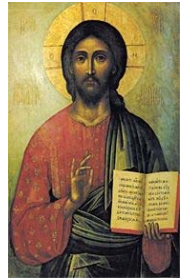


Week of Jubilate (Easter 4)

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: *Seventh Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Luther's Small Catechism)*

Hymn of the Week: *Welcome, Happy Morning!* (202)



Monday - Introit (Psalm 66:1-2, 3, 5, 8-9)

Read Psalm 66.

Jubilate means "Make a joyful noise." These words from our Introit come from Psalm 66:1-2, "Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious." This rejoicing is what Jesus promises his disciples and to all of us who fear God and trust in his mercy. But it does not come without first experiencing pain.

"You will weep and lament," Jesus says, "but the world will rejoice." Here our Lord is speaking of his crucifixion. And yet, this experience of weeping and lamenting is something that all of his sheep must undertake. We lament and weep over our sins. This is something that Christians do. When your loved ones die, when relationships are broken, and when you lose your livelihood, you know, as a Christian, that these are the wages of sin. This is the same sin that proceeds from your very heart (Matt 15:19-20). We also lament over the triumphal rejection of God's Truth by so many around us. The world rejoices over the shame of Christians. When a child of God falls away, the scoffers cheer. When a scandal plagues the church, then the mocking crowds say, "See? The church isn't as holy as she thinks!"

And yet, as Christians, we know that these trials are sent by our heavenly Father. Though our human reason cannot ponder why God allows such misery to inflict his children, faith looks through the pain to the joy that God promises. It's as the Psalmist sings (Ps. 66:10-12), "For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment." So to you who suffer the pain of spiritual battles against the devil, the world, and your own

sinful flesh -- to you who mourn over your sin, listen to the words of your Savior who died for you and is now highly exalted: "Your sorrow will be turned into joy."

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Isaiah 40:25-31)

Read Isaiah 40.

Jesus promises his disciples that they will rejoice. They will see him again and rejoice. In the meantime they will be sorrowful as the world rejoices. This echoes the comfort God gives to his people through the prophet Isaiah. We hear from Isaiah 40 during the time of Advent, "Comfort, yes comfort my people, says your God. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. This is spoken immediately after Isaiah tells Hezekiah, the king, that the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be carried off to Babylon. He tells them that they will be sorrowful in the days to come. But now, he encourages them to rejoice. He comforts them with the promise of God. Yes, the young, strong men will conquer nations, pillage, and destroy. No one will be able to stop them.

But even they get tired. Those who mock and jeer and make fun of you for confessing the gospel of Jesus eventually wear out and fade away. But God never gets tired. Even when he is suffering and dying on the cross, the eternal Son of God is fulfilling eternal salvation through his assumed human nature. Here is the promise of Christ's resurrection. "But those who wait on 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." Our Lord therefore encourages us to pray to him. Don't think that your ways are hidden from God or that he passes over your cares. It is because of this great promise God gave through his prophets, fulfilled by Christ, that you have every reason to rejoice and therefore every reason to pray to God. In Jesus' name, we do so with an unshakable confidence, which will never faint.

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Wednesday - Gradual

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

As we prepare to hear from Jesus his instruction about "a little while," let us meditate on St. Paul's words to the Corinthians (2 Cor 4:16-18):

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our

light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Our outer nature, our old Adam, is wasting away. This is why we must suffer in this life. This is why we must die. The wages of sin is death. Whether it is the world raging against the truth of God's Word, our sinful flesh being lured to various lusts, or our bodies falling prey to sicknesses, it is all a part of death. And God is teaching us to endure it for a little while so that we might look forward to what is unseen. Our inner nature, our new man, created in Christ Jesus, lives in the hope of the things to come, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Therefore, we can refer to our afflictions as light and momentary. We can despise the shame when the world despises the church, looking forward to the joy. This is how our Lord bore the cross in our place, and he teaches us to do the same. This is not so that we might earn our spot at the table. Instead, it is simply to prepare us for the eternal weight of glory beyond any comparison. In the meantime, these light and momentary afflictions serve as lessons for us to cling more firmly to the hope accomplished for us in the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus. And building on his resurrection, we look forward to this hope in sure confidence.

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Thursday - Epistle (1 Peter 2:11-20)

Read 1 Peter 2.

Jesus teaches his disciples that after suffering a little while they would rejoice. This is what every Christian must experience, in one way or another. It is called bearing the cross. The cross in the Christian's life is the affliction given to him by God through the enemies of the church. These enemies are the devil, the world, and the sinful flesh. We must bear such spiritual attacks with patience, whether they are against the body or against the soul. This is God's will, as he teaches us our unworthiness and need for Christ's salvation. St. Peter teaches us the context in which we bear the cross, namely, in doing the duties God has called us to do. As we fight against our sinful lusts, which war against the soul, and as we bear the ridicule of the world, we submit to all earthly authorities, even when they are corrupt. St. Peter teaches us to bear our cross when he directs us, as free children, to use our liberty as servants of

God, not as slaves to vice. To bear the cross is nothing other than to live in the freedom of Christ, who has delivered us from sin by his own cross. It is to live with a good conscience to God.

To avoid ones obligation to authority is to live as a slave. In the same way, to obey authority to the extent of disobeying God is also to live as a slave. St. Peter tells us to honor the king and all people. What does it mean to honor them? It means to honor what God has given them to do. It doesn't mean to fear or trust them. Rather, we are to fear God and love our fellow Christians with whom we trust in Christ. This is what a freed conscience does. In the meantime, we honor all authority as coming from God. So what is it to us that we must, for a little while, submit to authority that has been corrupted? Such authority still comes from God, the same God who has set us free from sin, our Father who gives us reason to rejoice in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the God toward whom we have a good conscience through our baptism into Christ (1 Pet 3:21). If he is our God then we can bear what he gives us to bear by honoring what he would have us honor. We can rejoice in the midst of our burdens, because we know that they have been given by the One in whom we rejoice.

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 111:9; Luke 24:26, 46)

Read Psalm 111.

Some people teach that it was not absolutely necessary for Jesus to suffer and die for our sins. God could have forgiven us in a different way, they say. But he loved us so much that he sent his Son to suffer our misery in order to show how he sympathizes with us. Now, it's certainly true that there is no greater token of God's sympathy and compassion than the death of his only begotten Son. As the hymn goes, "If the Son so loveth me [by suffering so much], God must have compassion." The suffering and death of Christ certainly reveals God's mercy. But it does not merely reveal it. It in fact accomplished God's mercy. It was necessary for him to die, because the law and the prophets had to be fulfilled. Our *Alleluia verse* quotes from Luke 24 in which Jesus affirms this very fact. The law justly condemned us and required obedience. The prophets proclaimed the will of God save us. So the our *Alleluia verse* also quotes from Psalm 111:9, "The Lord has sent redemption to his people." Both must be fulfilled, because both are the will of God revealed in his Word.

When we get into speculations about what is and isn't necessary, what are we basing these judgments on? We are basing them on our own

human reason. God is just. God is love. Human reason takes these concepts and decides for itself what they mean. God is just, so he only needed to give an example of punishment in order to teach us that sin is bad. So thinks human reason as it explains away that Jesus needed to make payment to God's justice in order to turn his anger away and bring about peace with God. God is love, so he can just forgive without any payment. So says human reason as it turns the death of Christ into a mere spectacle. But the love of God, which he requires of us in his law, was determined to be fulfilled by satisfying precisely what the law requires. It fulfilled love. The love of God fulfilled the love that God required. And this wasn't done by following our own ideas of what is love and what is justice. No, it was necessary for the love and justice of God to be fulfilled in the suffering and death of Christ, because this is what God's Word spoken through his law and prophets declare. And God's Word cannot be broken.

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Saturday - Gospel (John 16:16-23)

Read John 16.

This Sunday of *Jubilate* marks the beginning of five weeks when our Gospel lessons are taken from either John 16, 15, or 14. These chapters of John are part of a section of his Gospel known as the farewell discourses (John 13-16). They record the instructions Jesus gives to his disciples immediately before his suffering and death. One might wonder why we would return to this gloomy time during the season of Easter. Yet, it is in fact quite appropriate. Here we learn that the joy of our Lord's resurrection is true and real even in the midst of sadness. So today, we hear of Jesus, right before his arrest and crucifixion, teaching his disciples about rejoicing.

"A little while," he says, "and you will not see me; and again a little while, and you will see me, because I go to the Father." "A little while" refers immediately to Jesus' imminent death. And after only a brief stay in the grave, this "little while" also refers to his resurrection on the third day. Our Lord's "little while" accomplished our salvation, as he was crucified for our sins and raised for our justification (Rom 4:25). It is also the very template for our lives as God's saints. It is now the motto for the Christian. "A little while" is a phrase for all of God's children who must bear their cross in this life. This is the source of their joy, because they know that Jesus' death has conquered death, and his resurrection has brought eternal life to light. His passion, though spanning only a few days, is what gained for sinners the eternal weight of

salvation. It is by this that we can rejoice in the midst of sorrow, knowing that God has been born in the flesh, has suffered and died for our sins, and has risen again. As the woman who is still healing after a hard labor is overwhelmed with the joy of her child, so does the church, who still feels the pressure of a hostile world, find her joy in what is unseen for the time being. She rejoices in what surpasses all understanding.

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202

Welcome, Happy Morning!

Acts 10: 40

Salve, festa dies

Venantius Fortunatus, c. 590, cento

Tr., John Ellerton, 1863, alt.

G. 5. 6. 5. D., with Refrain

Sei du mir gegrüßet

"Enchiridion"

Lübeck, 1545

1 "Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!" Age to age shall say;
 2 Mak - er and Re - deem - er, Life and Health of all,
 3 Thou, of life the Au - thor, Death didst un - der - go,
 4 Loose the souls long pris - oned, Bound with Sa - tan's chain;

"Hell to - day is van - quished, Heav'n is won to - day!"
 Thou from heav'n be - hold - ing Hu - man na - ture's fall,
 Tread the path of dark - ness, Sav - ing strength to show.
 All that now is fall - en Raise to life a - gain.

Lo, the Dead is liv - ing, God for - ev - er - more!
 Of the Fa - ther's God - head, True and on - ly Son,
 Come, then, True and Faith - ful, Now ful - fil Thy word;
 Show Thy face in bright - ness, Bid the na - tions see;

Him, their true Cre - a - tor, All His works a - dore.
 Man - hood to de - liv - er Man - hood didst put on.
 'Tis Thine own third morn - ing - Rise, O bur - ied Lord
 Bring a - gain our day - light; Day re - turns with Thee.

"Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!" Age to age shall say;
 "Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!" Age to age shall say;
 "Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!" Age to age shall say;
 "Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!" Age to age shall say;

"Hell to - day is van-quished, Heav'n is won to - day!"
 "Hell to - day is van-quished, Heav'n is won to - day!"
 "Hell to - day is van-quished, Heav'n is won to - day!"
 "Hell to - day is van-quished, Heav'n is won to - day!" A - men.