

February 4, 2024
HYMNS FOR FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
LBW #400 “God, Whose Almighty Word”
WOV #731 “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”
WOV #673 “I’m so Glad, Jesus Lifted Me”

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:21-31

The Judeans in exile have a good reason to be hopeful: the one who will bring them to freedom is the God who created the world, the God who subdues the rulers of the earth and gives strength to those who are weary.

²¹Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;

²³who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.

²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the Lord,

and my right is disregarded by my God”?
28Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
29He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
30Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
31but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

PSALM: 147:1-11, 20c

R The Lord heals the brokenhearted. (Ps. 147:3)

1Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God!
How pleasant it is to honor God with praise!
2**The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem,
and gathers the exiles of Israel.**
3The Lord heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.
4**The Lord counts the number of the stars
and calls them all ¹ by their names. R**
5Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
there is no limit to God’s wisdom.
6**The Lord lifts ^{up} the lowly,
but casts the wicked to the ground.**
7Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make music upon the harp to our God,
8**who covers the heavens with clouds
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon the
mountains. R**
9God provides food for the cattle
and for the young ravens when they cry.
10**God is not impressed by the might of a horse,
and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner,**
11but finds pleasure in those who fear the Lord,
in those who await God’s steadfast love. 20c Hallelujah! **R**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

God entrusted Paul with the responsibility of bringing the gospel to diverse people. Hence the focus of Paul’s ministry is not his own rights or privileges as an apostle but the privilege of serving God by freely sharing the good news of Christ with others.

¹⁶If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:29-39

Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals people and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.

²⁹As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A Everlasting God, you bring your healing power to the church. Give your church a spirit of unity and prayer, that we discern your way for us in the world. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

A Creator of the ends of the earth, you make the grass grow and send rain for the soil. Bring your creation into harmony and balance. Give animals their food and provide healthy shelter for your people. Inspire us to honor the miraculous beauty of all you have made. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

A God without equal, your steadfast love endures forever. Bring the leaders, elected officials, and peacekeepers of our towns and countries into understanding and unity. Guide them to serve with compassion and understanding. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

A God who strengthens, you lift up with your hand any who are suffering. Heal those who are brokenhearted and strengthen the weak and all in need (*especially*). God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

A God who gives power to the faint, challenge us to share the faith stories of what God has done in our lives. Open us to receive the unique ways God is at work in your people, especially those whose perspectives challenge our own. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A God who calls each star by name, we remember all who have died. Shelter all who mourn with your mercy and care, and give us hope in your promised salvation. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

