

fulfilling the whole Law all the precepts of God and He went to His death, just-so-that, He could place His faithfulness on our hearts that it abounds to faith. Everything spoken by Jesus in verses 27-38 He fulfilled. He was beaten without retaliation, they took away all His clothing, they forced Him to carry His cross to the place of His murder. And yet He loved us even as it was the punishment for our sin that put Him on the cross.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ Lord God, heavenly Father, healer of our souls and caretaker of our bodies, accept our praise for the spiritual and physical blessings You give us every day. We have nothing to give You but our sins, and yet You tell us that You will remember them no more. For the peace of mind and assurance this gives, accept our thanks.

Without the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we would be unable to bear the burdens of physical afflictions. But You have changed our despair into the expectation of Heaven by the assurance of Your salvation. All Your promises are made certain in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Send us Your Holy Spirit that He will keep us firm in our faith. Help us recognize the real needs of others, and bless our efforts toward meeting those needs. Allow us to hear the Word of Jesus to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us that we would be primarily concerned for their spiritual needs. Bless our heart and tongue that we would greet those who visit our church as brothers and sisters.

To that end we pray for the well being of Your Church throughout the world; that she would be guided and governed by Your Good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians are led in the way of the truth. Send down on all Ministers of the Gospel and the congregations committed to their care the healthful spirit of Your grace.

We further implore You to look in mercy on all who have needs, all who have any affliction of body, mind or spirit. Give them patience in the midst of their suffering, and a happy release from their afflictions. Be with those who are traveling this day, and especially we pray for those of our brothers and sisters who could not be with us as we praise Your Holy name.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

Bless our nation with peace, and help us dwell in harmony with Your will. Help Your Church fulfill its primary mission and assure us of Your presence. In Jesus' name we pray.

© Amen.

EPIPHANY SEVEN

Chant Tone



Introit

Be still before the Lord and wait patient | ly for Him;*
fret not yourself over the one who prospers | in his way.

Fret not yourself because of evil — doers;*
be not envious of wrong — doers!
For they will soon fade | like the grass*
and wither like the — green herb.
Trust in the Lord, | and do good;*
dwell in the land and befriend
| faithfulness.

Delight yourself | in the Lord,*
and He will give you the desires | of your heart.

Commit your way | to the Lord;*
trust in Him, and | He will act.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Be still before the Lord and wait patient | ly for Him;*
fret not yourself over the one who prospers | in his way.

(Antiphon, Psalm 37:7a, b;
Psalm 37:1-5)

Collect of the Day

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Praise the Lord, all — nations!*
Extol Him, all — peoples!
For great is His | Love toward us,*
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for — ever.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory | due His name;*
bring an offering and come in | to His courts!

(Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Dear God, in You I live if I am to be alive. I confess I am filled with sadness. I have lost the sense of joy. I have become sick of today, and I do not care about tomorrow. I feel the hours drag on. God, my Father, release me from this emptiness. In the midst of this oppressive weakness, restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Remind me of the cross on which Your Son bore the guilt of my sin. Remind me of the empty tomb by which He gained for me the freedom to live. Help me live in the joy of my freedom and prepare me to meet every new day, every new task and even the terrors of this world with joy and confidence. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

A FORMER EMPLOYER WAS DRIVING A GROUP OF US HOME FROM A DISTANT JOB SITE. The conversation rolled around to the state lottery which was at some millions of dollars mark. Several of the men in the truck asked him to stop and let them buy lottery tickets. The "boss" asked them what they would do with the money. After hearing their litany of material goods, he refused to stop, stating that their desires were all selfish. He too would be selfish and serve his needs. (If they won the money he would lose a worker.) The seeking of vengeance, the rejection of strangers is a selfishness that could keep someone from the true knowledge of Jesus, selfishness on our part could prevent someone from hearing the wonderful Word of salvation. May we give up our selfish desires and our every vengeance to promote the Gospel in the world. We thank everyone, this day, who has gathered with us in the name and for the sake of Jesus our Savior.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Love Your Enemies

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 37:7a, b;) Psalm 37:1-5

Written by David. Psalm 37 reminds us not to be envious of the success of evil people. It can appear that the way to become successful is to be as evil as possible, however, you the guarantee of Heaven, they have nothing to live for beyond this life.

COLLECT

This Collect was written in 2006. It contains the second part of the historic Collect for Sexagesima Sunday. (Epiphany Seven was created in the first edition of a three year cycle of readings.) We have a problem because, as with the Introit, we see sinners being more successful than those trying to live out God's commands. We ask for God's mercy as the power to overcome all adversity. We ask God's mercy as we attempt to keep ourselves from being envious or hating the enemies of faith.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Genesis 45:3-15

A popular "myth," to explain suffering goes something along the lines of the life of Joseph. (If something bad happens in your life it might be a part of God's plan to put you somewhere special.) This was certainly true in the life of Joseph. Everything bad that happened in his life brought him to the moment of our Old Testament Lesson. He attempted to explain those circumstances to his brothers although they may not have been listening. This may not be true for your life, but it certainly was true in the life of Christ. All the bad things that happened to Him were caused by God, just-so-that you would become a permanent heir of Heaven.

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

God showers us with great love (grace) which is given to the believers and the unbelievers every morning. Verse 2 of Psalm 117 expresses the Love of God that shows forth in His faithfulness. By God's grace, we know that He will never vary from any part of His promises.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42

For Epiphany 6,7 and 8, we simply cut up 1 Corinthians 15 and read it. These sections stand rather independent of the theme for the day. The only connection today in in the fact that Paul basically reminding us (v. 33) that participating in bad acts will corrupt us. The Resurrection of Christ is a historical fact, your resurrection from the dead will become true as it is a guarantee from God. Hang in there against evil.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 6:27-38

Jesus is speaking of our true fulfilment of the Law, which is, in fact, not our fulfilment at all. Jesus fulfilled the Law of God in our place. He was