

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church 🕊️ **Trinity-17 Sunday September 27th 2026**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

King of kings, Your Son came as a servant to save mankind, receiving all authority at Your right hand. Give Your Church, destined to share His throne, faithful hearts, that we may serve the world in Your name. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O God, preserve and give success to the preaching of Your Holy Word. Through pastors, missionaries, church workers and the priesthood of all believers, send forth Your Son's gracious invitation to repent and believe and cause it to be received with joyful faith. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Holy LORD, You have given Your gift of holy marriage, and You preserve this estate against the forces of sin and Satan. Bless all married couples. Keep them faithful to each other in their vows and ready to welcome Your gift of children in their union, according to Your will. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD of all, Your Son teaches authorities to receive their positions with patience and not grasp them for themselves. Raise up humble and wise leaders for the good of all nations. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Father in Heaven, look in kindness upon those who have been humbled by the troubles of this life [*especially **Faith & Our Savior Prayers.***] ... and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal [*Silent*] prayer. Lift them up in healing, and renew their strength to serve You in what You have called them to do. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Divine Master, You graciously invite us to join You in the feast of this Sacrament. Grant that we would come, taking the lowest place in repentance and pleading Your mercy, that our hearts may be lifted up to the honor of receiving Christ's very body and blood. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD God, author of all concord, You will that Your people be one. Knit together Your Holy Church, that according to our vocations, we may join in humble service to the world and jubilant praise of You, the only God. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

These and whatsoever other things You would have us ask of You, O God, grant us for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our LORD and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, **Amen.**

TRINITY-17C Luke 14:1-14 POOR, LAME, BLIND...HOPELESS 9.27.26 F.OS

Luke 14:12-14 He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the Resurrection of the just."

STRANGER AT THE DOOR In today's Gospel Jesus directs us to invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind when we have a special meal. As I was thinking about these words, I thought about a situation which may have happened to some of us. A stranger comes to your door asking for help. S/He is maybe just a drifter – roaming around. He has what look like hospital bands around both of his wrists. He doesn't smell the best. After a couple of glasses of water, maybe a sandwich and a brief rest on your patio, he is on his way.

[JESUS'] HARD WORDS That experience **reminds me again of how hard Jesus' Words are.** We like the idea of it. But in reality it doesn't come naturally to us sinners at all, certainly not to me. The poor and lame and homeless bring with them a whole set of problems that we'd rather not deal with. We might get fleeced or robbed. At best, there's really nothing in it for us.

WE LIKE OUR FRIENDS We'd much rather have people over from whom we might get some benefit - friends or family or business associates. Maybe they'll invite us back. Or maybe we can impress them and be built up in their eyes enough that we can gain some other advantage out of it in the future.

JOCKEYING FOR POSITION **It's that sort of self-promoting, subtle self-exalting behavior** we so often engage in that Jesus is dealing with in the Gospel. He noticed how everyone was jockeying for the best and highest spots at the table at this Sabbath feast. He knew that they were watching Him closely, scrutinizing Him, looking for any flaw to exploit or to advantage of Him.

DROPSY One of the men at this feast had a condition called dropsy, or edema, a disfiguring condition that caused painful swelling in the joints and severe retention of fluid in the body, especially in the extremities. He was almost certainly in one of the lower positions at the table. In fact, he may even have walked in off the street during their meal. But Jesus doesn't keep His distance from this lowly man in need. Instead He says, "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?**" Is it okay for Me to help this man and make him glad?

[HEAL/]WORK ON SABBATH Some there didn't think so. Healing was **work**, and there was to be none of that on the Sabbath. You see, the Pharisees had **jacked up the requirements** of what it meant to truly keep the Sabbath. The day of rest which God appointed for rejoicing in all of His good gifts they had made into a strict performance. By keeping their more demanding Sabbath standards, they could then compare themselves to others and find themselves superior – which was really nothing different than their [again] **jockeying for better positions at the tables.**

[WORSE THAN] AN ANIMAL Jesus heals the man anyway. And then He gives them an illustration, "*Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?*"

[continues,] *"That's work. And yet you'd do that. How much more should I heal this human being who is in the pit of a bodily ailment and pain."* In the supposedly "higher" exercise of their religion, they were actually treating this man worse than they would treat an animal! How could it be contrary to the Sabbath to follow God's Word and love your neighbor?

KEEP THE SABBATH The fact of the matter is that **what Jesus was doing was actually in perfect keeping with the Sabbath**. For the whole purpose of this day of rest is for people to stop their work to focus on God's work. The Pharisees failed to see that in Christ God was the one doing the work here. And that's exactly what the Sabbath is all about. We stop our endless, futile efforts and striving so that we might receive good gifts from the LORD of the Sabbath – and not because we've got the top spot at the table or because we've earned some sort of reward for ourselves by our holier life, but simply because Jesus is good and merciful and revels in giving Himself to us, even to those at the bottom of the table, even to us whose bodies and souls are deformed by sin. He has come to release us from that bondage.

HOLD ON TO JESUS **Colossians 2:16&17** says, *"Sabbaths are/were a shadow of things that were to come, but the reality however is found in Christ."* The Old Testament day of rest **points us forward to Him** Who is Himself our rest and our peace, namely, Jesus. So it's not about following regulations, it's about receiving the **Gospel Word of the Savior** Who said, *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* To keep the Sabbath is to keep and **hold on to Jesus and to hear and believe His Word**.

W.D.T.M. 3RD ARTICLE That's why the **meaning to the Third Commandment** in the Catechism doesn't mention anything about a day of the week, but rather states, ***"We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."*** Remember, the Sabbath day is about you stopping your work and God doing His work on you and for you. And God's work is to preach His words of repentance and forgiveness, to lead you to see your sin and to rely on Christ ever more deeply who died to make full payment for your sin. Coming to church is not your occasion to do something for God; it's God's occasion to do something for you.

U R THE DONKEY or OX You see, the fact of the matter is that when it comes to spiritual and eternal things, you cannot do anything for God anyway. You are like that donkey or that ox that has fallen into the pit and cannot get out. You are in bondage to sin and death, and there's not a thing you can do to get up over the edge and free. But Christ comes along on the Sabbath and by the power of His descent into the pit of death, He pulls you out through His Resurrection, freeing you through the preaching of His Word of forgiveness and the Supper of His living Body and Blood.

GIFT vs. BURDEN The weekly Sabbath, then, is **NOT a** Pharaical burden but **a divine gift**. Jesus is **still** exercising His authority to heal and restore you. It's no wonder that so many people have such a hard time finding rest and peace when they cut themselves off from the source by staying away from Divine Service. They don't yet know the peace and the rest which

passes all understanding and which transcends all the daily troubles of this life. There is no greater calm that one's conscience can have than in hearing and believing, *"Your sins are forgiven through the shedding of Christ's Blood, you are reconciled to God in Jesus. He is on your side. He is with you every day that you must yet live in this fallen world, and He will surely bring you to Himself to share in the fullness of His life."* **That's the sure word of Christ to you today. That is your Sabbath rest, the work of Jesus for you.**

TRUE HUMILITY Only that work of Jesus can create true humility in us, that lowliness and gentleness toward one another that the Epistle speaks of. We can't work it up in ourselves. In fact, even if we would make it our goal to become humble and work at it hard every day, we'd never ever be humble, because then we'd be paying attention to ourselves and our own improvement like the Pharisees.

JESUS, ONLY JESUS Only Jesus, true God, who **humbled Himself** to be born of a Virgin – only He is truly **humble, gentle and lowly in heart**. He gives freely and abundantly to us without calculating what's in it for Him. And so humility is to be found only by living outside of yourself **in Him**. Only in Christ are you freed from the petty rivalries and the manipulating and using of people to show them real love, to do them good and to be a happiness for them without any calculation of their worthiness or whether or not you'll get anything in return. That's what Jesus is talking about when He says to invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind to your feasts. Be free from considering what you're going to get out of the deal, and simply pass on the good gifts of God for the benefit of others. By faith you receive the bounty of what God gives, no strings attached. By love you get to share His gifts with your neighbor, no strings attached. It's all grace, undeserved love.

HUMILIATED & EXALTED Our LORD Jesus is **the One who took the lowest place, who humbled Himself even to the point** of death on a Cross to rescue you and restore your honor. And now, having been raised from the dead, **Jesus is exalted to the highest place** at the Table by His Heavenly Father. And He has raised you up with Himself. By your Baptismal faith **you are united with Him** in such a way that you share in His exaltation as members of His Body. Remember, this is a wedding feast that Jesus speaks of. It is the celebration of His holy union with the Church, His bride. And if He is honored, then she also is honored with Him. If He goes up higher, then so does she. This is what Jesus means when He says, *"He who humbles himself will be exalted."* You who in lowly faith follow Christ and share in His Cross in this world will ascend with Him in the next and share in His everlasting life.

HE'S HERE W/ US Brothers and sisters in Christ, even now Jesus is here among us at the Head of the table. Take the lowest place, that is, come in all humility before God as a repentant sinner. Come empty-handed as the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, knowing that there's no way you'll ever be able to pay Jesus back, and you will be blessed. To **every penitent heart** He says, *"Friend, go up higher."* *"Come, share in My honor by receiving My own Body and Blood. Be filled with My forgiveness and My life."* Here is your Sabbath rest and healing. Here is the foretaste of that Last Day when you will go up higher forever in the Resurrection. **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**