

Week of Quasimodo Geniti

First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.



Weekly Catechism section: Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Luther's Small Catechism)

Hymn of the Week: O Sons and Daughters of the King (TLH 208); or: Like the Golden Sun Ascending (TLH 207)

Monday - Introit (1 Peter 2:2; Psalm 81:1, 7, 10, 16)

Read 1 Peter 2.

Quasimodo Geniti means "Like newborn babes," the first words of our Introit for this morning. These words come from 1 Peter 2:2, and they express the faith that Jesus bestows on us by his Word. Faith is passively receiving the salvation Christ gives us in his Word. This is the faith that Jesus teaches Thomas about. "Blessed are those who do not see yet believe," he says. Those who hear the Word of God and keep it as their dearest treasure in both life and death are like newborn babes thirsting for that pure spiritual milk of God's Word.

This is why John wrote his account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. "These things were written," John says, "so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." This is why the entire Bible is written, just as St. Paul writes (Rom 15:4), "whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." The Word of God is given for our comfort. It is given to give us a clear conscience before God (1 Pet 3:21). This is what it means to have peace with God. And this is why Jesus declares after his resurrection, "Peace to you."

This is why God's Word is proclaimed. This is why Jesus rose from the dead. And this is what faith clings to. It clings to the peace we have with God, since we have been justified by Christ (Rom 5:1). Jesus appeared to Thomas because he needed to be a witness of the Resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). And yet Jesus willed that Thomas believe based upon the Word proclaimed to him by the other apostles. Even after his apostles witnessed his Resurrection, it was still Jesus' will that he would sustain them by his Word (John 17:17). So this is his will for

us, as we depend on it like infants depend on their mother's milk.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

Read Ezekiel 37.

God made a promise to the dead. He showed Ezekiel all the bones of those who were slain by the Assyrians as well as the Babylonians. Israel's bones were dried up. They lay dead in the ground. But God promised to put flesh back on them and give them breath again. When we confess our Lord's resurrection we are confessing the resurrection of all flesh and the life everlasting, which God promises to all Christians.

This world doesn't have much respect for the body. Of course, they often claim to, saying that a woman has the right to her own body, for example. But this is used to justify her dressing like she doesn't have a father who loves her, killing her child living in her womb, or poisoning her womb with chemicals in order to deny for herself the gift of children. They claim to value the body, yet only in so far as it satisfies their carnal lust. But God, as both the Creator and the Redeemer, honors the body. He created man both male and female, something denied by those who are guided by the demon that comes in the name of social progress and so called equal rights. Unlike these enthusiasts, who treat their own bodies as things to be used and controlled only to grow old and die, God desires that the body would live forever. He requires the body to die, not because he doesn't value it. Instead, he wants to purify it of the sin and perversion by which the devil and world corrupt it. This is why God didn't simply take the form of man. He actually became a man, eternally claiming for himself a body. His Son, in the flesh, bore the sin of the world in order to rescue us from the world's condemnation. And risen from the dead, he proves that the sin, which corrupts our flesh to death, must give way to righteousness and life. Our bodies are dying. Our bones will dry up. But the Holy One of God did not rot in the grave. He is risen. And this means that God speaks this Word to us who are dying. He speaks this Word to the dead: "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land." This is how we know that he is the Lord. Because, instead of exploiting the body with false dreams of freedom, he claims it as his own, and he honors it with life.

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Wednesday - Gradual

Read Psalm 81.

During the season of Easter the *Gradual* is sort of swallowed up by the *Alleluia verse*, which lengthens for the sake of this joyous season. Therefore, instead of studying the text set for the *Gradual*, it is good for us to consider the *Introit* again, specifically Psalm 81. This Psalm, written by the descendents of Asaph, is one of praise as well as rebuke from God. We remember God's great saving act of bringing his people out of the land of Egypt. So we praise him. But then the Psalmist takes a step back to listen to "a language I had not known." Here God begins to speak of his great mercy toward his people but that his people didn't heed his Word. His Word of grace is not comprehended by the self-righteous human nature. And yet, it is God's will to feed us with this Word.

"You called in trouble and I delivered you," God says, "I answered you in the secret place of thunder." This is the God whose salvation, mercy, and peace pass all understanding. He wants us simply to receive these words of grace from him. "Open your mouth," he says, "and I will fill it." But God laments that his people won't hear his Word. This is because we are all, by nature, born of the flesh. But as John teaches us in his Epistle, whoever is born of God overcomes the world. This is God's will toward us. Like newborn babes, he desires to feed us with the finest wheat and satisfy us with honey from the rock. He gives us the Word of our crucified and risen Savior. And he says, "Oh, that my people would hear me!" So hear him. Listen to his Word. He has good news to declare to you!

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Thursday - Epistle (1 John 5:4-10)

Read 1 John 5.

Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Our own choice can't overcome the world. Our own commitment to God can't overcome the world. St. John says that our faith is the victory, which overcomes the world. And why? Because this is what is born of God, and this is what clings to Christ, the Son of God, who has overcome the world with his own death (John 16:33). Faith doesn't come about from our own free will decision on our part. It rather comes from the Word of God (Rom 10:17). It is born of God. And if faith is born of God then it follows that it would cling to the only Begotten of God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Our goal isn't to separate ourselves from the world so that we aren't

carrying on with our business. God calls us to various duties in which we use worldly tools to serve our neighbor. So what is it in this world that must be overcome? It is the sin and temptation, which causes so many to fall away from God's mercy. Yet nothing that comes from man can overcome such evil, because the very sin, which infects the world, proceeds from the heart of man. And this gets at the heart of our trouble in this world. The pressure to fit in at the expense of denying the Lord who bought us continues to overcome many poor consciences. The deceit of vain glory and carnal pleasures, which we find all around us, tears us away from God's Word. We see even our own loved ones fall away because of such offenses. No one can stop it. Yet, St. John says that our faith overcomes it. This little mustard seed, which is often shaken by the false promises of this world, nevertheless overcomes all deceit when it rests firmly on Christ, our truth and salvation. This is he who was revealed in his baptism as the Son of God, who shed his blood to save us from condemnation, and who gives us his Holy Spirit as a guarantee to nurture us in this faith. His death took away our sins, and the Spirit bears witness to this when he baptizes us. He who believes, though he be faint before the world's pressures, has the very witness of God's salvation in himself. Therefore, born of Water and the Spirit, he overcomes all things.

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Matthew 28:7; John 20:26)

Read Matthew 28.

Our *Alleluia* comes from St. Matthew's Gospel and St. John's Gospel. Matthew records the angels telling the women at the tomb to tell the disciples that Jesus has risen and that he is going before them to Galilee. Then we sing a portion of what we hear from our Gospel lesson in John 20: "After eight days Jesus stood in the midst and said, 'Peace to you.'" First and foremost we repeat the most wonderful news of all: Christ is risen from the dead! But then we recount the promise that Jesus would go before his disciples to Galilee. This is how our Lord operates. He goes before us. As our substitute, he is the first-fruit from the dead, going before us through death and the grave so that he might be the firstborn among many brethren who rise with him. Notice that in Matthew's account of the many saints who rose from the dead when Jesus died, Matthew says that they didn't appear to anyone until after Jesus was raised. Jesus goes before us to conquer sin and death. And then his promise is that he would go before his disciples to Galilee. Here the prophesy of Isaiah 9 is fulfilled when he says that the land of

Naphtali and Zebulun, which had suffered terrible wrath from God through the Assyrians, have now seen a great light. Galilee of the nations beholds the child born of Mary and the Son given as a sacrifice to give us life. There he would meet his disciples and call them brethren, not merely children anymore. There the light of the gospel spills out from the borders of Israel into the nations.

But first Jesus appears to his disciples in Jerusalem. The gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the gentiles. First he appears in Jerusalem so that his disciples would believe the Scriptures. First he meets them in their fear under the law of bondage, the same bondage which the earthly Jerusalem continues to be under. And he sets them free with the peace of God. Then he goes before them to Galilee of the nations so that the whole world might hear this light and be saved. Christ goes before us so that when we awake he is already there with us saying, "Peace to you."

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Saturday - Gospel (John 10:19-31)

Read John 20.

Newborns are not afraid, at least not in the way that adults are afraid. They don't fret about all the different possible outcomes. They don't worry about tomorrow. All they want is to be fed, to be changed, to be given comfort. They want what they need right now. The disciples stood behind locked doors afraid that after killing their Master, the Jewish authorities would come after them as well. They fretted over the possibilities of what might happen should they go outside. But Jesus appeared in order to give them the true, spiritual food that he knew they needed. Luke records that Jesus sat down and ate in order to prove to them that he was not a spirit or a ghost. And just as the Jesus' resurrected body was nurtured by real food, so does Jesus nurture our souls with the true spiritual food of his Word. First, he declares peace to them. This is peace with God, which is the result of being righteous in his sight (Rom 5:1). He has established this peace by the blood of his cross (Col 1:20). He then gives them his Holy Spirit. This is all we need in this life. Because what does the Holy Spirit declare? He declares the forgiveness of sins to poor sinners, declaring them righteous and at peace with God for the sake of Christ who was put to death for our sins and raised again for our justification (Rom 4:25).

This is why Jesus entrusts his disciples with the duty to carry out the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the authority, which Christ has given to

his entire church, to everyone who has the Holy Spirit. It is the authority to forgive sins and to retain sins. Yes, this is entrusted to the Apostles and all ministers who are called to carry this out publicly. But this authority does not belong to one person or class within the church. This is the authority of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, anyone who has the Holy Spirit has the freedom of Christ to speak the truth at all times. Blessed are those who do not see but believe. Blessed are those who believe God's Word even if everyone in a position of authority denies it. To newborn babes and nursing infants God has prepared for himself praise. This is the peace that surpasses all understanding. With our risen Lord's Word, we need not be afraid.

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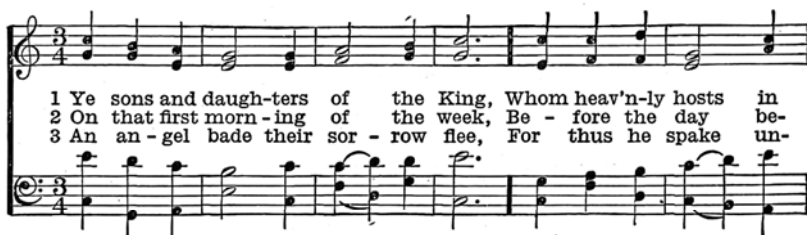
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Ye Sons and Daughters of the King

John 20
O filii et filiae
Author unknown, c. 1600
Tr., John M. Neale, 1851

B. B. B., with Alleluias

Gelobt sei Gott
Melchior Vulpius, 1609



1 Ye sons and daugh-ters of the King, Whom heav'n-ly hosts in
2 On that first morn-ing of the week, Be - fore the day be-
3 An an-gel bade their sor - row flee, For thus he spake un-



glo - ry sing, To - day the grave hath lost its sting:
gan to break, The Ma - rys went their Lord to seek:
to the three: "Your Lord is gone to Gal - i - lee."



Al - le - lu - ia! . . . Al - le - lu - ia! . . . Al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia! . . . Al - le - lu - ia! . . . Al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia! . . . Al - le - lu - ia! . . . Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

4 That night the Apostles met in fear,
Amidst them came their Lord most dear
And said: "Peace be unto you here":
Alleluia!

5 When Thomas afterwards had heard
That Jesus had fulfilled His word,
He doubted if it were the Lord:
Alleluia!

6 "Thomas, behold My side," saith He,
"My hands, My feet, My body, see;
And doubt not, but believe in Me":
Alleluia!

7 No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
"Thou art my Lord and God," he cried:
Alleluia!

The Sons and Daughters of the King

8 Blessed are they that have not seen
And yet whose faith hath constant been,
In life eternal they shall reign:
Alleluia!

9 On this most holy day of days
To God your hearts and voices raise
In laud and jubilee and praise:
Alleluia!

10 And we with holy Church unite,
As evermore is just and right,
In glory to the King of light:
Alleluia!

Like the Golden Sun Ascending

1 Like the golden sun ascending,
Breaking through the gloom of night,
On the earth his glory spending
So that darkness takes to flight,
Thus my Jesus from the grave
And death's dismal, dreadful cave
Rose triumphant Easter morning
At the early purple dawning.

2 Thanks to Thee, O Christ victorious!
Thanks to Thee, O Lord of life!
Death hath now no power o'er us,
Thou hast conquered in the strife.
Thanks because Thou didst arise
And hast opened Paradise!
None can fully sing the glory
Of the resurrection story.

3 For my heart finds consolation
And my fainting soul grows brave
When I stand in contemplation
At Thy dark and dismal grave;
When I see where Thou didst sleep
In death's dungeon dark and deep,
Yet didst break all bands asunder,
Must I not rejoice and wonder?

4 Though I be by sin o'ertaken,
Though I lie in helplessness,
Though I be by friends forsaken
And must suffer sore distress,
Though I be despised, contemned,
And by all the world condemned,
Though the dark grave yawn before me,
Yet the light of hope shines o'er me.

5 Thou hast died for my transgression,
All my sins on Thee were laid;
Thou hast won for me salvation,
On the cross my debt was paid.
From the grave I shall arise
And shall meet Thee in the skies.
Death itself is transitory;
I shall lift my head in glory.

6 Satan's arrows all lie broke,
Death and hell have met their doom;
Christ, Thy rising is the token:
Thou hast triumphed o'er the tomb.
Thou hast buried all my woe,
And my cup doth overflow;
By Thy resurrection glorious
I shall wave my palms victorious.

7 As the Son of God I know Thee,
For I see Thy sov'reign pow'r;
Sin and death shall not o'erthrow me
Even in my dying hour;
For Thy resurrection is
Surety for my heav'nly bless,
And my baptism a reflection
Of Thy death and resurrection.

8 Unto life Thou shalt arouse me
By Thy resurrection's pow'r;
Though the hideous grave shall house me,
And my flesh the worms devour;
Fire and water may destroy
My frail body, yet with joy

I shall rise as Thou hast risen
From the deep sepulchral prison.

9 Grant me grace, O blessed Savior,
And Thy Holy Spirit send
That my walk and my behavior
May be pleasing to the end;
That I may not fall again
Into death's grim pit and pain,
Whence by grace Thou hast retrieved me
And from which Thou hast relieved me.

10 For the joy Thy advent gave me,
For Thy holy, precious Word;
For Thy baptism which doth save me,
For Thy blest Communion board;
For Thy death, the bitter scorn,
For Thy resurrection morn,
Lord, I thank Thee and extol Thee,
And in heav'n I shall behold Thee.