

Daily Devotions for Home and Family
For the Week of The Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 18 through March 24

[ARTICLE IV. JUSTIFICATION]

²² We for our part maintain that God requires the righteousness of reason. Because of God's command, honorable works commanded in the Decalogue should be performed, according to Gal. 3:24, "The law is a custodian," and 1 Tim. 1:9, "The law is laid down for the lawless." For God wants this civil discipline to restrain the unspiritual, and to preserve it he has given laws, learning, teaching, governments, and penalties. ²³ To some extent, reason can produce this righteousness by its own strength, though it is often overwhelmed by its natural weakness and by the devil, who drives it to open crimes. ²⁴ We freely give this righteousness of reason its due credit; for our corrupt nature has no greater good than this, as Aristotle correctly says, "Neither the evening star nor the morning star is more beautiful than righteousness."²⁴ God even honors it with material rewards. Nevertheless, it ought not be praised at the expense of Christ. ²⁵ For it is false that by our works we merit the forgiveness of sins.

²⁶ It is false, too, that men are accounted righteous before God because of the righteousness of reason. ²⁷ It is false, too, that by its own strength reason can love God above all things and keep his law, truly fear him, truly believe that he hears prayer, willingly obey him in death and in his other visitations, and not covet. But reason can produce civil works. ²⁸ It is false, too, and a reproach to Christ, that men who keep the commandments of God outside a state of grace do not sin.

²⁹ We have proof for this position of ours not only in the Scriptures, but also in the Fathers. Against the Pelagians, Augustine maintains at length that grace is not given because of our merits. In *Nature and Grace* he says: "If natural capacity, with the help of free will, is in itself sufficient both for discovering how one ought to live, and also for leading a holy life, then 'Christ died to no purpose' (Gal. 2:21), and therefore also 'the stumbling-block of the cross has been removed' (Gal. 5:11). ³⁰ Why then may I not myself exclaim, too—yes, I will exclaim and chide them with a Christian's sorrow—'You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace' (Gal. 5:4); for 'being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish your own, you did not submit to God's righteousness' (Rom. 10:3). For even as Christ is 'the end of the law,' so likewise he is the Saviour of man's corrupted nature, for righteousness to 'every one who has faith' (Rom. 10:4)." ³¹ John 8:36 says, "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." Therefore reason cannot free us from our sins or merit for us the forgiveness of sins. And in John 3:5 it is written, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God." But if we must be born again through the Holy Spirit, then the righteousness of reason does not justify us before God, it does not keep the law. ³² And Rom. 3:23 says, "All fall short of the glory of God," that is, they lack the wisdom and righteousness of God which acknowledge and glorify him. And Rom. 8:7, 8, "The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." ³³ These words are so clear that they do not need an acute understanding but only attentive listening—to use the words that Augustine uses in discussing this matter. ~ Ap. of the Confession, Art. IV:22-33

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

*Pray and confess out loud as much from this order as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate.
Learn by heart the catechism and hymn each week.*

Invocation

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

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ☩ everlasting.
Amen.

Psalm – 119:9-16

The Catechism – *The Lord's Prayer – First Petition*

Hallowed by Thy name.

What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God's name kept holy?

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is rightly taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

Daily Readings:

Sunday, March 18 – Mark 14:12-31

Monday, March 19 – Mark 14:32-52

Tuesday, March 20 – Mark 14:53-72

Wednesday, March 21 – Mark 15:1-15

Thursday, March 22 – Mark 15:16-32

Friday, March 23 – Mark 15:33-47

Saturday, March 24 – Mark 16:1-20

Meditation (*If you are using another devotional tool, such as Portals of Prayer, this would be an appropriate place to insert it*)

Prayers

Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

O Lord, turn your eyes in mercy towards us...behold, visit, and relieve all Your servants who stand in need of prayer:

St. John's Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church-
Missouri Synod
The Rev. Matthew Harrison
The Atlantic District
The Rev. Derek Lecakes
Concordia Theological
Seminary, Ft. Wayne
The Rev. Lawrence Rast
Concordia Seminary, St.
Louis
The Rev. Dale Meyer
Concordia College – New
York
The Rev. John Nunes
The Concordia University
System
Lutheran Parochial Schools
Our Sister Churches
All Pastors, Missionaries,
and Church Workers
The United States of
America
President Donald Trump
Governor Andrew Cuomo
U.S. Military Personnel
All Fire, Police, and EMS
workers and volunteers

Judy Fisher
Alice Dreher
Thelma Stegemann
Irene Jones
Florence Vollmer
Susan Marotta
Stacy Harris
Jim Sclafani
Andrew Brooks
Lorraine Keller
Elizabeth Gaiser
Ernie Getzelman
Louise Blydenburgh
Thelma DeJoseph
Al DeJoseph
Richard Meltsner
Madison Coffey
Peter DiMartini
William Rossiter
Larry Dimiceli
Suzanne Weil
Frances Flanagan
Richard Duffy
Marge Glass
Bubby Verspoor
Aline Duval
Donald Duval
Lenny Kiesling

Rob Arrasate
Josephine Lowth
James McMorris
Jim Arrasate
Anita Grube
Lee Sclafani
Michael Seeger
Kathy Schneemann
Karl Ott
Don Lang
Deanna Schwartzman
Nancy Galasso
Diane Dadone
Allison Ruddick
Donald Smith
William Schultz
Joe Sanzano
Philip Latham
Pat Simmons
Cathy Ochs
The Rev. Brian & Kristin
Noack
The Rev. Jim & Yasuyo
Coffey
Alexandria Rappe
Ann Inoue

Look upon them with your grace and favor; grant them comfort and a sure confidence in You; defend them from all danger, and keep them in perpetual peace and safety; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Morning or Evening Prayer

(Morning) I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

(Evening) I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Hymn for the Week – *My Song Is Love Unknown*

LSB #430, st. 5

They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they save,
The Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful He
To suffering goes
That He His foes
From thence might free.

Closing Blessing

- L** Let us bless the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Looking ahead for Palm/Passion Sunday:

Zechariah 9:9-12 Philippians 2:5-11 John 12:12-19 Mark 14 & 15