

## Week of Rogate (Easter 6)

*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:** *What is Baptism (Luther's Small Catechism)*  
**Hymn of the Week:** *Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above (TLH #458)*

### Monday - Introit (Isaiah 40:20; Psalm 66:1, 17, 19-20)

#### **Read Psalm 66.**

"With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth. Alleluia. The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob! Alleluia." These words, taken from Isaiah 40:20, begin our *Introit* for Rogate Sunday. *Rogate* means, "Pray!" Unlike others, this title of the day does not come from the first words of the *Introit*. Instead, it comes from our Gospel lesson where Jesus commands us to pray. So what does this have to do with singing, declaring, proclaiming, and uttering to the end of the earth that the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob? The rest of the *Introit*, taken from Psalm 66, answers this. We sing of the honor of God's name and how he has answered our prayers. And how has he answered our prayers? By redeeming his servant Jacob! This is Christ, the Seed of Jacob, whom God raised from the dead. And it is therefore everyone who is in Christ through faith. Everyone who is a child of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through faith in the same promise in which they trusted -- these are God's servants and sons who have been baptized into the very death of Christ (Rom 6:3).

So before the *Introit* teaches us to pray, it teaches us how God has already answered our prayers. Such is our confidence in our prayers. We do not strive for what is uncertain (1 Cor 9:26). We do not ask for what is only a potential. We pray with certainty for what God has already promised and completed in Christ. Ask, Jesus says, that your joy may be complete. And what is our joy? It is that God has redeemed us from sin, death, and hell. It is that he is our God and we are his people, and that he will therefore not withhold any good thing from us (Rom 8:32). So when we pray, we sing out the honor of his name. Here is the first thing for which Jesus teaches us to pray: Hallowed be Thy name. God's name is certainly holy in itself. So we pray that it might be holy among us also, just as he has promised (Lev 19:2), "You shall be holy, for the Lord your

God is holy." Even before we pray we can assert with the Psalmist, "Blessed be God who has not turned away my prayer." So do not be afraid to pray! Because it is the Father's good pleasure to give you joy in his Kingdom (Luke 12:32).

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## **Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Numbers 21:4-9)**

### ***Read Numbers 21.***

Our Old Testament lesson from Numbers 21 records the people grumbling against God and against Moses. This is the opposite of prayer. Grumbling is an act of unbelief. We should not confuse a grumble with a complaint. A complaint is not necessarily an act of unbelief. In Psalm 55, David speaks of his complaint to God. But this is not a complaint against God. Rather, it is against God's enemies. It is a complaint, which proceeds from faith in God. Those who complain to God with a firm trust that God will hear them are those who are not under the law. They pray in Jesus' name, standing on Christ's promise that God will hear their groaning. But those who grumble against God are under the law. They need to ask someone else to pray for them, since they do not have the confidence to ask God themselves.

This is why the people in the wilderness asked Moses to pray for them after God sent poisonous snakes to bite them. Moses interceded for them, and God told him to make a fiery image on a pole for all to see. Moses made a fiery serpent, the image of God's wrath against their sins, and he taught them that anyone who would look at the fiery serpent would live. Moses was pointing to Christ, the image of the invisible God. He would bear in himself the fiery wrath of God so that whoever should look to him in faith will be saved. In this way, Jesus has interceded for sinners much more than Moses ever could. He intercedes as the very Son of God who has taken away sin forever. And this means that we do not need to ask anyone to pray for us. We can, with true confidence, give our complaints to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the eternal Son of the Father and therefore the only access to the Father. He gives us his Holy Spirit to intercede for us in prayer (Rom 8:26). The bronze serpent in the wilderness was pointing to the death of Christ (John 3:14-15). It was God's will for his people even then to live under this gracious promise as his holy people. But their sinful nature remained under the law. The same is true for our sinful nature. We, by nature, don't trust that God will answer our prayers. But in Christ we are not under the law. In Christ we always have a yes from God himself.

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## **Wednesday - Gradual**

### ***Read John 17.***

From Maundy Thursday to Pentecost Sunday, we spend time in chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20 of John's Gospel. Since the *Gradual* takes a break during the Easter season, it is fitting that we meditate on John 17, especially during the week of *Rogate* as we consider what prayer is. John 17 is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. One of my seminary professors told me that I should call the Lord's Prayer the *Our Father* and that I should refer to John 17 as the *Lord's Prayer*. This is good to ponder, no matter what we decide to call it. Here, in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel, John gives us intimate insight into our Lord's prayer. He prays for his disciples whom he was about to send out into the world. He prays for all of us who would believe because of the Word they were given to proclaim. And he bases this entire prayer upon his work of redemption where he would be lifted up on the cross for our salvation. This he calls his glorification. "Glorify me in your presence," he says, "with the glory I have shared with you from before the foundation of the world." The glory by which Jesus is true God with the Father from eternity is the glory by which he suffered and died so that we might have eternal life.

Jesus then explains what eternal life is. It is to know the Father as the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. It is to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. His Word is truth. This is what it means for us to pray to God. It is to know him through faith in Jesus Christ. It is to rely on his Word. As the hymn goes, "By the light His Word doth lend you; prayer will help and comfort send you." To pray is to rely on God's Word of promise, trusting that we will be one even as the Lord is one.

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## **Thursday - Epistle (*James 1:22-27*)**

### ***Read James 1.***

St. James admonishes us to be doers of the Word, and not just hearers. We should not be hypocrites who don't actually believe what we say. St. John says (1 John 3:18; 4:20), "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth... If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" Those who say they love God but hate their brothers are those who are merely

hearers of the Word of God. Don't be deceived! We might hear it condemn all the immoral behavior being touted by the culture while we find that we have the same opinion as God's Word. But do we pray for our brothers and sisters who struggle against such perversions? Do we warn our friends and family members who are being deceived by the world? Or do we just keep quiet, either in pride or in fear of ridicule?

We are to be doers of the Word, not just hearers. This means that we actually care about what the Word of God says, not because it agrees with our own values, but because it is the truth of God. To be a doer of the Word means that you are not beyond judgment, but you let God's Word judge you daily. Just as St. Peter says, judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet 4:17). To love in deed and in truth means that God's Word has given you a true heart and spirit in which your sins have been exposed and forgiven for Christ's sake. This is what we pray for after the sermon, "Create in me a clean heart... and renew a right spirit within me. (Ps. 51:10)" or as the Psalmist also says (32:2), "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." Our religion is useless if our hearts are deceived by our own prideful tongues. But when we consider what our Lord teaches us, then we do not forget that we were once slaves, that we are still afflicted by sin, and that Christ has set us free by his blood. To be a doer of the Word means to rely on it in everything that you do, because only the Word keeps us unstained from the world and gives us the confidence to call upon God in prayer.

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### **Friday - Alleluia Verse (Liturgical text; John 16:28)**

#### ***Read John 16.***

Our *Alleluia verse* comes from a liturgical text, "Christ, who has redeemed us with his blood, is risen and has appeared unto us," along with this portion of our Lord's words in the Gospel lesson of John 16:28, "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." These three things must stand together. First, Jesus redeems us by his blood. Second, he appeared, risen from the dead, to many witnesses. Third, Jesus, eternally coming forth from the Father has come into the world and has returned to the Father. In fact, we cannot grasp how the Son has come forth from the Father, how he has come into the world, or how he has returned to the Father unless the first two things are revealed to us. He has redeemed us by his blood and appeared risen from the dead. It is because of this

redeeming death and resurrection that we know both the Son and the Father. It is how we know that the Son has come from the Father. It is how we know he has come to earth. And it is how we know that he has returned to the Father.

That Jesus has died for our sins and is risen from the dead is how we know that the Father hears our prayers. There is no such thing as praying to the Father apart from the Son whom he has sent. There is therefore no such thing as praying to the Father apart from faith in the blood and resurrection of Jesus. This is why Jesus says that he comes from the Father, has come into the world, and is returning to the Father. It is so that we would ask the Father in his name for anything we need. It is so that we would have the ability to pray with full confidence that our Father hears and accepts our prayers, just as surely as the Father accepted the sacrifice of his Son, raised him from the dead, and received him to his right hand. So on this *Rogate Sunday*, we pray with confidence that God will hear and answer in his good pleasure.

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### **Saturday - Gospel (John 16:23-33)**

#### ***Read John 16 again.***

*Rogate* means "Pray!" or "Ask!" Jesus says, "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." He says, "Asuredly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give to you." In our Gospel lesson Jesus teaches us what faith is. Faith clings to what is unseen. It is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb 11:1)" Therefore, as St. Paul says (2 Cor 5:7), "We walk by faith, not by sight." And prayer is the quintessential expression of faith. We pray in Jesus' name because it was in Jesus' name that we were called to faith, which seeks and finds what it needs in Jesus. Therefore, Jesus tells us to ask anything of the Father in his name.

We pray by the power of the Holy Spirit whom he gives us, who intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words (Rom 8:26). This is the same Holy Spirit who called us to faith and keeps us in the faith (Gal 3:5; Rom 8:16). So just as we cannot, by our own reason and strength, believe in Jesus or come to him, we also have no power in ourselves to pray to him or to the Father. But the Holy Spirit gives us the confidence through his Word, and he gives us the boldness to ask anything from our heavenly Father. Because of our eyes and reason, which have their own way of scrutinizing God's mercy, Christians often fall into doubt. What we see doesn't jibe with what our Lord has promised us. But Jesus

doesn't teach us how to reason things out in our head or to judge how good of a provider God is. Instead, he teaches us to believe. He teaches us to cling firmly to his promise. He teaches us to seek in his crucified body and spilt blood the righteousness that we need to stand before God in his Kingdom, and so he teaches us that all other things will be added unto us (Matt 6:33).

Therefore, dear friends in Christ, pray to God in all trouble. He promises to hear you. Even if all evidence points to the contrary, and you can't figure out how, his answer is always yes in Jesus (2 Cor 1:19-20), and his resurrection proves it.

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## 458

## Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above

Matt. 6: 9 ff.

Vater unser im Himmelreich

Martin Luther, 1539


Tr., composite

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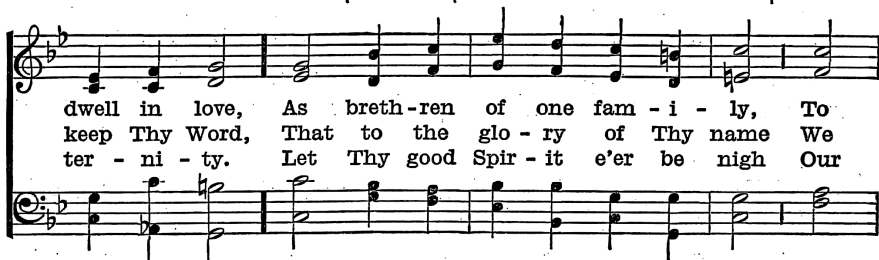
Vater unser

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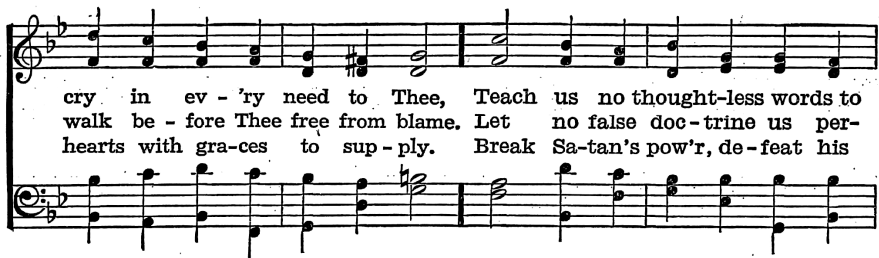
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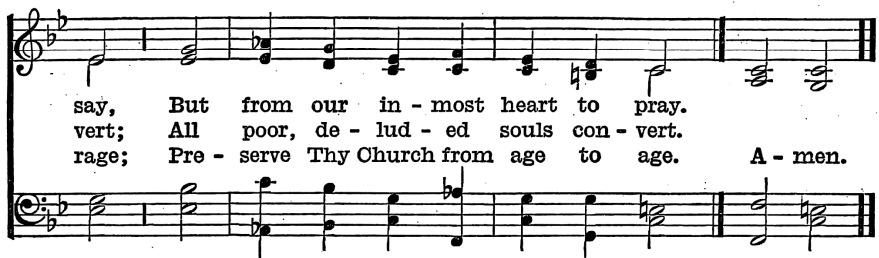
1 Our Fa - ther, Thou in heav'n a - bove, Who bid - dest us to  
 2 Thy name be hal - lowed. Help us, Lord, In pu - ri - ty to  
 3 Thy king - dom come. Thine let it be In time and in e -



dwell in love, As breth - ren of one fam - i - ly, To  
 keep Thy Word, That to the glo - ry of Thy name We  
 ter - ni - ty. Let Thy good Spir - it e'er be nigh Our



cry in ev - 'ry need to Thee, Teach us no thought - less words to  
 walk be - fore Thee free from blame. Let no false doc - trine us per -  
 hearts with gra - ces to sup - ply. Break Sa - tan's pow'r, de - feat his



say, But from our in - most heart to pray.  
 vert; All poor, de - lud - ed souls con - vert.  
 rage; Pre - serve Thy Church from age to age. A - men.

4 Thy gracious will on earth be done  
 As 'tis in heaven before Thy throne;  
 Obedience in our weal and woe  
 And patience in all grief bestow.  
 Curb flesh and blood and every ill  
 That sets itself against Thy will.

5 Give us this day our daily bread  
 And let us all be clothed and fed.  
 From war and strife be our Defense,  
 From famine and from pestilence,  
 That we may live in godly peace,  
 Free from all care and avarice.

## Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above

6 Forgive our sins, Lord, we implore,  
Remove from us their burden sore,  
As we their trespasses forgive  
Who by offenses us do grieve.  
Thus let us dwell in charity  
And serve our brother willingly.

7 Into temptation lead us not.  
When evil foes against us plot  
And vex our souls on every hand,  
Oh, give us strength that we may stand  
Firm in the faith, a well-armed host,  
Through comfort of the Holy Ghost!

8 From evil, Lord, deliver us;  
The times and days are perilous.  
Redeem us from eternal death,  
And when we yield our dying breath,  
Console us, grant us calm release,  
And take our souls to Thee in peace.

9 Amen, that is, So shall it be.  
Confirm our faith and hope in Thee  
That we may doubt not, but believe  
What here we ask we shall receive.  
Thus in Thy name and at Thy word  
We say: Amen. Oh, hear us, Lord!