

September 5th, 2010 Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction to the Day

Called to contemplate the cost of discipleship today, we might be helped by translating Paul's request to Philemon into our prayer of the day: Refresh my heart in Christ. Strengthened by the company and forgiveness of the Christ in the blessed sacrament and recalling God's grace in remembrance of baptism, we can be strengthened in this hour to "choose life"—to choose life in God as our own.

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

Prayers of the People

God hears the cry of the poor and is near to all in need. Let us pray for our neighbors, our world, and ourselves, trusting in God's mercy and love.

A brief silence.

God, you gather your church from the ends of the earth, planting us beside your life-giving stream. We pray for all who lead your people in prayer and service. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God, you have set before us life and death, entrusting to us the care of your creation. We pray for the health of the land from which we live and for the well-being of every living creature. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God, your family extends to each land and race. We pray for the leaders of nations, that they may walk in the ways of your mercy and justice. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God, your gospel means freedom for all who are oppressed. We pray for the liberation of all who are held captive to poverty, prejudice, and fear. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God, your Spirit is alive in this place. We pray for new energy in our ministries of education and formation. Inspire all who will serve as teachers and mentors this year to share their faith with boldness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God, we thank you each time we remember those we love. We praise you especially for all whose lives of faith have borne witness to the wideness of your embrace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All this we ask, gracious God, together with all that is known to you alone, in the name of your risen and anointed Son, through the power of your life-giving Spirit.

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 – *God teaches Jeremiah a lesson at a potter's shop. Just as a potter is able to destroy an unacceptable vessel, starting over to refashion it into one of value, so God molds and fashions the nations, including Israel.*

Jeremiah 18:1–11

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words. So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the LORD came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the LORD: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18

LORD, you have searched me out;

O LORD, you have known me.

**You know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.**

You trace my journeys and my resting-places
and are acquainted with all my ways.

**Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

You encompass me, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.**

For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

**I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

My body was not hidden from you,
while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths
of the earth.

**Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in
your book;**

my days were fashioned before they came to be.

How deep I find your thoughts, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

**If I were to count them, they would be more in number
than the sand; to count them all, my life span would need
to be like yours.**

Second Reading – *While Paul was in prison, he was aided by a runaway slave named Onesimus. The slave's master, Philemon, was a Christian friend of Paul. Paul told Onesimus to return to his master and encouraged Philemon to receive Onesimus back as a Christian brother.*

Philemon 1:1–21

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow
soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love
for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith
may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have
indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the
saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love — and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother — especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*** Gospel Reading** - *Jesus speaks frankly about the fearsome costs of discipleship. Those who follow him should know from the outset that completing the course of discipleship will finally mean renouncing all other allegiances.*

Luke 14:25–33

Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.