

## Introduction to Lenten ADP

“Lent” isn’t a word that excites anyone. At times, it can feel like little more than piling on – generally, the weather is cold and wet, we’re all suffering from a bit of cabin fever, the school year & work week is getting long and dull, and now we’ve got to give up chocolate and social media!

When we take such a dour approach to Lent, we eventually give up on Lent entirely. But this approach is so rooted in our modern religious practices that it seems that any approach is unlikely to create meaningful change. I doubt there is much we can do to reverse our Western Christianity approach to this self-immolating season.

But there’s something we can do – we can turn East.

In Eastern Christianity we see an ancient and well-worn path for Lent. **It is less about self-deprecation, and more about spiritual formation.** Naturally, this approach blends well with our concept of “church,” which is about learning to live as agrarian disciples of Jesus Christ. Alexander Schmemmann, one of Orthodoxy’s best representatives to western Christians, says that Lent is best understood as “...a school of repentance to which every Christian must go every year in order to deepen his faith, to re-evaluate, and, if possible, to change his life.” It is a school for learning, a place to discover anew who Christ is, who we are, and what is possible for those who desire to live the Christian life.

For traditional Orthodoxy, Lent was a time of catechesis. **Catechesis is a specific term that encompasses a course of study and preparation for Christian baptism.** The trouble here is that our modern education techniques are not adequate models for how the Church treats catechesis. It does not simply mean a “confirmation class” or “memorizing a catechism,” as if being able to answer trivia questions about the Bible and church doctrine is sufficient to enable us to follow Jesus Christ. Catechesis is about learning a lifestyle, a way of living, a “rule of life” that trains us to walk like Jesus, not just to know about Jesus. In this way, the journey from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday to Easter is the setting for which we prepare for our own journey from repentance, to baptism, in which “we are crucified with Christ,” to our resurrection, “If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation.”

Baptism is how we undergo this journey. In baptism, we are crucified with Christ. In baptism, we are raised to new life. **In other words, baptism is an experience of Lent.** In this way, we never grow out of baptism. Baptism is the soil in which all faith is planted. We never grow beyond baptism; we grow into it. So we do well, as Christians, to set aside time to come back to our baptism, remember the

journey we are on, remember the promises made to us, and learn again how to walk more faithfully as baptized people.

Fortunately, this well-worn path gives us some basic themes that are tried and true. **Lent has traditionally focused on three major themes – fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, or charity.** These three foci teach us about justice, about proper living in relationship to all things. Prayer teaches us about justice towards God, fasting teaches us about justice towards the self, and almsgiving teaches us about justice towards our neighbor.

As we set out on this six week journey, we'll discover, as we pray together, that there is a path. Each week takes us to a new section of the path of catechesis.

**Week 1 – Desire.** So much of faith fails because we don't know what we are aiming for. If we understood the kind of Kingdom Jesus comes to bring, and if we understood the blessings of following Jesus Christ, we would walk without hesitation. Instead, we have a dreary, weak vision of faith. Week 1 of ADP is about showing us what the Kingdom of God is really all about – a Kingdom of light and truth - and encouraging us that this way is worth it.

**Week 2 – Discipline.** Yes, the destination is wonderful. No, it will not come easy. Jesus himself said "The way is narrow." It takes work and effort. So week 2 teaches us about the discipline that is required. However, much like an athlete who works out because they anticipate the goal or the homerun, we know that the work we'll do is important.

**Week 3 – Cross.** Here, in the middle of Lent, we get our first taste of what Christian discipleship really is – the cross. Any Christianity that takes us around the cross takes us around Christ. So we come face-to-face with the cross and its implications for us and our lives.

**Week 4 – Passion.** It is not simply that we are crucified with Christ. It behooves us as disciples (followers) of Jesus to pay attention to how Jesus arrives at that cross. What does he value? What does he tolerate? What does he utterly reject? Understanding Jesus' road will provide us insight for our own.

**Week 5 – Resurrection.** As we draw near to Holy Week, Jesus reminds us, like he does all his disciples, that yes, there is crucifixion. There is also resurrection. As we get close to the moment of decision, perhaps we get antsy. Keep going.

**Week 6 – Holy Week.** Now we come to it, the holiest time of the year. From Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday to Good Friday, we walk the final days of Jesus, and in them we see what the Christian life is all about at its fundamental core.

To help us along this path, and to keep this baptismal road ahead of us during the entire season of Lent, we've added a section to the beginning of ADP that invites us to remember our baptism. But it is not a dour memory; rather, it is written to remind us that the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – leads us into the life of faith to which we are called.

We are deeply grateful that you've decided to come along on this journey of Lenten prayer. Drop us a note sometime and let us know how it is going, and how we can be in prayer for you as you enter this season of repentance, refocus, and preparation for the Kingdom that comes through the cross of Christ.

## Ash Wednesday Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

**Lord, make haste to help me.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord

**Who made heaven and earth.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Father God, Creator of heaven and earth,

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

God of Israel,

God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

True and Living God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

**Have mercy and hear our prayer.**

### We Remember Our Baptism

+ In baptism, the Father is well pleased with us.

+ In baptism, we are crucified with Christ.

+ In baptism, the Spirit leads us to life and peace.

**We are baptized; we are a new creation. Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm of the Day: Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;

worship the Lord in holy splendor.

The voice of the Lord is over the waters;

the God of glory thunders,

the Lord, over mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful;

the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;

the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,

and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;  
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.  
The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,  
and strips the forest bare;  
and in his temple all say, "Glory!"

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.

May the Lord give strength to his people!  
May the Lord bless his people with peace!

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

**Canticle: from Job 39**

"Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?  
Do you observe the calving of the does?  
Can you number the months that they fulfill,  
and do you know the time when they give birth,

when they crouch to give birth to their offspring,  
and are delivered of their young?  
Their young ones become strong, they grow up in the open;  
they go out and do not return to them.

"Is the wild ox willing to serve you?  
Will it spend the night at your manger?  
Can you bind it in the furrow with ropes,  
or will it harrow the valleys after you?

Will you depend on it because its strength is great,  
and will you leave to him your labor?  
Do you have faith in it that it will return your grain  
and gather it to your threshing floor?

"Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars,  
and spreads its wings toward the south?

Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up  
and makes its nest on high?

On the rock it dwells and makes its home  
in the rocky crag and stronghold.  
From there it spies out the prey;  
its eyes behold it from far away.  
Its young ones suck up blood;  
and where the slain are, there it is."

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

### **Apostles' Creed**

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.

### **Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be  
seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in  
heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as

the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Contemplation

### **The Beatitudes**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### **Intercessory Prayer**

*Offer a prayer for yourself, for someone God brings to your mind, a prayer for your Church, your community, and for the world.*

## Lord's Prayer

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 of our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

**May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

## Thursday Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

**Lord, make haste to help me.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord

**Who made heaven and earth.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Father God, Creator of heaven and earth,

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

God of Israel,

God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

True and Living God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

**Have mercy and hear our prayer.**

## We Remember Our Baptism

- + In baptism, the Father is well pleased with us.
- + In baptism, we are crucified with Christ.
- + In baptism, the Spirit leads us to life and peace.



**We are baptized; we are a new creation. Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm of the Day: Psalm 98**

Oh sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things!  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.

The Lord has made known his salvation;  
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.  
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness  
to the house of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!  
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,  
with the lyre and the sound of melody!

With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!  
Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
the world and those who dwell in it!

Let the rivers clap their hands;  
let the hills sing for joy together  
before the Lord, for he comes  
to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.

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

**Canticle: Jeremiah 31:10-14**

"Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him,

and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.'

For the Lord has ransomed Jacob  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.  
They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,

over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall be like a watered garden,  
and they shall languish no more.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
I will turn their mourning into joy;  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness,  
declares the Lord."

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

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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.

### **Scripture Reading: Romans 8:26-30**

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Contemplation

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and forgive us of our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

**May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

## Friday Morning Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

**Lord, make haste to help me.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord

**Who made heaven and earth.**

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## We Remember Our Baptism

+ In baptism, the Father is well pleased with us.

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**We are baptized; we are a new creation. Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm of the Day: Psalm 51**

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,

so that you may be justified in your words  
and blameless in your judgment.  
Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,  
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,

and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.  
O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;  
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem;  
then will you delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

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

### **Canticle: from Jeremiah 17**

Thus says the Lord:  
“Cursed is the man who trusts in man  
and makes flesh his strength,  
whose heart turns away from the Lord.

He is like a shrub in the desert,  
and shall not see any good come.  
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.

He is like a tree planted by water,  
that sends out its roots by the stream,  
and does not fear when heat comes,

for its leaves remain green,

and is not anxious in the year of drought,  
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

The heart is deceitful above all things,  
and desperately sick;  
who can understand it?

“I the Lord search the heart  
and test the mind,  
to give every man according to his ways,  
according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed;  
save me, and I shall be saved,  
for you are my praise.

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

### **Apostles' Creed**

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.

## **Scripture Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12**

“Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God.

‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord?

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

Contemplation

## **The Beatitudes**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.



"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### **Intercessory Prayer**

*Offer a prayer for yourself, for someone God brings to your mind, a prayer for your Church, your community, and for the world.*

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

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Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us of our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

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

For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

**May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

### **Saturday Morning Prayer**

God, come to my assistance.

**Lord, make haste to help me.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord

**Who made heaven and earth.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Father God, Creator of heaven and earth,  
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
God of Israel,  
God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,  
True and Living God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
**Have mercy and hear our prayer.**

**We Remember Our Baptism**

+ In baptism, the Father is well pleased with us.

+ In baptism, we are crucified with Christ.

+ In baptism, the Spirit leads us to life and peace.

**We are baptized; we are a new creation. Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm of the Day: Psalm 65**

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion,  
and to you shall vows be performed.

O you who hear prayer,  
to you shall all flesh come.  
When iniquities prevail against me,  
you atone for our transgressions.

Blessed is the one you choose and bring near,  
to dwell in your courts!  
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,  
the holiness of your temple!

By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness,  
O God of our salvation,  
the hope of all the ends of the earth  
and of the farthest seas;

the one who by his strength established the mountains,  
being girded with might;  
who stills the roaring of the seas,

the roaring of their waves,  
the tumult of the peoples,

so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth  
are in awe at your signs.  
You make the going out of the morning and the evening  
to shout for joy.

You visit the earth and water it;  
you greatly enrich it;  
the river of God is full of water;  
you provide their grain,  
for so you have prepared it.

You water its furrows abundantly,  
settling its ridges,  
softening it with showers,  
and blessing its growth.

You crown the year with your bounty;  
your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.  
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,  
the hills gird themselves with joy,

the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,  
the valleys deck themselves with grain,  
they shout and sing together for joy.

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

**Canticle: Isaiah 65:17-19, 21-25**

“For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth,  
and the former things shall not be remembered  
or come into mind.

But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,

and her people to be a gladness.

I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and be glad in my people;  
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping  
and the cry of distress.

They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,  
and their descendants with them.

Before they call I will answer;  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
and dust shall be the serpent's food.

They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain,"  
says the Lord.

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

### **Apostles' Creed**

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.

### **Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15**

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord...But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

Contemplation

## The Beatitudes

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

## Intercessory Prayer

*Offer a prayer for yourself, for someone God brings to your mind, a prayer for your Church, your community, and for the world.*

## Lord's Prayer

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 of our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

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

For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

**May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**