

Congregation at Prayer

✠ Advent III ✠

A Guide for Daily Family Prayer
For the Week of December 16th to 22nd

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

Last week we said prayer is the most natural thing for a Christian to do—much like a toddler talking—this week we’ve got to admit that at some point we’ve fallen out of that delightful and childish habit.

When we hear St. Paul admonish the Thessalonians in our Learn-By-Heart Scripture passage this week, we too are cut to the heart. *Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances.* If you’re anything like me, that comes more in the way of a command, then a description of what my life is already like!

It’d be great to rejoice always—but life is hard. Sometimes joy isn’t so forthcoming, and to rejoice always is out of the question!

Pray without ceasing means constant prayer. Much like breathing, which we do constantly without even thinking, prayer ought to be our natural rhythm. Prayer for others, prayer for the church, prayer for those suffering around the world, prayer for our families, prayer for ourselves. Every person we meet, every instance and situation we face—it should all be covered by prayer, by a conversation with the heavenly Father. And yet, how difficult it is to find even a few moments for prayer in our hectic lives.

And then comes “*give thanks in all circumstances.*” Really? ALL circumstances? The flu? Cancer? My car payments? Student loans? Whiney children? Broken families? Broken hearts? What does it mean to give thanks then?

What should be natural to us as children of God is, in fact, quite difficult on account of our sin. We’re plagued by this selfish desire and false sense of pride that looks inward rather than to God for all things. The only solution is the faith that trusts Christ to rejoice, pray, and give thanks for me.

It is Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father interceding even now for us! And on account of His prayer, we borrow from His strength. He gives His Spirit that we too might rejoice, pray, and give thanks always and forever, world without end. Amen!

Prayer without End

Responsive Prayer 2, *Lutheran Service Book* p.285

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ “Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Learn-By-Heart Catechism...

The Lord’s Prayer

Second Petition: Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does God’s kingdom come?

God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

Third Petition: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God’s will done?

God’s will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God’s name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

Daily Readings...

Monday (12/16): Isaiah 32:1-20; Revelation 4:1-11

Tuesday (12/17): Isaiah 33:1-24; Revelation 5:1-14

Wednesday (12/18): Isaiah 34:1-2, 8-35:10; Revelation 6:1-17

Thursday (12/19): Isaiah 40:1-17; Revelation 7:1-17

Friday (12/20): Isaiah 40:18-41:10; Revelation 8:1-13

Saturday (12/21): Isaiah 42:1-25; Revelation 9:1-12

Sunday (12/22): Isaiah 43:1-24; Revelation 9:13-10:11

Prayer of the Week...

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm of the Week...

Psalm 71

Hymn of the Week... “Arise, O Christian People”

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Looking Forward to Next Week...

Isaiah 7:10-17

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25