PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK  Psalm 98:1-2, 3-4
Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Alleluia! His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. Alleluia! His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

PRAY THE 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.

SAY THE 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 Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have grasped 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.
THEME OF THE WEEK: He is Risen to Proclaim the Truth
For the next Sundays, our Lord’s detailed teaching on the Holy Spirit will be heard. Today is the first and greatest of these. What the Holy Spirit does, and for what purpose, He convicts us of sin by His Law, because we by nature believe only in ourselves. Freed from self-righteousness, He then convinces us constantly of the true righteousness we have received in Christ, who reconciled us to the Father. He does this work in the Gospel that is preached and the Sacraments that seal it to us. Lastly, He explains what we do not see: the devil, the world, and our flesh already defeated and judged. In all this He guides us into the truth—not something new about ourselves, but something constant: Jesus Christ. Thus, the song of joy and victory begins to be sung even in this world, even before the last day, which is now made certain for us.

SC apit: John 15:5-15—Also the Holy Spirit, the Advocate
The Advocate must convince and convict, as all lawyers do. That is how Jesus explains the work of the Holy Spirit. His first work is more like a prosecutor than a defender: He convicts you of your own sin, rooted in unbelief. But exposing this, He disabuses you of any hope for self-righteousness. His second, gracious work is to convict and convince you of a new righteousness that avails: Christ’s, since He has gone to the Father as the sacrifice for your sins. Lastly, you must be convinced still of the fruits of this salvation: the devil, with all his power against you, is crushed. Lord, guide me into Your truth. Amen.

SC apit: Psalm 82—Gods Among Mere Mortals...or Not
The Lord establishes earthly authorities. The purpose is the preservation of this world by means of the Law—just judgments, protection from wickedness, and upholding what is good. But civil righteousness and human authority will never save this world. Only the Gospel does that. God, pictured in this Psalm as sitting in the midst of a council of kings whom He addresses as “gods,” gives a vivid reminder: even the kings die like any other mortal man. Let us never put our faith in this world’s authorities, even as we honor them. Lord, save Your people and bless those You have placed over us. Amen.

SC apit: James 1:16-21—Anger from Men or Righteousness from God?
Fallen flesh brings it brings every good thing out of its own doings. We think we know how to respond “righteously.” That is why we love to be angry: anger is me at my most righteous. James does not want us to be deceived. Our anger does not produce the righteousness of God, far from it—it’s nearly always self-righteousness. Everything we have comes from the Father as a gift. It comes from His stability, His eternal Word, which both created and redeemed us. Hearing with meekness is what the flesh hates: but it alone makes us righteous.

Lord, still my anger and give me ears quick to hear. Amen.

SC apit: John 8:21-36—Abiding in Sin or in His Word
God did not send His Son to condemn the world, but to save it. When He was lifted up on the cross, God was clearly seen: righteous not to condemn, but to save. There our sins were taken away from us. But what if God, dead on the cross, is rejected? What if this truth will not be received? Then we die not in His Word, free from our sins, but stuck in our sins. No one can remove their own sins by imitating Him. We must receive it. To hear the Word and trust in the crucified God is to have truth, freedom, life, and certainty. Lord, abide in me with Your Word, that I may abide in You. Amen.

SC apit: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21—The World is Reconciled
St. Paul speaks about the objective, “once-for-all” nature of Christ’s atoning death. All punishment has been borne. All flesh is reconciled to God. Through one act, one man, all men are declared righteous. Thus, the Church has an attitude different than the world. We not only respect all people as created “fellow-men;” we regard them as those for whom Christ died. And the Word of reconciliation dare not be preached as a future possibility (if you decide for it...) but as a finished reality: You are reconciled; therefore, be reconciled! Lord, thank You for Your great salvation in the death of Jesus. Amen.

SC apit: Psalm 126—Mouths Filled with Laughter
The work of God in the past ought to give us confidence. When we consider the Lord’s mercy to His people, this is the seed of our hope. Chiefly are we bound to praise Him for the glorious resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, who rolled back the captivity of death and brought life and immortality to light. In suffering, we are not afraid to pray that the Lord relieve us. In death, we plant the bodies of our loved ones into the earth, but nevertheless in confident hope: The Lord will also raise them, and we will rejoice on the last day with unmingled joy.


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