

A Day of Humiliation and Prayer

22 January 2011
For Prayer at Home

Marking the 38th Anniversary of the Legalization of Abortion-on-demand in the United States
and the Willful Destruction of 50 Million Innocent Unborn Children

+ In Nomine Jesu +

KYRIE Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

COLLECT FOR THE DAY

Almighty God, whose compassion never fails and who invites us to call upon You in prayer, hear the heartfelt confession of our sins and receive our humble supplication for Your mercy. Spare us from the just punishment of sin, which our Lord Jesus Christ has borne for us, and enable us to serve You in holiness and purity of life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

PSALMODY Psalm 94 (prayed in unison or responsively; the Gloria Patri is omitted today)

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, Have fellowship with You?

They gather together against the life of the righteous, And condemn innocent blood.

O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs--O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!
Rise up, O Judge of the earth; Render punishment to the proud.

LORD, how long will the wicked, How long will the wicked triumph?
They utter speech, and speak insolent things; All the workers of iniquity boast in themselves.

They break in pieces Your people, O LORD, And afflict Your heritage.
They slay the widow and the stranger, And murder the fatherless.

Yet they say, "The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob understand."
Understand, you senseless among the people; And you fools, when will you be wise?

He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see?
He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?

The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile.
Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law,
That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, Until the pit is dug for the wicked.
For the LORD will not cast off His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance.
But judgment will return to righteousness, And all the upright in heart will follow it.

Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

Unless the LORD had been my help, My soul would soon have settled in silence.
If I say, "My foot slips," Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up.

In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.
Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, Have fellowship with You?
They gather together against the life of the righteous, And condemn innocent blood.
But the LORD has been my defense, And my God the rock of my refuge.

He has brought on them their own iniquity, And shall cut them off in their own wickedness;
The LORD our God shall cut them off.

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, Have fellowship with You?

They gather together against the life of the righteous, And condemn innocent blood.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

II Corinthians 5:19-6:2

That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Response "Open your mouth for the speechless,
in the cause of all who are appointed to die." (Proverbs 31:8)

Matthew 6:16-21

"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Response “Open your mouth, judge righteously,
and plead the cause of the poor and needy.” (Proverbs 31:9)

MEDITATION

Hostility with God leads to hostility with one’s fellow man. Abel did not kill Cain, but Cain having rejected the Promise of the woman’s Seed raged against his brother so that Cain spilt Abel’s blood. God the Father has brought an end to hostility between God and man through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ and the shedding of His innocent blood for us. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,” so that the cry goes out to all people, “Be reconciled to God!” Sadly, such hostility exists in the heart of man against God still, that innocent blood is poured out daily among us in our land through the legalized acts of abortion.

The American way has often been heralded as the highest form of government in the world providing the greatest freedom to its citizens. More than by any other government on earth, after various amendments to the U. S. Constitution, man’s hostility against man was bridled in such a way that justice for all prevailed.

It was in the year 1854 that a Constitutional crisis existed in the United States as slavery was about to be extended. In response a gathering of Americans in Jackson, Michigan produced the following resolve and the beginning of the end of slavery finally was in sight:

That slavery is a violation of the rights of man as man; that the law of nature, which is the law of liberty, gives to no man rights superior to those of another; that God and nature have secured to each individual the inalienable right of equality, any violation of which must be the result of superior force

Viewed objectively, from the perspective of embryonic babies and fetus babies and third trimester babies and even some newborn babies, how very troubling that we must conclude that even this great experiment in freedom has – for now - failed. The hostility of man against man once more came unbridled in the Roe vs Wade Supreme Court decision of January 22, 1973. For 38 years, or two short generations, injustice has reigned in our land. Examples abound of the cruelty engendered by this decision, the latest that awaits full disclosure regards Dr. Kermit Gosnell of Philadelphia who was charged on Wednesday with eight counts of murder and his “house of horrors” shut down.

Dearly beloved, what government can never do, God Himself has done. God has loved the world and sent His only-begotten Son, making peace between the Holy One and sinners, and breaking down every barrier between men, so that there is neither Jew nor

Gentile, but one new race of people created in Christ Jesus. We who live in the peace of God in Christ have been created anew to live in love toward one another. We renounce the wickedness of abortion and stand opposed to it. With all who hate the godless reign of terror in our land, we resolve:

That **abortion** is a violation of the rights of *human beings as human beings*; that the law of nature, which is the law of liberty, gives to no *human being* rights superior to those of another *human being*; that God and nature have secured to each individual *human being* the inalienable right of equality, any violation of which must be the result of superior force.

Whether our nation can regroup and re-establish itself as a nation of justice-for-all and provide a defense for the most helpless of the human race is yet to be seen. It will only happen through the sustained voice of Christians willing to speak against the use of “superior force” that is wielded by the courts today. Certainly the task is daunting, for the increasing role of the United States government in promoting and funding the murderous act of abortion now results in 20% of all unborn babies in the United States being aborted, and more than 40% in some regions of the country. Lord, have mercy.

The greater task of our congregation and Christ’s Church throughout the world is to hold fast the pure Gospel with its gift of forgiveness for all, that those who will repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ our Savior may be comforted and saved from this evil generation, and by the creation of new hearts in Holy Baptism, join in the defense of the defenseless.

As articles concerning Dr. Gosnell are written, we will learn that more blood has been spilt than we have realized, both of mothers and children. We will cringe at the horror of what is going on in this fair land.

Lord, help us realize more and more that Your precious blood, spilt freely for us, cleanses us from all sin and teach us to look with horror at our sin.

Jesus will empower us by His Holy Supper to “Open [our] mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all the unfortunate”; to “Open [our] mouth, judge righteously and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy” (Pr. 31:8-9). Lord, help us. Amen.

HYMN "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide" #585

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| <p>1. Lord, Jesus Christ, with us abide,
For round us falls the eventide;
Nor let Thy Word, that heav'nly light,
For us be ever veiled in night.</p> | <p>2. In these last days of sore distress
Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness
That pure we keep, till life is spent,
Thy holy Word and Sacrament.</p> |
| <p>3. O God, how sin's dread works abound!
Throughout the earth no rest is found,
And falsehood's spirit wide has spread,
And error boldly rears its head.</p> | <p>4. Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray;
The guile and rage of Satan stay!
Oh, may Thy mercy never cease!
Give concord, patience, courage, peace.</p> |

PRAYERS

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer / The Apostles' Creed

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;
He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead;

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Almighty God and everlasting Father, who created mankind in Your own image, for whose dominion You have created all the world and the stars of heaven, hear us for all the unborn throughout our land and the world, that they may be delivered from instruments of death and from all who would deny them their God-given life and Your blessing;

For all mothers and those who one day will be, fathers likewise, that they may be strengthened to withstand the temptation of the devil, the lure of the world and their own flesh, so that they may be protectors of their offspring as You have ordained;

For all who have succumbed to the ways of this world in thought, word or deed, and have sacrificed their children or the children of others on the altar of convenience or pleasure or profit or ignorance, or who, chased by fear, have forsaken their God-given responsibility, not considering the weight of their transgression as enemies of God and despisers of the sanctity of human life, that they may repent of their sin, be lifted up by the power of Your Spirit, believe in Your infinite mercy and grace in Christ Jesus Your Son, and receive the forgiveness of their sins and be set free from a guilty conscience;

For all who hold positions of power and influence, for presidents and kings and all rulers on earth, for President Obama and all who serve in the U. S. Congress, governors and justices, for family members, medical persons, teachers and religious leaders, that all may wake up to the gravity of sin in shedding innocent blood and in failing to protect the weakest and most vulnerable in our society, that as peoples and nations we may walk according to justice and truth, forsaking the course set by the prince of this world;

For the elderly, the sick, the handicapped, the weak and the poor, whose lives also are threatened by an ever increasing callousness toward the shedding of innocent blood; and for the salvation of all; we pray for peace, deliverance and hope in Jesus' name, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The grace of our + Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

+ **Soli Deo Gloria** +

From the Letter to Diognetus

(speaking of what distinguishes Christians from pagans): "They marry, as do all others; they beget children but they do not destroy their offspring" (literally, "cast away fetuses").

From the Didache:

"You shall not slay the child by abortions."

From the Letter of Barnabas:

"You shall not destroy your conceptions before they are brought forth; nor kill them after they are born."

From St. Clement:

"Those who use abortifacients commit homicide."

From Tertullian:

"The mold in the womb may not be destroyed."

From St. Basil the Great:

"The woman who purposely destroys her unborn child is guilty of murder. The hair-splitting difference between formed and unformed makes no difference to us."

From St. Augustine:

"Sometimes their sadistic licentiousness goes so far that they procure poison to produce infertility, and when this is of no avail, they find one means or another to destroy the unborn and flush it from the mother's womb. For they desire to see their offspring perish before it is alive or, if it has already been granted life, they seek to kill it within the mother's body before it is born."

LORD, HAVE MERCY ON US.

LARGE CATECHISM

Thus says the Lord, "Thou shalt not murder."

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

What does Dr. Martin Luther teach concerning this commandment in the Large Catechism?

“. . . In the second place, this commandment is violated not only when a person actually DOES evil, but also when he fails to do good to his neighbor, or, though he has the opportunity, fails to PREVENT, PROTECT, and SAVE him from suffering bodily harm or injury.

If you send a person away naked when you could clothe him, you have let him freeze to death.

If you see anyone suffer hunger and do not feed him, you have let him starve.

Likewise, if you see anyone condemned to death or in similar peril and do not save him although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed him.

It will do you no good to plead that you did not contribute to his death by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from him and robbed him of the service by which his life might have been saved.”