

The Congregation at Prayer
A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer
For the Week of Oculi (The Third Sunday in Lent)
 March 23rd through March 29th, 2025

Catechesis Notes for the Week—What is the work of the ministry? This week concludes the two sections from the Table of Duties concerning “Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers and What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors.” If we are admonished to hold our pastors “in the highest regard in love because of their work,” we should understand clearly what their work is and what we should expect of them. The minister’s work is clearly spelled out in our Lutheran Confessions: “According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God’s Word alone. On this account [we] are bound to be obedient to the bishops according to the saying of Christ in Luke 10:16, ‘He who hears you hears me.’ On the other hand, if they teach, introduce, or institute anything contrary to the Gospel, we have God’s command not to be obedient in such cases, for Christ says in Matt. 7:15, ‘Beware of false prophets.’”

The Order of Meitation and Prayer

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or use as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

Theme: Jesus, the Strong Man, Binds Satan.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen



Apostles’ Creed

Verse: John 17:17

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Psalm 136:1-16 (antiphon: v. 26)—Pray the Psalm Daily

Prayer on the Psalm: We give thanks to You, O Lord God almighty, for You are good and Your mercy endures forever. You saved and rescued Your people throughout salvation history, because You are faithful to Your promises and never fail to keep Your Word. Grant us a faith which ever clings to Your promise of salvation and teach us at all times to call upon You for rescue and deliverance from all our enemies, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Catechism: The Table of Duties—What Hearers Owe Their Pastors - Second Half

<p><i>What does God’s Word say the hearers of God’s Word owe their pastors?</i></p> <p>We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.</p>	<p>First Grade + 1 Thess. 5:12</p>
<p>Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.</p> <p>Live in peace with each other.</p>	<p>Second Grade + 1 Thess. 5:13</p>
<p>Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.</p> <p>They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.</p> <p>Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.</p>	<p>Third Grade + Hebrews 13:17</p>

Prayer for Hearers of God's Word: O Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You for the gift of pastors who preach Your saving Gospel and administer Your life-giving sacraments to us. Crucify our flesh and destroy all impenitence and unbelief in us, so that we who have received faithful instruction in the Word of God might provide generously for the support of our pastors. Teach us to believe that our pastors, who faithfully sow the seed and tread out the grain of Your Word, are worthy of their wages and are entitled to reap from what they have sown. Teach us to believe that preaching and teaching Your Word is the most important work that our pastors do, so that we might honor and support them in this work, live together with them in the peace of Your forgiveness, and hold them in the highest regard in love for the sake of the Gospel; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings for the week of the Third Sunday in Lent (Oculi)

Day	First Reading	Second Reading
Monday	Jesus Is the Bread from Heaven—John 6:22-44	1 Corinthians 10:1-22
Tuesday	Annunciation of Our Lord —Luke 1:26-38	Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
Wednesday	Midweek: Forsaken for Us: Surrounded —Psalm 22:14-21	Luke 23:33-38
Thursday	Jesus Is Rejected by His Own—John 6:(45-46) 47-69	1 Corinthians 11:17-34
Friday	Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles—John 7:1-24	Leviticus 23:33-44
Saturday	Sunday's OT and Epistle—Exodus 16:2-21	Galatians 4:21-31

Prayers: Collects for the Week; Daily Themes for Prayer, In Our Prayers at Peace

Collect for The Third Sunday in Lent:

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Collect for the Annunciation of Our Lord: (Tuesday)

O Lord, as we have known the incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of the angel to the virgin Mary, so by the message of His cross and Passion bring us to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

In Our Prayers this Week (See Bulletin)

Lord's Prayer and Luther's Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism

Hymn of the Week

Jesus, Lead Thou On

LSB #718

Looking forward to the Week of Laetare (The Fourth Sunday in Lent)

March 30th 2025

Hymns: 906, 743, 637, 642, 636, 848, 634, 643, 923

Exodus 16:2-21: The children of Israel murmured against the Lord like spoiled children. "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." How does the Lord respond? Instead of letting them starve to death as faithless and rebellious children, He feeds them with manna from heaven. Isn't this His way? Just when we think He would be just in visiting His anger and wrath upon us, He gives to us the things we demand, even though these things may not be good for us, that we might come to see that the things we crave really cannot satisfy. When the things we crave do not satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts, then we are fit to receive the One who alone can give us peace and contentment, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Galatians 4:21-31: Ishmael, Hagar's son, was called the son of a slave-woman, or a son of the Law, because he was born when Abraham and Sarah were tempted to believe that the promise of a Son was not enough. They attempted to "help God" fulfill His promise of a son by having Hagar sleep with Abraham so that Abraham would have a son. In so doing, they showed forth a faith that was in their own works rather than the promise of the Gospel. This is why the son of the bondwoman was cast out. The Son of the promise came into the world by grace alone and not by the works of the Law, just as the salvation that He came to bring is entirely by grace and not by our works.

John 6:1-15: Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 in the wilderness is a miracle which attempts to teach His catechumens a lesson that the Old Testament children of Israel refused to learn, namely, that every craving and need of our lives can be satisfied only in Him. He is the true bread that came down from heaven. Whoever partakes of Jesus by faith alone will never hunger. He is forgiveness, life, salvation, health, wealth, peace, joy, contentment. He is the beginning and the end of faith and the One by whom we have everlasting life with God. The multitudes recognized the parallels with Jesus and Moses through whom the Lord fed Israel in the wilderness. They hailed Him as the prophet greater than Moses who was to come into the world. But only those in whom God worked true repentance and faith came to believe in Him alone.