***Possible* Prayer of Church for 21st Sunday of Trinity October 25th, 2026**

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

LORD of hosts, Your Word is a weapon that trains our hands for war and our fingers for battle. Strengthen us for every spiritual fight, and establish us to resist the lies and temptations of the old evil foe. *LORD, in Your mercy*, **hear our prayer.**

Father, You alone are our dwelling place and have given us order, peace and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the faith. Bless and guide our Synod, its leaders, its organizations and our congregation, that we may honor and follow You above all else. Keep us faithful to the end even as You have preserved and strengthened us to this day. *LORD, in Your mercy*, **hear our prayer.**

Creator God, You ordered this world according to Your good and gracious will, crowning Your creation with man and woman. Give us faith to cherish the holy estate of marriage, its union of husband and wife, Your call to be fruitful, and the promise that You will bless what You have made. *LORD, in Your mercy*, **hear our prayer.**

LORD, You have said by Your Apostle [Paul] that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers over this present darkness and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Lead us to respect godly authorities, to oppose what stands against Your Word and to see every unbelieving person as Your creature for whom Christ has died. *LORD, in Your mercy*, **hear our prayer.**

Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, teach us to trust His Words of healing even before their fruit appears. Strengthen all those hurting in body, mind or soul *[especially **Faith & Our Savior Prayers**] … and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal [Silent] prayer.* Strengthen them all to wait on You and, with patience, to receive the fulfillment of Your promises. *LORD, in Your mercy*, **hear our prayer.**

O God, bless us as we prepare to receive Your gifts in the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Forgive our sins, strengthen our faith and confirm us in the knowledge that You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. *LORD, in Your mercy*, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. **Amen.**

TRINITY-21 Ephesians 6:10-20 *DEVIL: ENEMY OF OUR FAITH* 10.25.26 F.OS

I. The D*evil = enemy of our faith*, II. *2. How we overcome the devil*.

In the Name of Jesus, who came to destroy the works of the devil:

[3] STRONG ENEMIES Our ***sinful flesh*** is a strong enemy of our faith; it's hard to wrestle against ourselves, and defeat something that's inside us all the time. ***The world*** is a strong enemy of our faith too; it's hard to wrestle against the world we live in, and go against people who are around us all the time. But that's **only** *"flesh and blood."* It's nothing compared to the devil. He's our strongest enemy. He's the main enemy of our faith – so much so that here **St. Paul** even says, *"we do **NOT** wrestle against flesh and blood."*

WE *DO WRESTLE* It isn't that we *don't* wrestle against the **world** and our **flesh**. They truly *are* our enemies. But they wouldn't be active without **the devil**. To get us to sin, the devil *uses* the world – the people and things in our life – and the devil *inflames* or *arouses* our flesh – our sinful desires. St. Paul says *"we do not wrestle against flesh and blood"* because usually we only concentrate on that part and focus our energies on overcoming **ourselves or the world**, and *we* forget **the most dangerous enemy** who's behind it all.

UN-HOLY TRINITY Again, we think of these three enemies of our faith – **the Devil, the world, and our flesh** – as the ***UN**holy* trinity. Just like the Holy Trinity – God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – are the best friend of our faith, these are the **worst** enemies of our faith. And just like the heavenly Father is the source of all our good, the devil is the source of everything evil that can harm us. **He's the strongest enemy of our faith.**

1. How the Devil is a strong enemy of our faith

[BIBLE] KNOW YOUR ENEMY There's only one way for us to realize how strong the devil is. There's only one place to go for that information. **It's the Bible**. It's because the devil is invisible to us. He takes different forms. Jesus once called Peter "Satan" because **Peter's words were a temptation from the devil.** The devil speaks to us even through our friends. He takes many unexpected forms. This way he hides from us. So he **has to be revealed to us. The Bible does this**. You'd be surprised how much the Bible says about the devil. This isn't to scare us. It's **so we know our enemy**. It's so we **don't UNDERestimate him!**

INVISIBLE ENEMY The devil is invisible to us. He's in the invisible part of God's creation, like the holy angels. Originally he was one of the angels. But he turned away from God. He led a rebellion in Heaven. The Bible says he was cast out of Heaven. Jesus said hell was created *"for the devil and his angels."* [You might think] This has **nothing** to do with us. But **it does**! This is why sin is in the world. *"The will of the devil is **the first cause of sin**." [Chemnitz, Loci Theol. V:3].* **The devil wants to bring** as **many people with him to hell.** And so **St. Paul** writes: *"We wrestle … against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* This refers to the devil and his "evil angels," or demons. They're invisible. They're in the spiritual world we can't see. But at the same time the devil and his armies of demons **are *very much* active in this world.**

IT'S [ALL-OUT] WAR If we knew just *how* active, then we'd really be afraid. **There's a war going on, with our souls as the prize**. The devil is fighting God, and we are the battleground. God said there would be *"enmity"* between the devil and *"Eve's offspring"* – that's **US**. We'd like to pretend all is peaceful. But *"the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* [**1Peter 5:8**]. **The devil is at war with us**, so we can't avoid it.

HOW ACTIVE HE IS Just think of how the Bible makes it evident that the devil is our enemy and is always active, trying to destroy our faith and kill our souls. First there's the story of **the Fall into sin**. *"The Serpent"* appeared to Adam and Eve because the devil had planned their fall, and taken the form of the serpent. Then there's the story of **Job**, when Satan presented himself before the Lord, and prepared to take from Job everything but his life, to get him to curse God and become an unbeliever. Right **after Jesus was Baptized**, there was the devil, tempting Him for 40 days, finally leaving only to wait for *"an opportune time"* [**Luke 4:13**]. The devil returned to Jesus, speaking **through Peter** and coming in the form of demon-possessed people. The Bible says **the devil *"entered into Judas"*** before he betrayed Jesus, and in the early church, Ananias and Sapphira were dishonest because *"Satan filled [their] hearts to lie to the Holy Spirit"* [**Acts 5**].

Doesn't this show how the devil always plans and works to destroy our faith?

HOW STRONG HE IS But it isn't only how active the devil is that should make us afraid. Then we might think we only need to be more aware. **The Bible also tells us how strong he is.** The Bible calls the devil *"the great dragon."* Jesus Himself called him *"the **prince** [or **ruler**] of this world."* Jesus once called him *"the strong man."* In the Gospels we see demon-possessed people, and they're able to get loose from chains and nobody can control them. If the demons are that strong, then [take it up ??? notches and] **think of Satan!**

FATHER OF LIES But the devil's strength isn't primarily physical. It just shows his real strength. His real strength is spiritual. St. Paul says that we need to *"withstand the wiles of the devil."* But, **we can't!** His main feature is being *"the **father of lies**,"* Jesus said. He lies and deceives us to get us to sin, and he also lies by getting us to doubt God's grace and forgiveness of our sins.

WE R WEAK. HE IS STRONG The devil gets into our hearts and minds! Our selfishness, coveting, and greed are from Satan [**1Timothy 6**]. When we're doing well, the devil is there to make us **over**confident. When we're suffering, he's there to **help us complain**. This is where we're too weak and the devil too strong. Nobody is able to *"withstand the wiles of the devil."* So…

2. [How] Do we overcome the devil? [CAN we beat him by ourselves]

WHY TALK ABOUT THIS? Why do we have to hear all this about *"the wiles of the devil"?* Why does God reveal it to us? It's **not** to spook us, although we need to be spooked a little. But this is the point: What good are a soldier's armor and weapons if they're **sitting there unused when the enemy attacks him?** The devil will always find us and attack us. There's one way –**only one**– that he can be defeated. We overcome the devil by having on *"the armor of God."* This is what St. Paul says here: to *"**take up** the armor of God."* Only Jesus had *"the whole armor of God."*

[W.M.D.s - WEAPONS] Think of what St. Paul says here about "girding" yourself with "**truth**," having "**righteousness**" as a breastplate, having the "**Gospel** of **peace**" as protection for your feet, "quenching all the fiery darts" of the devil with the "**shield** of **faith**," and using "the **Word of God**" like a "sword of the Spirit" to strike down the devil's temptations. Only Jesus did that. He was **perfectly righteous in all His deeds**, We aren't. He was truth itself; We aren't. He had perfect faith and trust in the heavenly Father, We don't. He used God's Word to say "**NO**" to every temptation of the devil. Sadly, **We don't**.

HE *WON* THE FIGHT But the point isn't what we fail to do in this fight. The point is what Jesus did in this fight ***FOR US.*** This is **the Gospel**. Jesus called the devil *"the strong man,"* but He called Himself *"the Stronger Man"* who *"overcomes him"* and takes everything from him. Jesus meant that the devil was once able to overcome us and take us into his kingdom. But then **Jesus overcame Him** – **redeemed us *from the power of the devil*** – and brings us into His own Heavenly Kingdom.

AND, *HOW*? And, **How** did Jesus do this? What is this victory? The Victory is **Jesus' death and Resurrection – which forgives our sins.** It tells us what Jesus took away. But the other way of looking at it is what Jesus **gives us.** Jesus gives us **His righteousness.** In other words, Jesus **gives us His Armor**. He declares us righteous, without any sins, and it's for Jesus' sake and we **receive it by faith**. This is the armor that *"quenches the flaming arrows of the wicked one,"* as St. Paul puts it here. **We don't have this armor ourselves. But God gives it to us.** We don't put it on ourselves. He puts it on us. That's **grace**. **A gift**, *"The gift of God."*

PUT IT ON [ARMOR] The important thing is for us to have this armor on. This armor is put on us at **Baptism**. This is **why we baptize children so quickly** – because the devil will attack them and we want them protected. But we need to continue to have this armor on. God puts it on us, when we hear the **Gospel** and He creates faith. When we **hear His Word** preached, read the **Bible** and have family **devotions**, confess our sins and hear the **Absolution**, and come to the **Lord's Supper**, we aren't doing anything. God is putting His armor on us – the forgiveness of sins, and faith to believe it – and that armor overcomes the devil so he can't accuse us with any authority. **This is how we overcome the devil.**

"WEAR" GOD'S WORD If you think the devil is too strong for you, if the devil is always overpowering you, then it shouldn't fill you with doubts and fears. It should tell you **how important it is to hear the Gospel**. If you wish you were better at overcoming the devil's temptations, the answer isn't for you to be stronger or better. **The answer is to have God's Word with you**. The answer is to **hear God's Word more and more**. This is a good way to think of coming to hear the Gospel: It's having God's armor put on you.

OBTAIN/*RETAIN* TH'VICTORY We don't obtain the victory. As the **Catechism** says: *"God will guard and keep us, that we may still in the end overcome and **retain the victory**."* By faith we *"**retain** the victory"* over the devil – only through faith we get the victory that Jesus **obtained** for us! **Amen.** ***SDG***