Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice! Alleluia.
Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide Your face from me. Alleluia.
The Lord is my light and my salvation;* whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life;* of whom shall I be afraid?
Teach me Your way, O Lord,* do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,* and such as breathe out violence.

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 MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
Morning: 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 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 Ascended to Bless His People

Jesus ascends and you are blessed. St. Paul describes it in Ephesians 4:7-16. He leads a procession of captives up from their bondage to guilt, shame, and the grave. He leads them by faith in His promises of triumph. To publish those liberating promises, He gives the church pastors, the Gospel, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar. Thanks be to God. Jesus who ascended is the Son who descended from the Father’s right hand, not to judge and condemn, but to ransom sinners. In Ascension, Jesus enrones the testimony of His atoning blood and our human nature “far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10).

SCRIPTURE: John 15:26-16:4 Comfort through Promises of Suffering

Our Salvation is enthroned at the Father’s right hand. Nothing can shake it. Our resurrected and ascended Lord conforms all things to His gracious will, the same will that conformed to the Father’s decree to save you by His blood. As His gospel continues to be preached and believed, His enemies are being crushed under His pierced feet. They struggle and fight back as they’re crushed. But don’t be alarmed. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking that just because the gospel can be opposed, it can be defeated. Jesus says, “I have said all these things to you, that when the Spirit comes, he will testify of Me. And you also will testify because you have been with Me from the beginning” (John 15:26-27). Keep me in the Helper’s testimony, O Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 93 Trustworthy Decrees

What’s the comfort of hearing about the Lord’s enthronement? It seems like a truism that God’s throne is glorious. How could it be otherwise? Indeed, considering our rebelliousness against God’s Law, hearing about divine majesty ought to make us afraid. Christ, your brother according to the flesh, has ascended. Because He ascended with the marks of your redemption on His glorified body, God’s throne has turned from the world’s foundation of fear to joy. The decrees of that throne, from before the foundation of the world, have been for your salvation. You have an advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). Jesus decrees, “I have died to save these saints.” Heavenly Father, You have manifested Your glory in mercy, and therefore I am saved. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:1-13 Promise Fulfilled

Luke concluded his gospel with this promise from Jesus, “And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Now we’re seeing that promise fulfilled powerfully and publicly. Before, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on the apostles so their forgiveness would be God’s forgiveness (John 20:21-22). Now the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son to give the apostles boldness and the languages to take that forgiveness to the ends of the world. Take comfort in the fact that Jesus keeps His promises. Whether He promises the Spirit for the apostles or eternal life through your baptism, Jesus is faithful. His Word is true. Grant me faith in Your promises, O Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 36:25-27 A Promise of Baptism and Its Power

The Old Testament is full of promises about Jesus’ church. Ezekiel tells us about the regenerative effects of Christian baptism. Through God’s name bound to water, you are washed clean, not merely from dirt, but from the stains of unbelief. Baptism robs you of your false gods and sets your heart on the true and life-giving God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism gives you living faith. Before you didn’t know your sin or your salvation. Now, through baptism, you know that though you were lost in sin, God has made you an heir of eternal life. Before you pursued the vain passions of the flesh. Now, because you’ve been saved by faith, you gladly desire to think and do God’s law. Grant me to be renewed daily in heart and spirit by baptism. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: John 17:20-26 The Unity of the Holy Christian Church

What binds us together as Christians? How are we supposed to define our unity? Is it predicated on loyalty to some guy at the top? That’s how it is in the Pope’s church. Is it predicated on saying nice things about Jesus? They say nice things about Him in Mormonism and Islam too. Then what is it? Our unity is in public preaching of God’s Word which makes us holy (John 17:17). Our unity is by faith in the unshakable and unchangeable Word (17:20-21). Not only do we find unity with one another as Christians. Faith is unity and communion with God the Father through the Son. The Pope, Mormonism, and Islam don’t know anything about this. Grant Your church the perfect unity of faith, O Lord, that we may be one as You are one. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:29-39 More than Conquerors

When you’re discouraged by your sins, when you feel pain, when the whole world is turned against you, when you wonder what God’s plan is for you, open your Bible and turn to these verses which you should highlight and underline. Put a bookmark on this page. You suffer because you were predestined to be conformed to the image of the crucified Son. But in being predestined, you have also been called, made righteous, and glorified. God is for you, not against you. Your sufferings are not condemnation. Your pain isn’t God’s displeasure. No charge stands against you because Jesus intercedes for you. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus, your Lord. Thank you, O Lord, that I am a conqueror through Jesus Who loved me. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 97 Righteousness and Justice are the Foundation of His Throne

God’s throne in heaven is terrible for the evil and wicked. Though they rebel for a time, “fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around.” But for the daughters of Judah and Zion, the penitent who have called on God’s mercy in their sin, they discover the righteousness that comes by faith. They are blessed with the justice that God has planted by Jesus’ atoning cross and enthroned at the ascension. Jesus’ works to save sinners, His powerful Word that brings joy to sorrowing souls, these are the tidings of God’s reign that lets the earth rejoice and the coastlands be glad. This is how He preserved the lives of His saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Rejoice in the Lord. O you righteous, and give thanks to His holy name. Amen.

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