

# Morning Prayer

The Fifth Wednesday of Easter

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Martyrs of the Reformation Era

Psalms Appointed

Psalm 72

## Readings

*A period of silence will follow each reading.*

### First Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 13:1-9

A Reading from the book of Wisdom.

All people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works; but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world. If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord, for the author of beauty created them. And if people were amazed at their power and working, let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the one who formed them. For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator. Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him. For while they live among his works, they keep searching, and they trust in what they see, because the things that are seen are beautiful. Yet again, not even they are to be excused; for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?

### Gospel Reading

Luke 8:16-25

A Reading from Luke.

Jesus said, "No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away." Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." But he said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they put out, and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. They went to him and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"

## **A Reading from The Church Fathers**

Martyrs of the Reformation Era

### *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.*

### *Martyrs of the Reformation Era*

Almighty and Most Merciful God, give to your church that peace which the world cannot give, and grant that those who have been divided on earth may be reconciled in heaven, and share together in the vision of your glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *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.*

## *Martyrs of the Reformation Era*

The Roman Catholic Church commemorates the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales on May 4: men and women who were executed for treason between 1535 and 1679 for their allegiance to the Catholic Church. In recent years, the Church of England has shared this commemoration, broadening it to all of the English saints and martyrs of the Reformation era. This commemoration remembers not only Anglican martyrs like Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley, who died for their adherence to the Church of England, but those Catholics who were killed by Anglicans—along with all other Christians who were persecuted by their fellow Christians for their beliefs, most notably the Anabaptists and the Quakers.

Ecumenical dialogues around the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation have led many Christians to soul-searching questions about the role that our churches played in the persecution of other Christians for their beliefs. Without minimizing the seriousness of the theological disagreements or the inextricable links between religion and politics in that time, this commemoration asks us to recognize that within the heritage of our own tradition there were both victims and persecutors, and that there was a deeply Christian courage and holiness present in the martyrs from various confessions who were willing to die for their faith. It is a sobering reminder of just how swiftly Christians have often turned from being persecuted and oppressed to being the persecutors and the oppressors of others.

By our baptisms we are incorporated into God's one church, and thus we are the heirs of both the martyrs and their executioners. It is this double heritage that must spur our efforts to heal our divisions and to work and pray for a future when Christ's prayer that his followers might be truly one as he and the Father are one (John 17:21) will be fulfilled.