

5 O let the harps break forth in sound!  
 Our joy be all with music crowned,  
 Our voices gladly blending!  
 For Christ goes with us all the way—  
 Today, tomorrow, ev'ry day!  
 His love is never ending!  
 Sing out! Ring out!  
 Jubilation!  
 Exultation!  
 Tell the story!  
 Great is He, the King of Glory!

6 What joy to know, when life is past,  
 The Lord we love is first and last,  
 The end and the beginning!  
 He will one day, oh, glorious grace,  
 Transport us to that happy place  
 Beyond all tears and sinning!  
 Amen! Amen!  
 Come, Lord Jesus!  
 Crown of gladness!  
 We are yearning  
 For the day of Your returning!

Text: tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978, alt.; Philipp Nicolai, 1556–1608  
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The Congregation at Prayer  
**The Whole Story**  
 2025  
 A Daily Devotional  
 St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



**Week #2-The Whole Story**  
**Week of Epiphany**  
 January 5-12, 2025

**Start Every Day**

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

recite **APOSTLE’S CREED**

Read Catechism—Where is this written?

*This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. (John 20:22-23)*

VERSE: Galatians 4:4-5 "***But when the fullness of time had come, God set forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.***"

### **PRAYER of the WORD**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Sunday, January 5**

- Read ***Psalm 5*** (Give ear to my words, O LORD)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 5***

### **Monday, January 6**

- Read ***Psalm 6*** (Be gracious to me, O LORD.)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 6***
  - **CHRYSOSTOM** (354-407AD): John saw a man that was a tyrant overthrowing the divine commands on marriage. With boldness, he proclaimed in the midst of the forum, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother Philip's wife." So we learn from him to admonish our

- 2 Come, heav'nly Bridegroom, Light divine,  
And deep within our hearts now shine;  
There light a flame undying!  
In Your one body let us be  
As living branches of a tree,  
Your life our lives supplying.  
Now, though daily  
Earth's deep sadness  
May perplex us  
And distress us,  
Yet with heav'nly joy You bless us.
- 3 Lord, when You look on us in love,  
At once there falls from God above  
A ray of purest pleasure.  
Your Word and Spirit, flesh and blood  
Refresh our souls with heav'nly food.  
You are our dearest treasure!  
Let Your mercy  
Warm and cheer us!  
O draw near us!  
For You teach us  
God's own love through You has reached us.
- 4 Almighty Father, in Your Son  
You loved us when not yet begun  
Was this old earth's foundation!  
Your Son has ransomed us in love  
To live in Him here and above:  
This is Your great salvation.  
Alleluia!  
Christ the living,  
To us giving  
Life forever,  
Keeps us Yours and fails us never!

### **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.

### **395 O MORNING STAR, HOW FAIR**

1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright!  
You shine with God's own truth and light,  
Aglow with grace and mercy!  
Of Jacob's race, King David's son,  
Our Lord and master, You have won  
Our hearts to serve You only!  
Lowly, holy!  
Great and glorious,  
All victorious,  
Rich in blessing!  
Rule and might o'er all possessing!

fellow servant as an equal. Do not shrink from the duty of chastising a brother, even though one may be required to die for it. Now do not make this cold reply: "What does it matter to me? I have nothing in common with him." With the devil alone we have nothing in common, but with all humanity we have many things in common. All partake of the same nature with us. They inhabit the same earth. They are nourished with the same food. They have the same Lord. They have received the same laws. They are invited to the same blessings with ourselves. Let us not say then that we have nothing in common with them. CONCERNING THE STATUES 1.32.<sup>1</sup>

### **Tuesday, January 7**

- Read ***Psalm 7*** (O LORD my God, in you I take refuge.)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 7***

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<sup>1</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [\*Mark \(Revised\)\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- **CHRYSOSTOM:** Christ says, “Care for the poor”; Mammon says, “Take away even those things the poor possess.” Christ says, “Empty yourself of what you have”;<sup>19</sup> Mammon says, “Take also what they possess.” Do you see the opposition, the strife between them? See how it is that one cannot obey both, but must reject one?... Christ says, “None of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions”; Mammon says, “Take the bread from the hungry.” Christ says, “Cover the naked”;<sup>21</sup> the other says, “Strip the naked.” Christ says, “You shall not turn away from your own family, and those of your own house”;<sup>23</sup> Mammon says, “You shall not show mercy to those of your own family. Though you see your mother or your father in want, despise them.” HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS 6.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. *Mark (Revised)*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Son of God, equal to the Father, the Word through whom all things were made, to become king of Israel. It is an indication of pity, not an increase in power. TRACTATE ON JOHN 51.3–4.<sup>6</sup>

### **Sunday, January 12**

- Read *Psalm 12* (The words of the LORD are pure words.)
- Read *The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 12*

### **End Every Day**

#### **Pray the *Collect for Epiphany***

Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year now ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### **Your Personal Prayers**

*pray* **LORD’S PRAYER**

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<sup>6</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. *Mark (Revised)*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

is troublesome to the other. To His WIFE 2.8.<sup>5</sup>

### Saturday, January 11

- Read **Psalm 11** (In the LORD I take refuge.)
- Read **The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 11**
  - **AUGUSTINE** (354-430AD): The master of humility is Christ who humbled himself and became obedient even to death, even the death of the cross. Thus he does not lose his divinity when he teaches us humility.... What great thing was it to the king of the ages to become the king of humanity? For Christ was not the king of Israel so that he might exact a tax or equip an army with weaponry and visibly vanquish an enemy. He was the king of Israel in that he rules minds, in that he gives counsel for eternity, in that he leads into the kingdom of heaven for those who believe, hope, and love. It is a condescension, not an advancement for one who is the

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

### Wednesday, January 8

- Read **Psalm 8** (How majestic is your name in all the earth!)
- Read **The Gospel of Mark, Chapter 8**
  - **Jerome** (347-420AD): From the lesser number of men [four thousand], less remains; from the greater number [five thousand<sup>6</sup>], more is left over. Four thousand men—fewer certainly in number, but greater in faith. The one who is greater in faith eats more, and because he does, there is less left over! I wish that we, too, might eat more of the hardy bread of holy writ, so that there would be less left over for us to learn. Tractate on the Gospel of Mark, Homily 78.<sup>3</sup>

### Thursday, January 9

- Read **Psalm 9** (I will recount the deeds of the LORD.)
- Read **The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 9**
  - **CHRYSOSTOM**: How did he shine? Tell me. Exceedingly. And how do you express this? He shone as the sun. As the sun, you say? Yes. Why the

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<sup>3</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [Mark \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

sun? Because I do not know any other luminary more brilliant. And he was white, you say, as snow? Why as snow? Because I do not know any other substance which is whiter. But he did not strictly speaking shine merely as the sun shines daily. This is proved by what follows: the disciples fell to the ground.<sup>23</sup> If he had shone as the sun daily shines, the disciples would not have fallen, for they saw the sun every day, and did not fall. But inasmuch as he shone more brilliantly than the sun or snow, they, being unable to bear the splendor, fell to the earth. EUTROPIUS, AND THE VANITY OF RICHES, HOMILY 2.10–11.<sup>4</sup>

### **Friday, January 10**

- Read ***Psalm 10*** (The LORD hears the desire of the afflicted.)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 10***

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<sup>4</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. *Mark (Revised)*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- **TERTULLIAN (155-250AD):** Where are we to find language adequately to express the happiness of that marriage which the church cements, the oblation confirms, the benediction signs and seals, the angels celebrate, and the Father holds as approved? For all around the earth young people do not rightly and lawfully wed without their parents' consent. What kind of yoke is that of two believers who share one hope, one desire, one discipline, one service?<sup>6</sup> They enjoy kinship in spirit and in flesh. They are mutual servants with no discrepancy of interests. Truly they are "two in one flesh." Where the flesh is one, the spirit is one as well. Together they pray, together bow down, together perform their fasts, mutually teaching, mutually entreating, mutually upholding. In the church of God they hold an equal place.<sup>8</sup> They stand equally at the banquet of God, equally in crises, equally facing persecutions, and equally in refreshments. Neither hides anything from the other. Neither neglects the other. Neither