

Morning Prayer

The Fifth Monday of Easter

Monday, May 3, 2021

Elisabeth Cruciger, *Poet and Hymnographer, 1535*

Psalms Appointed

Psalms 56, 57, & [58]

The people are seated

Readings

A period of silence will follow each reading.

First Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 9:1,7-18

A Reading from the book of Wisdom.

I appealed to the Lord and said, “O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, you have chosen me to be king of your people and to be judge over your sons and daughters. You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain, and an altar in the city of your habitation, a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning. With you is wisdom, she who knows your works and was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your sight and what is right according to your commandments. Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of your glory send her, that she may labor at my side, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you. For she knows and understands all things, and she will guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory. Then my works will be acceptable, and I shall judge your people justly, and shall be worthy of the throne of my father. For who can learn the counsel of God? Or who can discern what the Lord wills? For the reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail; for a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthy tent burdens the thoughtful mind. We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labor; but who has traced out what is in the heavens? Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus the paths of those on earth were set right, and people were taught what pleases you, and were saved by wisdom.”

Gospel Reading

Luke 7:36-50

A Reading from Luke.

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.” Jesus spoke up and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Teacher,” he replied, “Speak.” “A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

A Reading from The Church Fathers

Elisabeth Cruciger, Poet and Hymnographer, 1535

Collect of the Day

The Officiant then says

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Elisabeth Cruciger

Pour out your Spirit upon all of your sons and daughters, Almighty God, that like your servant Elisabeth Cruciger our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our worship may give you glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayers of the People

A Prayer in Time of Great Sickness and Mortality

O most mighty and merciful God, in this time of grievous sickness, we flee unto thee for succor. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; prosper the means made use of for their cure; and grant that, perceiving how frail and uncertain our life is, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leadeth to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Oppressed

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Elisabeth Cruciger, Poet and Hymnographer, 1535

Elisabeth Cruciger was a friend and coworker of Martin Luther, and the first female hymn writer of the Protestant Reformation. Elisabeth entered monastic life as a young woman, but through books that were smuggled into the monastery she became convinced of the teachings of the Protestant Reformation and left the convent for Wittenberg. She would eventually marry Caspar Cruciger, who was a professor of theology.

Elisabeth embarked on an active ministry as a hymn writer, producing a number of compositions that helped to teach the Christian faith to laypeople. According

to one account, she once dreamed she was standing in the pulpit of the Wittenberg church preaching. When she told Caspar this, he replied that whenever the church sang one of her hymns, she was indeed preaching, just as much as if she had spoken the words from the pulpit. She died when she was in her mid-thirties.

Elisabeth's hymn "Lord Christ, God's Only Dear Son" was translated into English by Miles Coverdale, and was one of the most popular hymns used by Anglicans in the sixteenth century. It is still included in most Lutheran hymnals, and is #309 in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, the current hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The following is the English translation of her hymn translated by Anglican priest Arthur Tozer Russell in 1850:

1. The only Son from heaven, foretold by ancient seers, by God the Father given, in human form appears. No sphere his light confining, no star so brightly shining, As he, our Morningstar.
2. Oh, times of God appointed, Oh bright and holy morn! He comes, the king anointed, the Christ, the virgin-born, Grim death to vanquish for us, to open heav'n before us And bring us life again.
3. Awaken, Lord, our spirit to know and love you more, In faith to stand unshaken, in spirit to adore, That we, through this world moving, each glimpse of heaven proving, May reap his fullness there.
4. O Father, here before you with God the Holy Ghost, And Jesus we adore you, O pride of angel host: Before you mortals lowly cry: "Holy, holy, holy, O blessed Trinity!"