



*A ministry and community of prayer of  
The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont*

A few notes about today's service.

Please ***leave your microphone on mute*** during the responsory portions of the service. You are welcome to unmute yourself when you are invited to offer your prayers, then remember to mute it again when you have completed your prayer.

We will always read the Gospel appointed for the day so that we can read and meditate on Jesus' words and teaching.

MORNING PRAYER

*November 24, 2021*

*Wednesday of Ordinary Time, Proper 29*

*Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia, and  
Margaret of Antioch, Martyrs, c. 300*

## Opening Sentence

*The Officiant says the following*

Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

*Psalm 43:3*

## Invitatory and Psalter

*Officiant* O God, open our lips.

*People* And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

*All* Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

*Officiant* God is praised by all creation:

*People* Come, let us worship.

*Said in unison* **Jubilate** *Psalm 100*

May all lands be joyful before you, O God, \*  
serve with gladness

and come before your presence with a song.

For we know that you are God; \*

you yourself have made us, and we are yours;

we are your people and the sheep of your pasture.

We shall enter your gates with thanksgiving,  
go into your courts with praise, \*  
give thanks to you and call upon your Name.

For you are good; your mercy is everlasting; \*  
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

*Officiant* God is praised by all creation:

*People* Come, let us worship.

## **Psalm Appointed**

### ***Psalm 119:145-176***

*Qoph Clamavi in toto corde meo*

145 I call with my whole heart; \*  
answer me, O God, that I may keep your statutes.

146 I call to you;  
oh, that you would save me! \*  
I will keep your decrees.

147 Early in the morning I cry out to you, \*  
for in your word is my trust.

148 My eyes are open in the night watches, \*  
that I may meditate upon your promise.

149 Hear my voice, O God, according to your loving-kindness; \*  
according to your judgments, give me life.

150 They draw near who in malice persecute me; \*

they are very far from your law.

151 You, O God, are near at hand, \*  
and all your commandments are true.

152 Long have I known from your decrees \*  
that you have established them for ever.

Resh *Vide humilitatem*

153 Behold my affliction and deliver me, \*  
for I do not forget your law.

154 Plead my cause and redeem me; \*  
according to your promise, give me life.

155 Deliverance is far from the wicked, \*  
for they do not study your statutes.

156 Great is your compassion, O God; \*  
preserve my life, according to your judgments.

157 There are many who persecute and oppress me, \*  
yet I have not swerved from your decrees.

158 I look with loathing at the faithless, \*  
for they have not kept your word.

159 See how I love your commandments! \*  
O God, in your mercy, preserve me.

160 The heart of your word is truth; \*  
all your righteous judgments endure for evermore.

Taw Appropinquet deprecatio

161 Rulers have persecuted me without a cause, \*  
but my heart stands in awe of your word.

162 I am as glad because of your promise \*  
as one who finds great spoils.

163 As for lies, I hate and abhor them, \*  
but your law is my love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise you, \*  
because of your righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have they who love your law; \*  
for them there is no stumbling block.

166 I have hoped for your salvation, O God, \*  
and I have fulfilled your commandments.

167 I have kept your decrees \*  
and I have loved them deeply.

168 I have kept your commandments and decrees, \*  
for all my ways are before you.

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be  
for ever. Amen.

**The Lessons**

## **First Reading**

*Reader:* A reading from **First Letter of Peter 2:1-10**

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

'See, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious;  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

'The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the very head of the corner',  
and

'A stone that makes them stumble,  
and a rock that makes them fall.'

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,  
but now you are God's people;  
once you had not received mercy,  
but now you have received mercy.

Here ends the reading.

*read in unison* **Canticle C**

***The Song of Hannah*** 1 Samuel 2:1-8

My heart exults in you, O God; \*  
    my triumph song is lifted in you.  
My mouth derides my enemies, \*  
    for I rejoice in your salvation.  
There is none holy like you, \*  
    nor any rock to be compared to you, our God.  
Do not heap up prideful words or speak in arrogance; \*  
    Only God is knowing and weighs all actions.  
The bows of the mighty are broken, \*  
    but the weak are clothed in strength.  
Those once full now labor for bread, \*  
    those who hungered now are well fed.  
The childless woman has borne sevenfold, \*  
    while the mother of many is forlorn.  
God destroys and brings to life, casts down and raises up; \*  
    gives wealth or takes it away, humbles and dignifies.  
God raises the poor from the dust; \*  
    and lifts the needy from the ash heap  
To make them sit with the rulers \*  
    and inherit a place of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth are God's \*  
    on which the whole earth is founded.

**The Gospel**

*Reader* A reading from the Gospel of **Matthew 19:23-30**

Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.’ Then Peter said in reply, ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

Here ends the reading.

*A moment of silence is observed so that we may reflect on the teachings and ministry of Jesus.*

## **The Apostles' Creed**

*All say together*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

## **The Prayers**

*Officiant* God be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Officiant* Let us pray.

*Officiant and People*

### **An alternative Lord's Prayer**

Our loving God in heaven,  
holy is your Name,  
may your reign come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.

For all creation, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## **Suffrages**

V. Help us, O God our Savior;  
R. Deliver us and forgive us our sins.  
V. Look upon your congregation;  
R. Give to your people the blessing of peace.  
V. Declare your glory among the nations;  
R. And your wonders among all peoples.  
V. Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;  
R. Never forget the lives of your poor.  
V. Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;  
R. And your favor to those who are true of heart.  
V. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;  
R. So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

## **The Collects**

### **The Collect of the Day**

*Proper 29*

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things  
in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords:  
Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved

by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Embolden your church, O God, with the stories of your saints Catherine, Barbara, and Margaret, that we might face all trials and adversities with a fearless mind and an unbroken spirit, knowing that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. Through the same Jesus Christ our Savior, *Amen.*

*Together*

### **A Collect for Guidance**

O God, our Creator and Sustainer, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

*Together*

### **For People Facing Uncertainty**

God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart; bring hope and courage to us all as we wait in uncertainty. Bring hope that you will make us the equal of whatever lies ahead. Bring us courage to endure what cannot be avoided, for your will is health and wholeness; you are God, and we need you. Amen.

*Together*

### ***For discernment for the future of the Diocese of Vermont***

Gracious and loving God, of transformation and discovery, we give thanks that you call us to be your people in this time, and in this place. As you call us into deeper and uncertain waters, “to step

out of the boat and go closer to Jesus,” we give thanks for the experience, gifts and skills of our diocesan household, represented by the Task Force for Hope, Revitalization, Innovation, Vision, and Efficiency (THRIVE). Bless their efforts as they rally and shepherd us in our common work. We pray for open hearts and minds and for clear vision, and never-ending reliance on your abundant and creative goodness. We pray for inspiration and guidance from your Holy Spirit, knowing that your power working in us can accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine. All this, we pray, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

*Together*

***For dismantling racism***

Creator of the Universe, source of all goodness and love, we ask wisdom, help, and guidance as we work to counter the many instances of injustice and racism in our world. Help us to value differences in culture, religious beliefs, and physical appearance, and celebrate the God-made wonder of every human being. Help us to be vigilant, working against racial and social injustice in our own hearts and in the world around us, that we may live into our baptismal covenant to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.” Amen.

*The Officiant says*

I invite your prayers of thanksgiving and intercession at this time.

*(During the silence people may add their own prayers. **Please unmute yourself to share your prayer aloud. When you have completed your prayer, return the microphone to mute.**)*

*The Officiant concludes with the Collect for Mission*

### **A Collect for Mission**

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### **The General Thanksgiving**

*The Officiant and People say together*

Almighty God, of boundless mercy,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world  
by our Savior Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts  
we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips,  
but in our lives,

by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our best vision,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

### *Together* **A Collect of Dedication**

Beloved God: As we offer ourselves to you this day, guide and stir us with your Holy Spirit, that we may become one body, one spirit in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

### **Dismissal**

*Deacon or Officiant*    Let us bless God.  
*People*                    To God be thanks forever.

### **Concluding Sentences**

The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **Commemoration**

Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia, and Margaret of Antioch were three of the most popular ancient and medieval

saints, and they even attracted widespread devotion among Anglicans after the Reformation. In the mid-twentieth century, however, their popularity waned significantly as doubts about this historicity grew. The lives of all three virgin martyrs contain many elements that are indisputably either legendary or metaphorical. In recent decades, however, martyrdom accounts written in such a style have attracted increased scholarly attention as we have started to ponder the particular ways in which communities choose to remember trauma. It is striking, for example, that virtually no female martyrdom accounts include sexual violence, even though we know from other genres of writing that it was historically very common. Whatever is happening in these accounts, it is clearly not a straightforward description of the facts, but seems to be rather a recasting of trauma into something that one might actually want to remember and feel inspired by, and the kind of stories that one could pass on to one's children. In the world of historical facts, we all know that instruments of torture do not spontaneously shatter and that dragons do not explode. For that matter, we know that there are no dragons to begin with! But if the purpose of such narratives is not to convey the literal truth of what happened, but rather to portray the unvanquished spirits of these early Christian martyrs in the face of trauma, then perhaps there may be a kind of truth behind the legends after all. According to the life of Catherine of Alexandria, she was a young scholar and the daughter of an Egyptian government official who converted to Christianity as a teenager. When she rebuked the emperor for his cruelty in inciting persecution against the Christians, he summoned 50 of his best philosophers and orators to debate with her, but she won every single argument and many of them were converted to Christianity. The emperor then condemned her to be tortured to death on a spiked wheel, but it shattered at her touch. Finally, he had her beheaded. Barbara's life states that because of her beauty,

her father locked her up in a tower where only her pagan tutors were granted access to her. From them she became highly educated and began to consider the very nature of the physical and metaphysical world, and eventually decided that there was only one true God, and that it might be the God of the Christians. She had a third window added to her prison, and thus created place of personal prayer where she could contemplate the Trinity as the light moved across the three windows. When her father questioned this action, she professed her Christian faith to him and was executed. The life of Margaret of Antioch recounts that she was the daughter of a pagan priest named Aedesius. Her mother died in childbirth, and so she was given to a Christian woman to nurse, and as she grew up she embraced the Christian religion. When her religion became known, she was subjected to severe persecutions, the most famous trial included being swallowed by Satan in the form of a dragon. The cross that she was holding in her hand irritated the dragon's stomach, however, and caused it to immediately explode. Eventually, after prevailing through many trials, she was executed. Margaret was one of the most popular English saints, both before and after the Reformation. Many Anglican parishes have been dedicated to her, as has the women's religious community the Society of Saint Margaret.

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