

August 15th, 2010 Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction to the Day

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today, in the assembly, we are surrounded by "so great a cloud of witnesses." In the word and in the holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

After a moment of silent meditation to prepare ourselves for worship, we will begin the liturgy.

Prayers of the People

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Empower your church to be faithful to Jesus, the perfecter of our faith, especially in the face of persecution. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Restore your creation, especially deserts and places of hot winds and scorching heat.

Keep safe firefighters and all who work to put out flames and save those in danger. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Raise up just and fair leaders, for all the nations belong to you. Quench the raging fire of war and conflict, and bring your peace to this earth. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Give justice to the weak and the orphaned. Bring dignity to the poor and needy. Heal the sick, that they may know your joy. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Strengthen all families in this congregation, that father and son, mother and daughter may be united in their love for you and service to others. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In thanksgiving we praise you for the great cloud of witnesses who have run with perseverance the race of faithfulness and are now joined with you in glory. Grant us the same strength to live by faith. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Lector: Please read the introduction, then the citation (i.e. "The First Reading is from the.... chapter of ..." - then read the text.)

First Reading – *The prophet sings about a beautiful vineyard, carefully planted and cultivated, that nevertheless yields wild grapes. The owner therefore determines to destroy the vineyard, which represents the sinful people of Israel and Judah.*

Isaiah 5:1–7

Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.
And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.
What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?
And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;

I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.
For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 80:1–2, 8–19

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
you cast out the nations and planted it.

**You cleared the ground for it;
it took root and filled the land.**

The mountains were covered by its shadow
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.

**You stretched out its tendrils to the sea
and its branches to the river.**

Why have you broken down its wall,
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?

**The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.**

Turn now, O God of hosts,
look down from heaven;

**behold and tend this vine;
preserve what your right hand has planted.**

They burn it with fire like rubbish;
at the rebuke of your countenance let them perish.

**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

Second Reading – *The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this "cloud of witnesses," we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.*

Hebrews 11:29-12:2

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

* **Gospel Reading** - *Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.*

Luke 12:49–56

I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son
and son against father,
mother against daughter
and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.