

POSSIBLE Prayer of Church ☩ 16th Sunday after Trinity, September 20th 2026

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

O LORD, Father of all, we bow before You in all confidence and beg You: strengthen us by Your Spirit, ground us in Your love and fill up what we lack out of Your own abundance. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD of the Church, we thank and praise You for the ministers of Your Gospel, who preach the unsearchable riches of Your mercy. Strengthen all pastors and teachers of Your Word, that they may boldly proclaim the forgiveness of sins in Christ's name. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Faithful Father, when loss and heartache invade our homes and tempt us to doubt Your divine care, hear our cries and renew our faith and life in You. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Holy Comforter, You gave aid to the widows of Zarephath and Nain so they would not be left alone. Provide faithful friends and companions to our shut-ins and those who live alone, that they may be encouraged in faith toward You and in love toward one another. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Heavenly Father, from whom all fatherhood in Heaven and earth is named, guide our rulers aright by the ministry of Your Church, and instill in them humility under Your divine authority, that they, in turn, would honor and uphold the godly callings of father and mother in our land. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, Your Son became flesh and healed the sick of all kinds of diseases and afflictions, demonstrating His power and giving us a foretaste of the Resurrection on the Last Day. Have mercy upon all those in need of deliverance [*especially **Faith & Our Savior Prayers.***] ... *and all those we name in our hearts in personal [Silent] prayer...* Heal them in Your time and according to Your will, and preserve them in the confidence that You will deliver Your people from all afflictions at the Resurrection of all flesh. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Gracious LORD, we are not worthy that You should come under our roof, yet You come to us in mercy. Grant us Your Spirit, that we may receive our Lord in faith when He comes to us in His body and blood and be strengthened for Your service by this Eucharist. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD of hosts, Your saints in heaven now know as they are known and comprehend the fullness of Your love in Christ. Conduct our way through this fallen world to join them in Your heavenly presence. *LORD in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, we are bold to ask You, heavenly Father, because You have made us Your people and members of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

TRINITY-16/A Luke 7:11-17 WHEN LIFE AND DEATH CONTEND 9.20.26 F.OS.L PRAYER *LORD God, Heavenly Father, You sent Your Son to be made Flesh, that by His death He might atone for our sins and deliver us from **eternal death**: We pray, confirm in our hearts the hope that our Lord Jesus Christ Who with but a Word raised the widow Nain's son, in like manner will raise us on the Last Day and grant us **Eternal life, In Jesus' Name. Amen.***

MIXUP [STORY] A bank in Binghamton, New York, had some flowers sent to a competitor who had recently moved into a new bank building. There was a mix-up at the flower shop, and the card sent with the arrangement read, "**With our deepest sympathy.**" The florist, who was greatly embarrassed, apologized. But he **was even more embarrassed** when he realized that the card intended for the bank was attached to a floral arrangement sent to a funeral home in honor of a deceased person. That card read, "**Congratulations on you new location!**"

FUNERALS NO-FUN **Nobody really enjoys going to a funeral.** We've all felt the uncomfortable-ness of attending a visitation or a funeral service and not knowing exactly what to do or what to say to those who have lost a friend or a family member. We want to be caring, but we don't want to stick our foot in our mouth. We'd much rather not have to deal with those situations at all. It brings to mind all the things about this fallen world and our own mortality that we'd rather not think about.

DEATH NOT NATURAL Of course, when someone has lived a good long and full life, there can be a sense of completion and fulfillment at a funeral. People are brought together, and we enjoy sharing good memories of the one who has died. And yet we dare not get lulled into believing, even in those circumstances, that **death is somehow normal or okay or even good**, and that the only truly tragic deaths are the ones that are premature – child or a middle-aged person. **EVERY death is "premature;" every death is tragic.** God did **not** create us to die, but to live with Him, body and soul forever. Death has only entered the picture because it is the curse of sin which we have brought upon ourselves. **Whether someone dies at 9 or 90**, it's still not how God created it to be, it's still a result of sin. [Mark Twain often said sarcastically,] "*We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Adam, the **first great BENEFactor** of the human race: he brought death into the world.*"

TOO YOUNG TO DIE That reality does hit us hardest, though, when someone dies young or before we expected. **And that's what Jesus was dealing with** in today's Gospel reading. He comes upon a funeral [procession], just at the time when they were carrying the body out to be buried. And the one in the casket was a [young?] **man, his mother's only son.** Perhaps there was an accident; perhaps some illness overcame him. But she had to hold his dead body in her arms. And she had just been through this, maybe not long before. You see, she was a **widow, who had to bury her husband** as well. Now she was **all alone**, no one to care for her, no one to provide for her future. Here we see **death's curse at its**

worst - bringing us **sadness and grief and fear**, separating us from **those we love, crushing our hopes and dreams**.

JESUS' HEART POURS OUT **But remember**, it is written, *"The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down ... He relieves the **fatherless and the widow**."* When the LORD saw this widow, He had compassion on her; He was deeply moved with empathy for her plight; **His heart went out to her**. And He said, *"Do not weep."* Don't cry. Jesus wasn't just telling her to be tough, to suppress her emotions. Jesus Himself grieved and **wept openly at the death of Lazarus**. Rather, **St. Paul** reminds us that we are ones who do not grieve as those **who have NO hope**. We do not need to wallow in grief and self-pity and blame, because **we have a sure and certain Hope in Christ**. And so Jesus speaks with comforting mercy, *"Don't cry, for I have come to conquer everything that saddens you and makes you feel alone and cut off and hurt and helpless. I am here to wipe away every tear from your eyes."*

BLESSED WHO MOURN Jesus earlier had said, *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."* *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."* *"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart."* We do not face death and loneliness alone. With you is Jesus, the One Who is your Help and your Shield, the One Who is overflowing in mercy to all who call upon Him, the One Who is the Resurrection and the Life. He faces death head on to renew our bodies and revive our spirits.

PUTS IN HIS [DEAD] PLACE Jesus comes and touches the open coffin, and those carrying the dead man stand still. **Jesus stops the procession of death dead in its tracks**. With this touch of the coffin, Jesus puts Himself in the place of the widow. He shares in her heartache and the heartache of all those who have lost loved ones, as it is written, *"He is ... a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."* And by touching the casket, Jesus also puts Himself in the place of the only son. You see in so doing, according to Old Testament Law, Jesus is making Himself ceremonially unclean with this young man's death. He **allows that mortality to come on Him**. But that's still *not all He's doing*. Not only does Jesus touch and receive this man's death, He also transfers to the young man **His own life in exchange**, to make the young man clean and whole. The only Son of the Father, Jesus, also became a dead man, to save this young man, and all of us as well.

HE TOUCHED US [TOO] On the Cross Jesus **touched your casket**; He absorbed your death into His own body to save you from it. Outside the gate of the city at Nain and later outside the gate of the city at Jerusalem, Jesus allowed death to pass from you to Him so that you would be restored to life, cleansed and made whole. Because **the Savior has shared our griefs and sorrows**, He has sanctified them. Because the Savior has shared in our death, He has redeemed us from death and lets us share in His bodily Resurrection to Life.

THE GIFT OF LIFE *"Young man, I say to you, arise!"* These are the Words of the **Creator who brings life out of nothing**. The one who was dead sat up and began to speak. Jesus presented the young man to His mother. Just as this son was a gift of God in birth, **so now Jesus gives this son again to his mother with the gift of New life**.

WE DIE WITH HIM It's the **same in our Baptism**. Not only is it **a gift of God** that children are born to fathers and mothers, but now Jesus presents them to Christian parents born again to new life by water and the Word. Remember, all who are Baptized die with Christ. It's as if you lose your child there, and then gain him back forever. We are crucified with Christ in order that we might also rise with Him to live a new and holy life. Baptized children, then, **have been given to you parents by God twice over so that**, like the Nain widow, you rejoice with them in Life Everlasting in Christ.

3-FOLD BAPTISM Even as Elijah stretched himself out **three** times over the Zarephath woman's son, God stretched Himself **out over you in the Threefold application of His Name at the Baptismal font**. He breathed His Spirit into you, granting you a sure and certain hope which transcends all grief and sorrow. Yes, we must live now by faith, still under the shadow of our physical death. But the life of Christ will be ours by sight in the age to come. **Romans 6** says, *"If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His Resurrection."*

WE SHALL RISE [TOO] **On the day of our bodily death**, our souls will be received into the blessedness of Heaven. And **on the Last Day our bodies themselves will be raised from the dead**, rejoined with the soul to live in Christ's glory. Jesus said, *"I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though s/he dies. And whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."* No longer are we dead in our trespasses and sins. God has made us alive in Christ by the forgiveness of our sins.

HE COMES TO US NOW In response to this miracle, **holy fear came upon the people**, and they glorified God, saying, *"A great prophet has risen up among us,"* and *"God has visited His people."* Indeed, **God HAS visited His people in Christ**, the Greatest of all prophets, the very Son of God raised up from the dead to bring life and immortality to all who take refuge in Him. Even today **He visits us in His Holy Supper**. He is **literally here for you** with His true Body and Blood – to forgive you, to raise you up, and strengthen the faith you need to rely on Him through all earthly losses.

LIFE TO COME **Now all is well, for Christ is alive, and in Him, the grave has lost its sting**. So do not weep, for our Lord has said, *"I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly. Because I live, you will live also."* Jesus will surely visit us yet again at His return to do for us what He did for this young man, and even more. And so we confess in the Creed, *"I look for the Resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. SDG