

The Congregation at Prayer

# Daily Devotions

2026

A Daily Devotional

St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



**Fourth Week of Lent**

March 15-March 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: Psalm 26:8 ***"O LORD, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells."***

*Read/Chant* **Psalm 142**

**CATECHISM—*Holy Baptism—What is Baptism?***

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

**Sunday, March 15**

- Read **Mark 11:20-33**
- *Secondary reading:* **Genesis 41:28-57**

CHRYSOSTOM: Prayer is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine never exhausted, a sky unobstructed by clouds, a haven unruffled by storm. It is the root, the fountain, and the mother of a thousand blessings. It exceeds a monarch's power.... I speak not of the prayer which is cold and feeble and devoid of zeal. I speak of that which proceeds from a mind outstretched, the child of a contrite spirit, the offspring of a soul converted—this is the prayer which mounts to heaven.... The power of prayer has subdued the strength of fire, bridled the rage of lions, silenced anarchy, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, enlarged the gates of heaven, relieved diseases, averted frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. In sum, prayer has power to destroy whatever is at enmity with the good. I speak not of the prayer of the lips, but of the prayer that ascends from the inmost recesses



## 571 God Loved the World So That He Gave

- 1 God loved the world so that He gave  
His only Son the lost to save,  
That all who would in Him believe  
Should everlasting life receive.
- 2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,  
Who was made flesh and suffered death;  
All then who trust in Him alone  
Are built on this chief cornerstone.
- 3 God would not have the sinner die;  
His Son with saving grace is nigh;  
His Spirit in the Word declares  
How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.
- 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son  
Forgives all sins which you have done;  
And, justified by Jesus' blood,  
Your Baptism grants the highest good.
- 5 If you are sick, if death is near,  
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:  
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death;  
That is the firmest ground of faith.

*Text: Heiliges Lippen- und Hertzens-Opffer, c. 1778, Stettin; tr. August Crull, 1845-1923, alt.  
Text: Public domain*

of the heart. ON THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE NATURE OF GOD,  
HOMILY 5.44, 46, 57, 58.<sup>1</sup>

### **Monday, March 16**

- Read **Mark 12:1-12**
- *Secondary Reading: Genesis 42:1-38*

AUGUSTINE: But how will you insure that the inheritance will be yours? Merely because you killed him? Hold on! You in fact did kill him, yet the inheritance is still not yours. Do you not recall the Psalm which says: "I lie down and sleep," and then adds, "I wake again"? did you miss that point? While you were gloating that you had killed him, he was sleeping. The Psalm says: "I slept." Just while they were raging and would kill me, what was I doing? "I slept." And if I had not willed it, I would not even have slept, for "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again."<sup>6</sup> So let the oppressors rage. Let the earth even be "given into the hands of the wicked," let the flesh be left to the hands of persecutors, let them suspend him on wood with nails transfixed, pierced with a spear. The one who lies down and sleeps simply adds: "I rise again."<sup>8</sup> ON PSALM 41: ON THE FEAST OF THE MARTYRS 9.<sup>2</sup>

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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.

<sup>2</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [Mark \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian

### **Tuesday, March 17**

- Read **Mark 12:13-27**
- *Secondary Reading:* **Genesis 43:1-28**

AUGUSTINE: We are God's money. But we are like coins that have wandered away from the treasury. What was once stamped upon us has been worn down by our wandering. The One who restamps his image upon us is the One who first formed us. He himself seeks his own coin, as Caesar sought his coin. It is in this sense that he says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,"<sup>12</sup> to Caesar his coins, to God your very selves. TRACTATE ON JOHN 40.9.<sup>3</sup>

### **Wednesday, March 18**

- Read **Mark 12:28-44**
- *Secondary Reading:* **Genesis 44:1-34**

BEDE: Neither of these two kinds of love is expressed with full maturity without the other, because God cannot be loved apart from our neighbor, nor our neighbor apart from God. Hence as many times as Peter was asked by our Lord if he loved him, and attested his love, the Lord added at the end of each inquiry, "Feed my sheep," or "feed my lambs,"<sup>22</sup> as if he were clearly saying: "There is only one adequate confirmation of whole-hearted

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Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>3</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds.

1998. [\*Mark \(Revised\)\*](#). Ancient Christian

Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL:

InterVarsity Press.

### **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.

### **Sunday, March 15**

- Read **Mark 14:12-31**
- *Second Reading:* **Exodus 1:1-22**

### **End Every Day**

#### **Pray the *Collect for Fourth Sunday in Lent***

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. 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.

love of God—laboring steadily for the needy in your midst, exercising continuing care of them.” EXPOSITION ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK 2.22.<sup>4</sup>

### **Thursday, March 19**

- Read **Mark 13:1-23**
- *Secondary Reading:* **Genesis 45:1-28**

GREGORY THE GREAT: Let us keep in mind that these present afflictions are as far below the last tribulations, as is the person of the herald below the majesty of the judge he precedes. Reflect with all your mind upon this day, my dearest ones. Remedy what is now defective in your present life. Amend your ways. Overcome evil temptations by standing firm against them. Repent with tears of the sins you have committed. For the more you make ready against the severity of his justice by serving him in fear, the more serenely shall you behold the coming of that eternal judge, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, world without end. Amen. ON THE GOSPEL, HOMILY 1.<sup>5</sup>

### **Friday, March 20**

- Read **Mark 13:24-37**

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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.

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

- *Secondary Reading: Genesis 47:1-31*

ATHANASIUS: When his disciples asked him about the end, he said with precision: Of that day or that hour no one knows, not even he himself—that is, when viewed according to the flesh, because he too, as human, lives within the limits of the human condition. He said this to show that, viewed as an ordinary man, he does not know the future, for ignorance of the future is characteristic of the human condition. Insofar as he is viewed according to his divinity as the Word who is to come, to judge, to be bridegroom, however, he knows when and in what hour he will come.... For as upon becoming human he hungers, thirsts and suffers,<sup>2</sup> along with all human beings, similarly as human he does not see the future. But viewed according to his divinity as the Word and wisdom of the Father, he knows, and there is nothing which he does not know. FOUR DISCOURSES AGAINST THE ARIANS 3.46.<sup>6</sup>

### **Saturday, March 21**

- Read **Mark 14:1-11**
- *Secondary Reading: Genesis 49:29-50:26*

DIDASCALIA: And Judas Iscariot, who was one of us, rose up and went his way to betray him. And Judas came with the scribes and with the priests of the people, and betrayed our Lord Jesus.

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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.

Now this was done on the fourth day of the week. And in the night they seized our Lord Jesus. And the next day, which was the fourth of the week, he remained in ward in the house of Caiaphas the high priest. And on the same day the chiefs of the people were assembled and took counsel against him. And on the next day again, which was the fifth of the week, they brought him to Pilate the governor. And he remained again in the ward with Pilate the night after the fifth day of the week. But when it drew on (towards day) on the Friday, they accused him much before Pilate; and they could show nothing that was true, but gave false witness against him. And they asked him of Pilate to be put to death; and they crucified him on the same Friday.

He suffered, then, at the sixth hour on Friday. And these hours wherein our Lord was crucified were reckoned a day. And afterwards, again, there was darkness for three hours; and it was reckoned a night. And again, from the ninth hour until evening, three hours, (reckoned) a day. And afterwards again (there was) the night of the Sabbath of the Passion. DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM 21.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. *Mark (Revised)*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.