

The Congregation at Prayer

Daily Devotions

2026

A Daily Devotional

St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA

And they devoted themselves
to the apostles' teaching and
the fellowship, to the breaking
of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

First Week of Lent

February 15-February 22, 2026

Start Every Day

*"In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen"*

recite **APOSTLE'S CREED**

VERSE: Acts 2:41a, 42 ***"So those who received
his word were baptized...and they devoted
themselves to the apostles' teaching and the
fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the
prayers."***

Read/Chant **Psalm 2**

CATECHISM—*Lord's Prayer—Fifth Petition*

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

Sunday, February 15

- Read **John 5:19-29**
- *Secondary reading:* **Job 11:1-20**

HILARY OF POITIERS: He bore witness that life, to the fullest extent, is his gift from the living God. Now if the living Son was born from the living Father, that birth took place without a new nature coming into existence. Nothing new comes into existence when the living is begotten by the living, for life was not sought out from the nonexistent in order to receive birth. And life, which receives its birth from life, must—because of that unity of nature and because of the mysterious event of that perfect and ineffable birth—live always in [Christ], who lives



413 O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair

- 1 O wondrous type! O vision fair
Of glory that the Church may share,
Which Christ upon the mountain shows,
Where brighter than the sun He glows!
 - 2 With Moses and Elijah nigh
The incarnate Lord holds converse high;
And from the cloud the Holy One
Bears record to the only Son.
 - 3 With shining face and bright array
Christ deigns to manifest today
What glory shall be theirs above
Who joy in God with perfect love.
 - 4 And faithful hearts are raised on high
By this great vision's mystery,
For which in joyful strains we raise
The voice of prayer, the hymn of praise.
- D 5 O Father, with the eternal Son
And Holy Spirit ever one,
We pray Thee, bring us by Thy grace
To see Thy glory face to face.

Text: Sarum Breviary, 1495, Salisbury; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
Text: Public domain

and has the life of the living in himself. ON THE TRINITY 7.27.¹

Monday, February 16

- Read **John 5:30-47**
- *Secondary Reading: Job 12:1-25*

CHRYSOSTOM: Christ's meaning is nothing other than this: I do not have a will different and apart from that of the Father. Rather, if [the Father] desires anything, then I do as well. If I desire it, then so does he. Since therefore no one could object to the Father judging, so neither may anyone object to me, for the sentence of each is given from the same mind." And if [Jesus] utters these words rather as a man, do not be surprised that they still considered him to be a mere man.... "For as in the case of people, [he might say], one who is free from selfishness cannot be justly charged with having given an unfair decision, so neither will you now be able to accuse me. One who has his own ends in view may incur suspicion of injustice, but one who does not have his own interests at heart cannot be suspected of such injustice." HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 39.4.²

Tuesday, February 17

¹ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2006. [John 1-10](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2006. [John 1-10](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- Read **John 6:1-21**
- *Secondary Reading: Job 13:1-12*

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: [If] our enemies persecute us, it is possible for us to behave well towards them by leaving them for a time, even when there is no harm in remaining. By evading their attacks and avoiding their rage, we may find that their anger abates and thus we may undercut the boldness of their arrogance.... To do the work of love then is not necessarily enduring those who wish us evil, nor to remain among one's enemies, causing them to become even more bitter and angry because they are unable to soften our opposition. Love then, as Paul says, "does not insist on its own way," and this was [certainly true] in Christ. COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 3.4.³

Wednesday, February 18

- Read **Mark 1:1-13**
- *Secondary Reading: Genesis 1:1-19*

ORIGEN: The way of the Lord must be prepared within the heart; for great and spacious is the heart of man, as if it were a whole world. But see its greatness, not in bodily quantity, but in the power of the mind which enables it to encompass so great a knowledge of the truth. Prepare, therefore, in your hearts the way of the Lord, by a worthy manner of life. Keep straight the path of your life,

³ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2006. [John 1–10](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Personal Prayers

pray **LORD'S PRAYER**

Luther's Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Luther's Evening Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

the gift of an invisible impulse so that he was able to follow. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPELS 1.21.⁷

Sunday, February 22

- Read **Mark 2:18-28**
- *Second Reading:* **Genesis 4:1-26**

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for Transfiguration (Sun-Tue)*

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Pray the *Collect for Ash Wednesday (Wed-Sat)*

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our

⁷ Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [*Mark \(Revised\)*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

so that the words of the Lord may enter in without hindrance. HOMILIES ON LUKE 21.5.7.⁴

Thursday, February 19

- Read **Mark 1:14-28**
- *Secondary Reading:* **Genesis 1:20-2:3**

EUSEBIUS: Reflect on the nature and grandeur of the one Almighty God who could associate himself with the poor of the lowly fisherman's class. To use them to carry out God's mission baffles all rationality. For having conceived the intention, which no one ever before had done, of spreading his own commands and teachings to all nations, and of revealing himself as the teacher of the religion of the one Almighty God to all humanity, he thought good to use the most unsophisticated and common people as ministers of his own design. Maybe God just wanted to work in the most unlikely way. For how could inarticulate folk be made able to teach, even if they were appointed teachers to only one person, much less to a multitude? How should those who were themselves without education instruct the nations?... When he had thus called them as his followers, he breathed into them his divine power, and filled them with strength and courage. As God himself he spoke God's true word to them in his

⁴ Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [*Mark \(Revised\)*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

own way, enabling them to do great wonders, and made them pursuers of rational and thinking souls, by empowering them to come after him, saying: “Come, follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” With this empowerment God sent them forth to be workers and teachers of holiness to all the nations, declaring them heralds of his own teaching. PROOF OF THE GOSPEL 3.7.⁵

Friday, February 20

- Read **Mark 1:29-45**
- *Secondary Reading:* **Genesis 2:4-25**

ORIGEN: And why did he touch him, since the law forbade the touching of a leper? He touched him to show that “all things are clean to the clean.”

Because the filth that is in one person does not adhere to others, nor does external uncleanness defile the clean of heart. So he touches him in his untouchability, that he might instruct us in humility; that he might teach us that we should despise no one, or abhor them, or regard them as pitiable, because of some wound of their body or some blemish for which they might be called to render an account.... So, stretching forth his hand to touch, the leprosy immediately departs. The hand of the Lord is found to have touched not a leper, but a body made clean! Let us consider here,

⁵ Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [*Mark \(Revised\)*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

beloved, if there be anyone here that has the taint of leprosy in his soul, or the contamination of guilt in his heart? If he has, instantly adoring God, let him say: “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”
FRAGMENTS ON MATTHEW 2.2–3⁶

Saturday, February 21

- Read **Mark 2:1-17**
- *Secondary Reading:* **Genesis 3:1-24**

BEDE: By “follow” he meant not so much the movement of feet as of the heart, the carrying out of a way of life. For one who says that he lives in Christ ought himself to walk just as he walked, not to aim at earthly things, not to pursue perishable gains, but to flee base praise, to embrace willingly the contempt of all that is worldly for the sake of heavenly glory, to do good to all, to inflict injuries upon no one in bitterness, to suffer patiently those injuries that come to oneself, to ask God’s forgiveness for those who oppress, never to seek one’s own glory but always God’s,⁶ and to uphold whatever helps one love heavenly things. This is what is meant by following Christ. In this way, disregarding earthly gains, Matthew attached himself to the band of followers of One who had no riches. For the Lord himself, who outwardly called Matthew by a word, inwardly bestowed upon him

⁶ Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [*Mark \(Revised\)*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.