

Hymn of Invocation

421 *Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing*

- 1 Jesus, grant that balm and healing
In Your holy wounds I find,
Ev'ry hour that I am feeling
Pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within
Tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning
Keep me from its first beginning.

- 2 Should some lust or sharp temptation
Fascinate my sinful mind,
Draw me to Your cross and passion,
And new courage I shall find.
Or should Satan press me hard,
Let me then be on my guard,
Saying, "Christ for me was wounded,"
That the tempter flee confounded.

- 3 If the world my heart entices
With the broad and easy road,
With seductive, sinful vices,
Let me weigh the awful load
You were willing to endure.
Help me flee all thoughts impure
And to master each temptation,
Calm in prayer and meditation.

- 4 Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me
By Your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I'm faint, Your cross revives me,
Granting new life to my soul.
Yes, Your comfort renders sweet
Ev'ry bitter cup I meet;
For Your all-atoning passion
Has procured my soul's salvation.

- 5 O my God, my rock and tower,
Grant that in Your death I trust,
Knowing death has lost its power
Since You crushed it in the dust.
Savior, let Your agony
Ever help and comfort me;
When I die be my protection,
Light and life and resurrection.

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Opening Responsory

Jesus Christ, You are the Light of the World

Sung by Cantors

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Cantor: Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world,
The light no darkness can overcome.
Stay with us now, for it is evening,
And the day is almost over.
Let your light scatter the darkness,
And shine within your people

Evening Hymn

Joyous Light

All Sing

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1.) Joy-ous light of heav'n-ly glo - ry, lov - ing
2.) In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the
3.) You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev - 'ry

4
glow of God's own face, you who sing cre - a - tion's
blaz - ing sun of dawn, in the light of peace and
7 danc - ing star of night, make us shine with gen - tle

10
sto - ry, shine on ev - 'ry land and race. Now as
wis - dom, we can hear your qui - et song. Love that
jus - tice, let us each re - flect your light. Might - y

13
eve - ing falls a - round us, we shall raise our songs to
fills the night with won - der, love that warms the wea - ry
God of all cre - a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our

16
you. God of day - break, God of shad - ows, come and
soul, love that bursts all chains a - sun - der, set us
way, lov - ing Spir - it of sal - va - tion, lead us

light our hearts a - new.
free and make us whole.
on to end - less day.

Evening Thanksgiving

Sung Responsively

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Cantor: May God be with you all.

All Sing: Musical notation for the phrase 'And al - so with you.' It consists of a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).

And al - so with you.

Cantor: Let us sing our thanks to God.

All Sing: Musical notation for the phrase 'It is right to give God thanks and praise.' It consists of a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Cantor: Blessed are you, Creator of the universe,
From old you have led your people by night and day.
May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright,
For your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways,
And you are the light and life of all creation. Amen.

Psalmody

Psalm 20 (spoken)

P The LORD answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you! May he send you help from the sanctuary, and give you support from Zion.
May he remember all your offerings, and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices.
May he grant you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your plans.

C May we shout for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God set up our banners.

P May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

C Now I know that the LORD will help his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with mighty victories by his right hand.

P Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses, C but our pride is in the name of the LORD our God.

P They will collapse and fall,

C but we shall rise and stand upright.

P Give victory to the king, O LORD; C answer us when we call.

P The LORD answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you! May he send you help from the sanctuary, and give you support from Zion.
May he remember all your offerings, and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices.
May he grant you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your plans.

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C but we shall rise and stand upright.

P Give victory to the king, O LORD;

C answer us when we call.

Gloria Patri

sung to Gethsemane 77 77 77 (Chief of Sinners)

Glory to the Father be,
And to Christ, eternally.
Glory to the Spirit raise.
Join all nature in her praise:
From creation's ancient shore
Unto life forevermore.

Stand

Reading

Luke 23:32–43

³²Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴And Jesus said, **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”** And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³And he said to him, **“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”**

Sit

Theme Hymn

(sung to LSB 449 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded)

The voices of the Passion,
Those words from ancient days—
What message do they fashion
As on your cross I gaze?
In words that once were spoken,
In speech now overheard,
Grant me, O Lord, this token:
To hear your living Word!

Sermonic Introduction

P Three men died that day. Our focus, of course, is on the cross in the center, on the Savior who gave his life for the life of the world, for every one of us. In some ways he was very ALONE in his suffering: No one could fully share what he endured. Even today, no one can even fully comprehend the weight of sin, the depth of despair, the responsibility of redemption. He was very alone in his death. No one else could have done it; no one else can even share it with him.

Yet, in another sense he was not alone. "He was numbered among the transgressors," Isaiah had prophesied centuries before. And so he was. Three men died that day.

Oh, I'll grant you he was also surrounded by more "savory" types: The "good people" of the day--religious folk, society leaders, representatives of government--of law and order. They jeered at him in his dying ... which made him all the more ALONE ... or at least at a distance.

But it was the two thieves (of all people--for three men died that day) who were the closest, not only in location, but also in situation. They were dying.

The other folks down there were dying, too, of course. We all are, though we often forget that ... until we're brought up short by something like a cross on a hill ... or three of them.

Those two were the closest. If we could have overheard their dying words, what do you suppose they might have said?

Soldier (shouting, from a distance) Centurion! Centurion! The one in the middle is dead already.
(pause) Yeah, he's really dead.

Left Well, my pious praying friend, there goes your hope.

Right (groggy) Huh? What do you mean?

Left He's dead.

Right Dead?

Left Your Messiah on the middle cross. He's dead.

Right I know that. I heard him cry out and breathe his last. That was a while ago, I think. What time is it?

Left What difference does it make? It's time to die, that's what time it is ... die, like he did.

Right (almost to himself) He's dead. He was the first to die.

Left Yeah, they just ran a spear through him; didn't you see?

Right No, I'm having trouble seeing anything.

Left Well, I saw it. They ran a spear through him. Blood and water came out, already separated.

Right A spear?

Left We should be so lucky, huh? (shouting) HEY, SOLDIERS! WHY DON'T YOU RUN A SPEAR THROUGH ME? ... COME ON, YOU ROMAN PIGS! WHY DON'T YOU FINISH THE JOB? SPEAR ME! KILL ME! RUN ME THROUGH! (then sobbing, much quieter) Let me die. Oh, please, let me die. (recovering) I don't want to die. I want to live. (growing louder) Pull me down from this cross and put a spear in my hands, you herd of swine, and I'd show you how to use it! COME ON, KILL ME! Or take me down from this cross. TAKE ME DOWN FROM THIS CROSS!!!

Soldier (shouting from background, during the thief's rant) Aw, shut up and die! (pause) Turn it off, you jerk! (pause) Yeah, sure you would! (pause) Yaaaaa!

Right That's what you said to him too, wasn't it?

Left (*sarcastically*) Who, your great Messiah?

Right (*softly, reverently*) Yes, my great Messiah.

Left (*still sarcastic*) Your king? "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"?

Right He is a king.

Left He *was* a king, you mean. He's dead.

Right He *IS* a king.

Left Then where in God's name is his kingdom?

Right That's exactly where it is.

Left Huh?

Right "In God's name." "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." You were there last Sunday with the rest of us. You joined the parade. Seems to me you were waving branches and shouting with the rest of the crowd.

Left But he was *alive* then ... and so were we. And there was still *hope*.

Right There still is hope.

Left (*resigned*) No, there isn't. He's dead and we're dying, and for all we tried to change it, the Romans are still in charge. If Israel is ever to be free, we won't live to see it.

Right (*surprised*) "If Israel is ever free"? Is that all you can think of?

Left What else is there?

Right (*pause*) Paradise.

Left (*exploding*) Paradise! Oh, come on!

Right "Today you will be with me in Paradise," he said to me.

Left Yeah, I heard him. Fat lot of good that's going to do.

Right Well, I believe him.

Left Well, I don't

Right What *do* you believe in then?

Left I believe in *me*, that's what. I believe in "numero uno."

Right But you're spiked to a cross.

Left So is he.

Right But we deserve to be. We're getting exactly what we deserve. But he was innocent.

Left (*sneering*) And look what it got him. If you're going to be crucified, you might as well be guilty.

Right Wouldn't it be better to be innocent?

Left Too late for that now.

Right Is it?

Left What do you mean? We were tried and convicted and now we're being executed. Guilty ... innocent ... what difference does it make? We're dying.

Right It *could* make a difference.

Left (*sneering*) What difference?

Right (*after a pause*) Don't you fear God?

Left (*incredulous*) GOD??? What does God have to do with it?

Right Well, for one thing, you're about to meet him ... face to face ... any minute now. Seems to me "guilty or innocent" should make all the difference in the world.

Left Shut up, will you. I don't have any time for God.

Right Do you have time for anything else?

Left Look, don't try to hang that guilty number on *me*!

Right Why? Aren't you guilty?

Left NO!!! We were *right* in what we were doing!

Right Were we?

Left Yes, we were! What is more right than seeking freedom? Than overcoming tyranny? Than throwing off the bonds of oppression and letting our people be

free again?

Right Free for what?

Left What do you mean?

Right What did you intend to use that freedom for?

Left (*flustered for a moment*) Why ... why to make the world a better place to live in, of course.

Right For whom?

Left Why, for us, of course. For Israel.

Right But mostly for you, right? "Numero uno"?

Left So what's wrong with that?

Right (*getting upset*) What's wrong? What's wrong with murdering people? What's wrong with stealing? What's wrong with anger and slander and hatred?

Left (*loudly*) Well, they did it to us!

Right And so we did it to them. Is *that* what makes it right or wrong? Who does it to whom?

Left (*exasperated*) But we were oppressed!

Right So we make that right by becoming oppressors? Does that suddenly change the verdict from guilty to innocent?

Left (*really upset*) That's the way the system works. That's the way *everybody* does it.

Right (*more softly*) He didn't.

Left (*mocking*) Sure.

Right He really was innocent.

Left And look what it got him.

Right Look what "guilty" got us!

Left So what's the difference? Are you going to say he died with dignity and we die with shame? Look, buddy, a third cross on the hill doesn't look too dignified to me.

Right No, he died with more than dignity. He died with faith.

Left (*upset*) With *faith*? Look, *I* had faith. I believed ... I really did. I believed we were right. I believed we had a cause. I believed we could make a difference.

Right (*softly*) But did you believe in God?

Left (*more upset*) God? What does God have to do with it?

Right Everything.

Left Nothing.

Right (*insistent*) EVERYTHING!!!

Left Well, where is your precious God then, if you're so all-fired sure that he's so terribly involved?

Right (*pause*) Right there, between us.

Left Him?

Right Yes, him.

Left Oh, come on. If he was God, why didn't he get down off the cross and save himself? Why didn't he exercise that almighty power and *do something*?

Right (*pause*) I believe he did. I'm not sure exactly what or why, but I believe that right here ... on this hill, as we hung here and watched ... God did something.

Left (*sneering*) He died.

Right Yes, that's what he did. He ... died ... right here with us.

Left So what good is *that* going to do?

Right It's done something for *me*.

Left Like what?

Right Well, for one thing, it's shown me how wrong I was. It's given me a chance to do something you haven't done, even in the face of death: To *confess* my wrong, to face up to God ... and life, my life, and what I've done with it ... what I haven't. And to see what *he* could do with a life, and real life, the kind of life God intended for all of us. It's given me faith that he really *is* involved, and that he cares ... even about the likes of me.

Left If he cares so much, why doesn't he save you?

Right (*pause*) He has.

Left What???

Right "Today you will be with me in paradise," he said. And I believe him.

Left How can you be sure?

Right How can you?

Left (*getting angry*) Look, I'm sure!

Right Are you?

Left I'm sure we were right and they were wrong.

Right But are you sure about God? Are you sure enough to die?

Left YES!!!

Soldier (*shouting, from a distance*) All right! We've got our orders to get this over with. Break their legs!

Left (*shouting and screaming*) NO!!! I don't want to die! I'm not ready to die! I'm afraid to die! No, don't do it! SAVE ME!!! HELP ME!!! Aaaaaaaaaahhhhh!!!

Right (*with calm assurance*) "Lord, remember me when you come in your kingly power."

Sermonic Conclusion

P *And so they died. We don't know whether they really said precisely all that, to be sure, but on the basis of what we do know, we can say that they are quite typical. We must all die as they did.*

We may go seeking, even yet, to justify ourselves. There's a lot of that going around, although I'm not sure we always recognize that kind of thing to be mocking the Savior and what he has to offer, joining the crowds at the foot of the cross (or the thief over there) ... but it is.

The other choice is to die trusting in the mercy and the promise of Jesus the Savior who, in his terrible aloneness--the aloneness of his agony which he endured precisely to make us right in the sight of God--chose not to die and gain the victory of Paradise ALONE, but to include another in what lay ahead (both of them, if they would have it).

Even alone, Jesus was WITH US in his dying ... to assure us that when it comes time for OUR dying--the most "alone" thing each of us can ever do--he will be with us THERE as well. The question, as always, is: "Will we be with him?" "We were buried with Christ by Baptism into death," the Bible assures us, "united with him in a death like his, to be united with him in a resurrection like his."

Three men died that day. ALL men (and women, too) die some day. The difference, of course, is the One in the center.

Theme Hymn

(sung to LSB 449 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded)

When my last night is falling
And darkness 'round me lies,
Lord, let me hear you calling
To blessed Paradise.
There may I stand before you,
Your majesty to see.
My King, I now implore you:
O Lord, remember me!

Offering

Stand

Prayers

P O almighty and eternal God, we are frail and time-bound children of the dust,
destined to return to the earth from which, by your creative power, we sprang.

C We are alone, and fearful in our loneliness--afraid to die, and yet not able, in our
sinfulness, to live alone without your sin-forgiving love to cleanse our souls and
make us right with you, despite the well-meant, misdirected error of our ways.

P Be with us in our loneliness, O God, as Christ your Son was with us in his life and
death.

C Forgive our sins, and redirect our zeal, that day by day we pray, "Thy kingdom
come," and show that kingdom in our lives of service and obedient love

P until our final day on earth, when we shall see your kingdom come indeed and know
that we are not alone,

C but then--as always--in the company of him who left his throne on high that we might
share in Paradise,

P in whose redeeming name we join to pray:

C Our Father ...

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Final Blessing

Sung Responsively

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Cantor: Let us bless our God:
Praise and thanks to you.
May God, Creator, bless us and keep us,
May Christ be ever light for our lives,
May the Spirit of Love be our guide and path for all of our days.



Closing Hymn

435 Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

- 1 Come to Calv'ry's holy mountain,
Sinners, ruined by the fall;
Here a pure and healing fountain
Flows for you, for me, for all,
In a full, perpetual tide,
Opened when our Savior died.
- 2 Come in poverty and meanness,
Come defiled, without, within;
From infection and uncleanness,
From the leprosy of sin,
Wash your robes and make them white;
Ye shall walk with God in light.
- 3 Come in sorrow and contrition,
Wounded, impotent, and blind;
Here the guilty, free remission,
Here the troubled, peace may find.
Health this fountain will restore;
They that drink shall thirst no more.

- 4 They that drink shall live forever;
'Tis a soul-renewing flood.
God is faithful; God will never
Break His covenant of blood,
Signed when our Redeemer died,
Sealed when He was glorified.

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