

# Morning Prayer

April 24, 2024

St. Mark, the Evangelist (April 25<sup>th</sup>)

## Opening Sentence

*Officiant* On this day the Lord has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it. *Psalm 118:24*

## The Invitatory and Psalter

*Officiant* Lord, open our lips.

*People* ***And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.***

*Officiant and People* Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
***as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.***

*Officiant* Alleluia. The Lord is risen indeed:  
***Come let us adore him. Alleluia.***

**Venite** *Psalm 95:1-7*

**Come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving  
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.**

**For the Lord is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are the caverns of the earth,  
and the heights of the hills are his also.  
The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands have molded the dry land.**

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.  
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!**

**The Psalm Appointed** *(appointed for the day)*

*Psalm 2: 7-10*

**Let me announce the decree of the LORD:  
he said to me, "You are my Son;  
this day have I begotten you.**

**Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance  
and the ends of the earth for your possession.**

**You shall crush them with an iron rod  
and shatter them like a piece of pottery."**

**And now, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.**

**Submit to the LORD with fear,  
and with trembling bow before him;**

**Lest he be angry and you perish;  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.**

**Happy are they all  
who take refuge in him!**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

### **The Lessons**

#### **A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah**

*Isaiah 53: 7-10*

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."  
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the Lord to Zion.  
Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The Lord has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord.

***Thanks be to God.***

**Canticle 12 A Song of Creation** *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini* *Song of the Three Young Men, 35-65*

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Let the earth glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills, and all that grows upon the earth,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams,  
O whales and all that move in the waters.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,  
and all you flocks and herds.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Let the people of God glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Glorify the Lord, O priests and servants of the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Glorify the Lord, O spirits and souls of the righteous,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

You that are holy and humble of heart, glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,  
***praise him and highly exalt him for ever.***

## **The Gospel**

*Gospeller* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

*Mark 16: 15-20*

*People* ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

Jesus said to the apostles, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

The Gospel of the Lord.

***Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

## **Reflection**

A disciple of Jesus, named Mark, appears in several places in the New Testament. If all references to Mark can be accepted as referring to the same person, we learn that he was the son of a woman who owned a house in Jerusalem, perhaps the same house in which Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples. Mark may have been the young man who fled naked when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul refers to “Mark the cousin of Barnabas,” who was with him in his imprisonment. Mark set out with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but he turned back for reasons which failed to satisfy Paul (Acts 15:36–40). When another journey was planned, Paul refused to have Mark with him. Instead, Mark went with Barnabas to Cyprus. The breach between Paul and Mark was later healed, and Mark became one of Paul’s companions in Rome, as well as a close friend of Peter’s.

An early tradition recorded by Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis in Asia Minor at the beginning of the second century, names Mark as the author of the Gospel bearing his name. This tradition, which holds that Mark drew his information from the teaching of Peter, is generally accepted. In his First Letter, Peter refers to “my son Mark,” which shows a close relationship between the two men (1Peter 5:13).

The Church of Alexandria in Egypt claimed Mark as its first bishop and most illustrious martyr, and the great Church of St. Mark in Venice commemorates the disciple who progressed from turning back while on a missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas to proclaiming in his Gospel Jesus of Nazareth as Son of God, and bearing witness to that faith in his later life as friend and companion to the apostles Peter and Paul.

## **The Apostles’ Creed**

*Officiant and People*

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

***I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.***

***He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit***

***and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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,***

***and is seated at the right hand of the Father.***

***He will come again 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 Prayers

Officiant      The Lord be with you.

People          ***And also with you.***

Officiant      Let us pray.

***Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is 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.***

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. ***And grant us your salvation.***

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. ***Let your people sing with joy.***

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. ***For only in you can we live in safety.***

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. ***And guide us in the way of justice and truth.***

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. ***Your saving health among all nations.***

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

R. ***Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.***

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

R. ***And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.***

## The Collect of the Day

*Officiant* Almighty God, by the hand of Mark the evangelist you have given to your Church the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God: We thank you for this witness, and pray that we may be firmly grounded in its truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

*Officiant* Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## Spiritual Communion

Let us pray together a prayer for Spiritual Communion:

**Lord Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. We are grateful to know there are many ways to experience your presence, but in whatever way we do, we know you come into our hearts, minds and souls. Unite my heart with those of my family of faith and make us all one with you. May this spiritual communion strengthen my faith and grant me confidence in your loving care now and forever. Amen.**

## The General Thanksgiving

*Officiant* Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. **Amen.**

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

## Bible Study

### Gospel: John 15: 1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

### Reflection on John 15: 1-8

In this discourse from John's Gospel, Jesus explores a metaphor. Jesus is the vine and the disciples (read: us!) are the branches. The metaphor facilitates an analogy. Just as the vinegrower "prunes" branches to make them bear more fruit, the disciples are "cleansed" by the words of Christ.

The connection between the two ideas is clearer in the original text, since in New Testament Greek, "prunes" and "cleansed" have the same root: *katharos*, meaning "clean" or "pure." This root is the origin of our word "catharsis." Literally, Jesus' words provide catharsis for us and help our lives to bear fruit.

But crucially, Jesus' words are not only the words of a teacher or instructor in the conventional, didactic sense of those terms. Jesus isn't standing and speaking next to the branches, or outside of them. Jesus is the vine from which the branches spring. Jesus is the ground of the branches' being. And so, the Jesus who speaks words of catharsis to us speaks as one who grounds our very life and existence. He does not stand outside of us. He sustains us, and we sustain ourselves in and through him. To live is to be connected to Christ, to spring out from his life; to be spoken to by Christ is to be spoken to by the very life of our life, to be cleansed by the upwelling truth within us and before us.

- How can we connect with Christ, the vine to our branch, the ground of our being, here and now?
- How do we find our ground in the present moment, whatever is happening? And how do we "abide" in that ground across circumstances?