PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 34:3b; 34:17; 48:14a; 78:1-3, 4b
Say to my soul, “I am your salvation.”* The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears. He delivers them out of all their troubles.* For this is God, our God forever and ever. Give ear, O my people, to my law:* incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable:* I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known,* and our fathers have told us. We will tell the generation to come the praises of the Lord,* and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

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 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: Resisting the Flesh Led by the Devil

The Lord comes to those corrupted and paralyzed by sin’s venom. He says, “take heart, your sins are forgiven.” He comes with authority as God’s Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world. He redeems us by offering Himself as the price. He joins us to Himself in Baptism, making us His body and turning us toward one another for help and care. He calls us out as a unique people, peculiar and hated to the world, but beloved to God. As we consider the great opposition to Christ and His Church, we take comfort in His promises which no one can wrest from us: His absolution, His redemption, our salvation.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:1-8—Astonishing Authority on Earth

The greatest authority is the authority to forgive sins. God alone possesses it. But the blood of His Son has won it for us. On account of that sacrifice, all authority to forgive has been given to the Son. And what astounds the crowds is that this authority has been given to men. Jesus absolves not only as God, by it. But the blood of His Son has won it for us. On account of that sacrifice, all Christ and His Church, we take comfort in His promises which no one can wrest from us: His absolution, His redemption, our salvation.

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:145-152—Watch Out

The morning keeps watch for the enemy, but a watch has already been kept: the prayer of Christians. This Psalm is not talking about midnight Matins, but about the priority of faith. Before it is necessary to worry about our enemies, we ought instead to devote ourselves to the Lord’s Word in prayer and faith. In the defense of the faith, knowledge of the truth is the best protection. In defense against evils of body and soul, God’s promises are not only stronger but prior. They have been founded from of old. They are steadfast. O Lord, deliver us by Your Word. Amen.

TUE

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:22-28—Corrupting, Deceitful Desires

The former self is corrupt through deceitful desires. What a perfect definition of original sin. It corrupts like a virus, using the best things for evil purposes. Its source and tragedy is rooted in our will, our desires—do not mistake your pleasure for God’s. And it is deceitful: what we think will please does not, or does not last. Lastly, Paul speaks to us Christians and calls us continually to put off this old sinful self. Instead, we must put on again the clothes of Baptism: Christ’s true righteousness and holiness. O Christ, create in me a clean heart and give no place for the devil. Amen.

WED

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 44:21-23— Redeemer of Israel and All

The song of Israel’s redemption echoes in sky, depths, forest, and mountain. “The Lord has done it.” Indeed, when Jesus cried out “It is finished” from the cross, all was accomplished. His promises through the sons of Abraham was fulfilled. Sins are now evaporated like clouds and mist, not merely by a whim or thought, but by the blood of His New Testament. We gentiles may also apply these words to ourselves, because in Christ we have become the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). Those whom the Lord formed, He has redeemed. The price is paid. The Lord has done it. Lord, turn me again to You, my Redeemer. Amen.

THU

SCRIPTURE: John 1:35-51—Agnus Dei, the Lamb of God

John’s most famous sermon is never heard as the Gospel reading on Sunday: that is because it is sung every Sunday instead: “O Christ, the Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world!” The man Jesus is God’s Lamb, the one He provides to take away the world’s sin. He is God in the flesh, whom Abraham saw and in whom He rejoiced. The disciples of John must peel away and follow Him, and they do. They bring others to Him also. They seek to stay with Jesus, and that is the needful thing. So we add these prayers to John’s confession: Lord, have mercy upon us and grant us Your peace. Amen.

FRI

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27—The Body of Christ

The Church is the body of Christ, and we are her members. We are part of a whole body, working together because you are joined to Christ, the head, through Baptism. Rejoicing and suffering are to be done together. What is weak or struggling is to be covered and cared for by what is strong. All is to be done to the glory and at the command of the head, for the good of the whole body. There is much to ponder in this simple symbol made reality by Christ. Lord, join me in love to my fellow Christians also. Amen.

SAT


If the world hates you, know that it hated Jesus first. They would love you if you were theirs: they hate you because you are Christ’s. These are blessed truths for those who suffer or even, like Simon and Jude, face death for the sake of Christ and His Word. They are warnings for us also: it is necessary that we are and remain strange to the world. If we are its friends, that is the sign we have returned to the world rather than being called out of it by Christ. On the other hand, there is this promise: those who keep Jesus’ word will also keep ours. Lord, give me saintly conviction to persevere in Your truth. Amen.