



## Mount Olive Devotion

Sixth Week of Pentecost (July 6 – July 10, 2020)

### Monday

Psalm 139:1-10

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
<sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
<sup>4</sup> Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O LORD, you know it completely.  
<sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.  
<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.  
<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

This psalm is sometimes entitled “The Inescapable God.” It’s fair to say that that is both good news and bad news. As the prophet Jonah found out, even when you want to get away from God you can’t. But because we know the love of God, the inescapable nature of God is most often good news. Jesus said that when we have seen Him, we see God, and so we know what the Invisible God is like: compassionate, merciful, righteous, faithful, sacrificial, loving beyond imagination. This kind of a God is the kind of God from which one never needs escape. This is the kind of God that we want desperately to have near to us, especially when times are tough. How good it is to know that our God is an inescapable God.

### Prayer

We praise you, loving God for your inescapable presence. We praise you for your steadfast faithfulness. We thank you that no matter where we go, in this world or the next, you are near, leading us and holding us fast. Keep us near you always, we pray. In Jesus’ name. AMEN.

## Tuesday

Jeremiah 1:4-8

<sup>4</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

<sup>5</sup> “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
and before you were born I consecrated you;  
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

<sup>6</sup> Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’;  
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,  
and you shall speak whatever I command you.

<sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them,  
for I am with you to deliver you,  
says the LORD.”

This opening passage from Jeremiah’s writings is his account of his call into the ministry. He makes it very clear that his call was not something hatched up in his own mind, but it was God’s idea. Indeed, it sounds like Jeremiah tried to talk God out of it, but God would not hear of it. This call story is instructive for all of us who are disciples of Jesus, for we all have a call to ministry. As St. Paul reminds us in his letters, we are all given gifts for ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ, and for service to the world. Like Jeremiah, we might argue that we don’t have what it takes to do what God is calling us to, but God will have none of it. “I formed you, I consecrated you, and I appointed you,” says our God. “You are called to be my servants. Do not be afraid.” This word comes to us as well.

## Prayer

Holy Spirit of God, today we ask that you give us faith and courage as we hear your call. Give us faith to believe that indeed you have given us gifts for ministry. Give us courage to use those gifts. Like Jeremiah, we so easily doubt that we have what it takes. Quiet our anxious hearts. Fill us with your peace. In Christ’s name, we pray. AMEN.

## **Wednesday**

Mark 10:13-16

<sup>13</sup> People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." <sup>16</sup> And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Jesus is reminding us here that the way of little children is the way of God's kingdom. What does this mean? The possible meanings are endless. Perhaps it is the openness to life that little children have. Perhaps it is their innate trust of those who care for them. Perhaps it is their willingness to forgive. Perhaps it is their curiosity of and care for all living things. There are so many ways that children are the way of the kingdom. Our job is to always be welcoming to children and their ideas, and to honor them as God does. How foolish it would be for us to miss the lessons God would teach us through our children. We only need to watch, learn, and listen.

### **Prayer**

Thank you for our children and all children, O God. Thank you for gifting them with innate trust and love. Grant that their example might inspire us to walk in the ways of the kingdom. We pray this in Jesus' name. AMEN.

## Thursday

I John 3:1-3

<sup>1</sup> See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

In this short passage, St. John reminds us of two marvelous claims. First, we are God's children *now*. That's right. Right now, we are God's children. We don't need to wait for heaven to make that claim. As we are reminded in other places, we are joint heirs with Christ. By virtue of our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ we have been born anew into this new family – the family of God. We are God's children *now*. But the second claim is also astonishing: "What we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him." This second claim is even more marvelous than the first, for we well know that even though we are God's children now, we are still also children of the flesh. This means that sin continues to cling to us. But when Christ is revealed, we shall be like him. We don't know exactly what that entails, but we trust it will be unimaginably marvelous. To be like Christ? What could be more marvelous than that!

### Prayer

Thank you, Gracious Parent of us all, for making us your children through water and the Word. Thank you for granting us a place in your family and promising that when Christ is revealed, Christ's nature will be ours. What a marvel it is to even imagine such a thing. Give us joy in believing, and grant us even now a closer walk with you. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

## Friday

Revelation 7:9, 13-17

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" <sup>14</sup> I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

<sup>16</sup> They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

<sup>17</sup> for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

St. John's vision of the great multitude is one of the most visual scenes we have in all of scripture. We are asked to imagine an innumerable crowd of people from all times and places, nations and creeds, languages and ethnicities, standing before the throne of God robed in white. When, in the vision, St. John is asked who these people are, he responds to the questioner, "Sir, you are the one that knows." And then it is he learns that these are martyrs and other witnesses to Christ's way. They have come out of "the great ordeal." They have hungered, and thirsted, and lived in scorching heat, and who knows what else, in order to be faithful to their call, and now they are receiving their reward. Reward is not something we talk much about, but St. John leaves no doubt that the faithful will be rewarded. And what a reward they have: Christ the Lamb will be their shepherd; they will be guided to the springs of the water of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

## Prayer

We hear of great rewards for faithfulness, O God, and we wonder, will this include us? We have not always been faithful. Few of us have suffered for the faith. Even fewer will be martyrs. Grant us your Spirit, O God, so that we might be found faithful. We aspire to follow you in all things. In the name of Christ, we pray. AMEN.