

Gathering Liturgy

P: God is our refuge and strength,

A very present help in trouble.

P: Therefore, we will not fear

Though the earth should change, Though the corona virus has its way.

P: The God of hosts is with us,

The God of Jacob is our refuge.

At the Font

P: We gather with gratitude for the land, the air we breathe, and the water that sustains all life; We give thanks for the opportunity to gather as community in our place of worship where we remember who we are:

created in the image of God, Source of life and love, joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, and set free by the Spirit to be God's healing in the world.

P: But our hearts are filled with more than gratitude -- it is not as it was before the pandemic:

We come, tentatively, uncertain about our worship practices and the future, We know in a new way our deep interconnectedness with all of creation, We know better the vulnerabilities of neighbours far and near.

P: Truthfully, the assurance of Your presence within our breath and body seems distant when we cannot sing, or hug the children, or share the peace.
Come, Holy Spirit, come. Resonate in our bodies. Touch our hearts. End the virus!

P: As we cry out and make our prayers this day:

Be our refuge and strength, Be a very present help in these pandemic days.

P: Widen our imagination with your large vision

Equip us to courageously participate in your very present help, to be a refuge and strength in our hurting world. Amen.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Psalm 103:8-13

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,

so far he removes our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

Gospel Acclamation

1 John 2:1, 12

Allelulia. We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous,
your sins are forgiven on account of his name. Allelulia.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING. Genesis 50:15-21

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

SECOND READING. Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written,

'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.'

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

GOSPEL. Matthew 18:21-35

'Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'