

Sunday, January 25th 2026

Third Sunday after the Epiphany



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AS WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

God's Enemies Are Conquered by the Revelation of Grace in Christ

Christ brings about a great reversal in St. Paul. “*He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy*” (Gal. 1:23). The enemy of the Gospel becomes its foremost preacher, and the last of the apostles becomes the first (Matt. 19:30). Paul is God’s “*chosen instrument ... to carry [His] name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel*” (Acts 9:15). The conversion of Paul is only a more dramatic example of what God does in revealing Christ to us. The bondage of our sin makes saving faith impossible. “I believe that I cannot ... believe” (Small Catechism, Third Article of the Creed). But even this is no obstacle for our Lord’s grace in Christ and the Holy Spirit’s power through the Gospel. Baptized, filled with the Holy Spirit, and hearing the Word of Christ, our ears are opened and our spiritual blindness is lifted (Acts 9:17–19). It is dangerous to be a traitor to Christ’s enemies — “*I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name*” (Acts 9:16) — but everything that is left behind is “*rubbish*” compared to “*the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:8) and the eternal life that we, with St. Paul, will at last inherit (Matt. 19:29).

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 124:8

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. *Ps. 130:3-4*

P Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

[Luke 18:13]

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

[John 20:19-23]

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

2 Timothy 4:22

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹²What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." ¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

¹⁸For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fourth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹²When [Jesus] heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶the people dwelling in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,

on them a light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**”

¹⁸While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “**Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. ²⁴So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Homily

“I appeal to you, brothers...”

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Prayer of the Church

P Lord, in Your mercy
C hear our prayer.

Benedicamus and Benediction

P Let us bless the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

[Psalm 103:1]

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

C Amen.

P Go in Peace!
C Serve the Lord!

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