

Prayers of the Day

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Lord God, we are often reluctant to confess our sins. We don't want to admit to the wrong we have done. We prefer to examine other people's sins. Give us the humility and strength to face up to our sins and acknowledge them before you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, it is not only hard to confess our sins, but, once we have confessed them, it is hard to believe that you truly forgive them. Give us the faith to believe the words "the entire forgiveness of all your sins." Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, you generously forgive us our sins. Teach us to forgive others just as generously. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, you reign over heaven and earth, and yet the rulers of the earth pretend like you don't. Teach them to be humble before you and to rule as justly as you rule. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, bless and heal all those who are sick, suffering, or in danger (*especially...*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, your kingdom is our goal and destination. Bring us to live with you, as your own beloved children, in the company of all the saints. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

TODAY'S LESSONS

Office of the Keys/Confession

Prayer of the Day: Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Messiah; you are Christ our King. Reign over us, rule us with justice, forgive us with mercy, and bring us to live forever in your kingdom. **Amen.**

A reading from Leviticus:

God said: If you disobey me and my laws, and if you break our agreement, I will punish you terribly, and you will be ruined. You will be struck with incurable diseases and with fever that leads to blindness and depression. Your enemies will eat the crops you plant, and I will turn from you and let you be destroyed by your attackers. You will even run at the very rumor of attack.

Then, if you still refuse to obey me, I will punish you seven times for each of your sins, until your pride is completely crushed. I will hold back the rain, so the sky above you will be like iron, and the ground beneath your feet will be like copper. All of your hard work will be for nothing—and there will be no harvest of grain or fruit.

Then suppose you realize that I turned against you and brought you to the land of your enemies because both you and your ancestors had stubbornly sinned against me. If you humbly confess what you have done and start living right, I'll keep the promise I made to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will bless your land and let it rest during the time that you are in a foreign country, paying for your rebellion against me and my laws.

No matter what you have done, I am still the LORD your God, and I will never completely reject you or become absolutely disgusted with you there in the land of your enemies. While nations watched, I rescued your ancestors from Egypt so that I would be their God. Yes, I am your LORD, and I will never forget our agreement.

Psalm 24:

The earth and everything on it belong to the LORD.

The world and its people belong to him.

The LORD placed it all on the oceans and rivers.

Who may climb the LORD's hill or stand in his holy temple?

**Only those who do right for the right reasons,
and don't worship idols or tell lies under oath.**

The LORD God, who saves them, will bless and reward them,

because they worship and serve the God of Jacob.

Open the ancient gates, so that the glorious king may come in.

Who is this glorious king?

He is our LORD, a strong and mighty warrior.

Open the ancient gates, so that the glorious king may come in.

Who is this glorious king?

He is our LORD, the All-Powerful!

A reading from First Timothy:

St. Paul writes: I thank Christ Jesus our Lord. He has given me the strength for my work because he knew that he could trust me. I used to say terrible and insulting things about him, and I was cruel. But he had mercy on me because I didn't know what I was doing, and I had not yet put my faith in him. Christ Jesus our Lord was very kind to me. He has greatly blessed my life with faith and love just like his own.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This saying is true, and it can be trusted. I was the worst sinner of all! But since I was worse than anyone else, God had mercy on me and let me be an example of the endless patience of Christ Jesus. He did this so that others would put their faith in Christ and have eternal life. I pray that honor and glory will always be given to the only God, who lives forever and is the invisible and eternal King! Amen.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew:

Jesus said: "If one of my followers sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you. If that person listens, you have won back a follower. But if that one refuses to listen, take along one or two others. The Scriptures teach that every complaint must be proven true by two or more witnesses. If the follower refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church. Anyone who refuses to listen to the church must be treated like an unbeliever or a tax collector. I promise you that God in heaven will allow whatever you allow on earth, but he will not allow anything you don't allow. I promise that when any two of you on earth agree about something you are praying for, my Father in heaven will do it for you. Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you."