

The Parish at Prayer and Study

The Fourth Week in Advent

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT (Rorate Coeli)

Deuteronomy 18:15–19; Philippians 4:4–7; John 1:19–28 (or Luke 1:39–56)

John the Baptizer Points Everyone to the Messiah

The coming of God in all His unveiled power at Mount Sinai was terrifying to the people of Israel. The thundering voice of the Lord puts sinners in fear of death (Deut. 18:15–19). God, therefore, raised up a prophet like Moses—the Messiah, the Christ. God came to His people veiled in human flesh. The skies poured down the Righteous One from heaven; the earth opened her womb and brought forth Salvation (Introit) through the blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of the Lord (Luke 1:39–56). The fruit of her womb is the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the One whose sandal strap John was not worthy to loose (John 1:19–28). In Jesus we are delivered from fear and anxiety. In Him alone we have the peace of God which surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:4–7).

TWO-YEAR SCRIPTURE READING PLAN

Mon: Gen. 36:1-37:36

Tues: Gen. 38:1-39:23

Wed: Gen. 40:1-23

Thurs: Gen. 41:1-40

Fri: Gen. 41:41-57

Sat: Gen. 42:1-44:34

DAILY THEMES FOR PRAYER

(The following suggestions may be used to establish a pattern of daily and weekly prayer. Christians pray not only for themselves, but for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people, according to their needs. These daily suggestions are meant to assist the Christian to that end, and to be a supplement to the Christian's other daily prayers)

Sun: For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacraments.

Mon: For faith to live in the promise of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.

Tue: For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with sin.

Wed: For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.

Thur: For the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

Fri: For the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying (and all who have requested our prayers).

Sat: For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's Holy Gifts in the Divine Service.

COLLECT OF THE WEEK

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

HYMN OF THE WEEK: LSB 346 “When All the World Was Cursed”

PSALM SCHEDULE

(From the “Table of Psalms for Daily Prayer” in Lutheran Service Book, p. 304. The Book of Psalms is the Bible’s hymnal/prayerbook. It behooves the Christian, therefore, to pray the Psalms daily, and the Table we will use throughout the year allows us to do so seasonally)

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
ADVENT							
Morning	24	122	33	50	18:1-20	102	90
Evening	25; 110	40; 67	85; 91	14; 16	126; 62	130; 16	80; 72

CATECHESIS FOR THE WEEK

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Bible Story: “Christ Fulfills the Law” (Matthew 5:17-48)

(NOTE: This is the Bible Story for the Fourth-Eighth Commandments)

Excerpts from Dr. Luther’s Large Catechism on the Fourth Commandment

To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction, above all estates that are beneath it, that he commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them. With respect to brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general he commands nothing higher than that we love them. Thus he distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to himself. For it is a much greater thing to honor than to love. Honor includes not only love but also deference, humility, and modesty, directed (so to speak) toward a majesty hidden within them. It requires us not only to address them affectionately and reverently, but above all to show by our actions, both of heart and of body, that we respect them very highly and that next to God we give them the very highest place (379:105-107).

Young people must therefore be taught to revere their parents as God’s representatives, and to remember that, however lowly, poor, feeble, and eccentric they may be, they are their own father and mother, given them by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their ways or their failings. Therefore, we are not to think of their persons, whatever they are, but of the will of God, who has created and ordained them to be our parents. In other respects, indeed,

we are all equal in the sight of God, but among ourselves there must be this sort of inequality and proper distinctions (379-380:108).

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Fourth Commandment

My God has given me my father and mother through whom I received life from Him. He has placed them and all temporal authority over me for my good and for the benefit of my neighbor.

Questions for self-examination regarding the Fourth Commandment

Has the fear and love of God shaped my honor and obedience to parents and others in authority over me?

Have I trusted God to bless me and make my life good when I submit to the authority of parents and those over me, or have I been angry with them, rebelling, fighting against them because I was not getting what I wanted?

Have I been insolent, sullen, and disrespectful to my parents, teachers, employers, or authorities over me? Have I been on good behavior when they are present and mocking them when they are absent?

Have I helped those who carry responsibilities of governing? Do I pray for parents, leaders of the nations, schools, and church? Do I grumble about work given me to do?

Prayer after self-examination

Lord God, heavenly Father, I confess that I have not obeyed Your Fourth Commandment as I ought. I have not always given my parents and other authorities the honor and obedience You demand of me, but have far too often shown them disrespect and been disobedient. I have not helped or prayed for those who govern nearly as much as I should, but have often grumbled and complained about their leadership instead. I deserve nothing but Your temporal and eternal wrath and punishment. But, I am sorry for my sins and believe in Your Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord, who fulfilled this, and all Your commandments, perfectly. For His sake, have mercy on me and forgive me all my sins. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, that I may do better, and look not upon my failures, but upon the perfect holiness and righteousness of Your Son, in which I am clothed by faith; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Bible Verses for Meditation on the Third Commandment

Proverbs 3:11-12; 23:22 See also: Small Catechism—Table of Duties

BOOK OF CONCORD ONE-YEAR READING PLAN

Mon: Large Catechism—Part I: Ten Commandments 103-116

Tues: Large Catechism—Part I: Ten Commandments 117-133

Wed: Large Catechism—Part I: Ten Commandments 134-148

Thurs: Large Catechism—Part I: Ten Commandments 149-165

Fri: Large Catechism—Part I: Ten Commandments 166-182

LOOKING FORWARD: THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD (*Christmas Day*)

Exodus 40:17–21; 34–38; Titus 3:4–7; John 1:1–18

The Living and Life-Giving Word of God Dwells among Us in the Flesh

In the beginning God created all things through His Word, His Son. But man fell into sin, and with man all creation was cursed. Therefore, God spoke His Word again, this time into the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle of our human nature (Ex. 40:17–21,34–38). “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:1–14). The Son of God took on our flesh and blood and died on the cross in order that we might receive the right to become the children of God through faith. Baptized into Christ’s body, we are made partakers of a new Genesis, “*the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:4–7). In Christ, the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man has truly appeared.

Collect of the Day

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: LSB 370 “What Child Is This”

LOOKING FORWARD: THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Isaiah 11:1–5; Galatians 4:1–7; Luke 2:22–40

The Seed of David Comes to His Temple

A Rod has come forth from the stem of Jesse (Is. 11:1–5)—the Seed of David whose kingdom shall be established forever (2 Sam. 7:1–16). In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son Jesus to redeem us from the judgment of the Law (Gal. 4:1–7). Now He is presented in the temple in fulfillment of the Law and revealed to be “*a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel*” (Luke 2:22–40). Christ has enlightened us in baptism, giving us to be adopted as sons of God and heirs of eternal life. Receiving the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood, we are prepared to depart this world in peace, for our eyes have seen the salvation of God in Him.

Collect of the Day

O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: LSB 389 “Let All Together Praise Our God”