

ORDER OF DAILY PRAYER
WITH SELECTIONS FOR MORNING & EVENING

THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI (EASTER 3)
26 APRIL—2 MAY

THE VERSICLES, GLORIA PATRI, & ALLELUIA

O Lord, open ☩ Thou my lips,
and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.
Make haste, ☩ O God, to deliver me.
Make haste to help me, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

† THE PSALMS FOR WEEK III & THE GLORIA PATRI

† AT MATINS	† AT VESPERS
SUN: 89	SUN: 90—92
MON: 93—96	MON: 97—101
TUE: 102, 103	TUE: 104
WED: 105	WED: 106
THUR: 107, 108	THUR: 109, 110
FRI: 111—114	FRI: 115—117
SAT: 118	SAT: 119:1—42

After every psalm the Gloria Patri is said.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

THE HYMN

A hymn proper to the season or day may be sung.

† THE LESSON

† AT MATINS

SUN: St. John 5:22-24
MON: St. John 5:1-9
TUE: St. John 5:10-18
WED: St. John 5:31-47
THUR: St. John 6:16-21
FRI: St. John 6:30-40
SAT: St. John 6:52-59

† AT VESPERS

SUN: Proverbs 22:17-19
MON: Micah 2:12, 13
TUE: Isaiah 30:19-26
WED: Jeremiah 3:11-19
THUR: Ezekiel 34:1-11
FRI: Ezekiel 34:12-22
SAT: Ezekiel 34:23-31

Silence for meditation should follow the reading.

† THE GOSPEL CANTICLE

† AT MATINS: BENEDICTUS

✠ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

† AT VESPERS: MAGNIFICAT

✠ My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree; He has gilled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his posterity forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

THE OUR FATHER

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.

† THE COLLECTS

O Lord, hear my prayer.

And let my cry come unto Thee.

† AT MATINS

God, why by the humiliation of Thy Son didst raise up the fallen world, grant unto Thy faithful ones perpetual gladness, and those whom Thou hast delivered from the danger of everlasting death do Thou partakers of eternal joys; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

O God of all power, who hath called from death the great Pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, comfort and defend the flock which He hath redeemed by the blood of the eternal testament; increase the number of true preachers; mitigate and lighten the hearts of the ignorant; relieve the pains of such as be afflicted, but especially those that suffer for the testimony of the truth; by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

† AT VESPERS

O Lord, we beseech Thee to maintain Thy church in truth and patience that her pastors may be faithful, her watchmen vigilant, her flock loyal, her camp united, her war spiritual, her weapons heavenly, her lamps burning and shining; and as Thy Son Jesus Christ hath given so great a price for us, let us not count it a hard thing to give up all for Him and to spend and be spent for the souls He hath redeemed; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire Thee with our whole heart, that so desiring, we may seek and find Thee, and so finding Thee we may love Thee, and loving Thee we may hate those sins from which Thou hast redeemed us; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

After the Collects are prayed sufficient time for individual petitions should be allowed for any and all needs of family, friends, community, and the world.

THE BENEDICAMUS

Bless we the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

SUNDAY, APRIL 26: ST. JOHN 5:22-24

That all may honor the Son. St. John 5:23

Sunday, the Day of the Lord's Resurrection, the day holy Church honors the Son by honoring His Word. We do this outwardly through ritual and liturgy. We sing before the Gospel's arrival, *Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go.* We stand on both feet with our heads raised looking towards the source of the Gospel, the Book from which it will be read. Before and after His Word is read we praise Him for His Word, "*Glory to you, O Lord,*" and "*Praise to you, O Christ.*" In the full tradition of the Church Christ is honored through His word with the greatest of fanfare. The Gospel Book is raised before the people's eyes. It is processed and read from the midst of the congregation. It is preceded by acolytes bearing torches. It is shrouded with the fragrant offering of incense. It is even vested with a golden cover to show the pricelessness of the Word of Jesus to the Church. All of it together seems a bit excessive and might even raise the Judas question, "*shouldn't all this expense be given to the poor?*" No. It shouldn't. For the Church adorning the Gospel in such splendor is the outward act of her ardent devotion and love of Jesus and His Word. It is the outward sign that she honors Jesus by honoring what He gave to us, is giving to us, and continues to give us in His Word. *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life...he has passed from death to life.* Life from death, a truly priceless gift to which no cost is ever "too expensive" to return in honor of God and His salvation for us.

Now in this time, beloved, we are kept from our usual outward expression of honoring the Son by honoring His Word in such extravagant ways. Since filming on Saturdays, our church is empty on Sunday mornings. The organ has stopped. The acclamations ended. The processions have come to a staggering halt. I miss it. I miss the liturgy, the pomp and circumstance, and all the outward signs of the Church's love for Jesus and His Word. My heart aches for the day when we can pull out all the stops for our first Divine Liturgy together. But as beautiful as those things are, they are all only external things. Even though we are spending our Sundays apart, we can still honor the Son together by honoring His Word in our hearts by faith. Though the external trappings are gone for a time, we are now given time to focus more intently on the true honor that we are to give the Son, reading His Word, believing it, and having our lives become the ornamental sign of our inward faith. Look around and see the "pomp and circumstance" still to be shown Christ by loving deed to a neighbor newly unemployed, a homeschooling parent at their wits' end, or a local business owner uncertain how they will recover or make ends meet for their family. Look and see all around you the beautiful honor we can pay the Son in the faces of our neighbors.

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

MONDAY, APRIL 27: ST. JOHN 5:1-9

Do you want to be healed? St. John 5:6

I've long held the belief that the true opposite of love is not hate, but apathy. At least with hate there is some animation of the soul towards its object of ire. I can love something or I can hate it, but in either case I'm showing some feeling towards it. There is still, even if in a negative sense, some relationship between myself and that object. Take for instance Brussels sprouts. As a child or even as a young adult, I'm sure I uttered the phrase, "I hate Brussels sprouts." That hate, which perhaps you share, though allowed me the opportunity to be converted. Because even in hate my soul was still animated towards that creature of my disgust and because it was still moving in relationship towards the tiny cabbage my feelings still had the possibility of being swayed. But had I become apathetic towards Brussels sprouts, not caring one bit about their existence, and having absolutely no interest in them one way or another, I never would have tried them roasted. Had I been apathetic to them, I never would have been able to now say, "I love them." Why? Because I wouldn't have even cared enough to try or ask myself why I hated them in the first place. My heart would have just been cold and dead to them.

Apathy is at the heart of today's healing story. We get this sense about the invalid from a series of clues that John narrates for us. 1) Jesus knows the man's been there a long time. 2) Jesus has to ask him if he even wants to be healed. 3) He doesn't answer Jesus question. 4) He comes up with an excuse why he just lays there, i.e. it's someone else's fault. After thirty-eight years he's become apathetic, indifferent, unmoved by his state. He simply exists for the sake of existing and whether he wants to be healed or not is now a legitimate question. We are also given another clue that this is truly his problem, only Jesus' strict command can shake him from his apathy.

This is something that we must be on guard for in this time. As the man who lived for year with his issues and became comfortable with them, we must not grow too comfortable with our current situation. We ought not become apathetic or indifferent to the virus or to our new status as a "digital church." As the days of sheltering at home grow longer we must not start to become indifferent to the Church, to gathering together, or to Holy Communion for these are not indifferent to our life of faith, but are a necessary part to it. I pray these days of infirmity will not stretch on much longer, but if they do let us never make Jesus wonder whether or not we want to be His body, His disciples, or eat and drink the healing medicine He gives us.

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

TUESDAY, APRIL 28: ST. JOHN 5:10-18

My Father is working until now, and I am working. St. John 5:17

As you all know one of the biggest points of contention that Jesus encountered during his three year ministry were His deeds of power done on the Sabbath. The Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday evening) was the day given by God purely for the sake of rest. We all know the text from Genesis, *“So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.”* This day was given purely as a gift to man and to animal alike. Humanity could rest from their toils and so could the beasts of burden who labored under the sun along with man. This gift in Genesis of the day of rest later becomes a command of God (Third Commandment). The Law of God sought to preserve the gift by binding His people to observe it. And so they did. They sought every way possible to keep it holy, even to the minutia of deciding what did or did not constitute “work” or rather unlawful observance of the Commandment. But though man was bound to keep the Commandment, God himself was not. And this is precisely Jesus’ point. The Work of God continues even when we are permitted to rest. Luther makes this point in his own way when talking about the Reformation. *“Take myself as an example. I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything.”*

Thanks be to God for the gift of rest, for the gift of knowing that the world doesn’t hang upon our shoulders, and that it doesn’t spin by the labor of our hands. Thanks be to God that He gifts us rest and continues to labor for us and for the world while we sleep, eat, drink a beer, or whatever else we do to unwind from the stresses and anxieties of the world for a few hours. For God has given this gift to us be used according to His purposes; to rest and to believe. To rest from our labors by turning to the One who takes them all upon His broad shoulders, Jesus the Christ. For Christ himself bids us to come to Him for that very thing; to find our Sabbath’s rest in Him. But we are not only to rest. We are also to believe in Him. To believe in the power of His Word to work in our lives and in the world while we rest. For it is the work of the devil and the whisper of his foul lies that conjures in us guilt for not “doing more” and for resting. I have heard that lie more than I can count since this epidemic started and some days I even start to believe it. But then comes Jesus’ Word and pure promise that He alone is the savior of the Church, not me. How beautiful that sweet promise of Christ He and the Father are working up until the very present. They do not rest from their labors, so that we can have the time to rest from ours.

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29: ST. JOHN 5:31-47

You search the Scriptures...and it is they that bear witness to Me. St. John 5:39

We see in this verse from our Lord Jesus two ways that people may come to the Scriptures, the Bible, the Word of God. The first of these is there revealed by our Lord Jesus in the first half of the verse. *You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life.* This is a way of reading the Scriptures as an end unto itself. That the Bible is the “Rule Book” in which one seeks to obey and by obeying it perfectly and fully eternal life is granted. In some forms, even today, this way of reading the Bible becomes Bibliolatry or Biblicism. It is a rather Islamic way of reading the Sacred Scriptures. For Muslims the Quran is the Word of God alone. To them the Quran is equated to God. They truly “read their scriptures” thinking that by obedience to them they will enter paradise. Yet this is not a Christian way of reading the Bible, for we do not see it as God, but rather as a pure testimony to God. For us the Sacred Scriptures are the Word of God, not because of some form of dictation (like the Quran is claimed to be by Muslims), but because it bears witness to Jesus Christ. This is how Jesus himself argues how the Scriptures are to be read, *“it is they that bear witness about me.”* That is to say the Bible is the Word of God because it points us to the true source of eternal life, Jesus Christ. The Bible is not an end unto itself, but rather has its beginning and end in Jesus.

With Jesus as the end, the telos, of the Bible we should then find Him on every page. Every verse of the Bible may speak to us of the coming, the presence, or the promised return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is a life-giving source of faith, because it speaks to us He who is Himself the Word of God. It is not a law book by which we can check off all the boxes to enter paradise. We do not have eternal life in the Scriptures alone or by doing what they ask of us. This is salvation by works. It is a foreign religion. It is not Christian. Rather we have our eternal life in Jesus Christ and the Bible gives Him to us. It teaches us the way of salvation not by our works, but by His work upon the Holy Cross. It lifts our spirits, because it creates in us everlasting hope, because it tells us of Jesus’ mighty resurrection. It gives faith, because it speaks God’s powerful and creative word in us. We must come back again and again to the source of our faith the Word of God so that it continues to be created, strengthened, and born in us anew. We must have each day its testimony imprinted into our hearts, our minds, and our souls because it gives us our Lord. Let us not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of our minds by the Word.

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

THURSDAY, APRIL 30: ST. JOHN 6:16-21

It is I; do not be afraid. St. John 6:20

The Kyrie of LBW's form of the Divine Liturgy is borrowed from the opening Great Litany of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (4th-5th century). Our Orthodox brothers and sisters begin each Divine Liturgy with a very similar opening, "*In peace let us pray to the Lord...For the peace from above and for our salvation...For the peace of the whole world, for the wellbeing of the Church of God and for the unity of all...etc.*" But LBW did not copy in full the Great Litany. If it had, we all would be more familiar with praying one of the oldest petitions of that Kyrie, "*For those who travel by land and sea...let us pray to the Lord.*" The early Church always included in her prayers particular prayers for those who are traveling, especially by sea. She did so, because she knew how perilous it is to travel and she also knew of the numerous Gospel accounts in which the disciples of the Lord were caught at sea by a storm. Indeed, it was the ship that became one of the very first images of the Church itself. Those early believers resonated with the ship tossed to and from upon the waves, because many of them had experienced the tragedies that the sea brought. Not only that, but also because they were experiencing a new life as Christians filled with just as much peril and uncertainty. They felt the barrage of waves crashing down upon them with each round of persecutions. The roaring wind of Caesar continually blew against them. And seeing themselves as that little boat full of disciples, they took great solace in the Gospel passages such as this. For they knew Jesus, unaffected by the storm, was coming to them, to rescue them, and to silence her oppressors.

I think we are all feeling a bit like we're on a boat right now with the waves and wind of uncertainty growing stronger the longer this epidemic goes on. Catching COVID-19, woosh! Economy, crash! Unemployment howls across the nation. We are beaten up on all sides by this storm and we feel it more and more the longer we're on sea. Yet, beloved, take heart! For off in the distance one approaches us. One for whom the water does not even dampen His feet nor the wind move His garments. The ebbing and flowing waves flatten like glass before His feet as He walks towards us. The only ripples the sea now has are ones of stillness, peace, and calm as they radiate from His presence. For He with only a look and a finger to His mouth hushes the raging uncertainty all around the ship. Indeed He becomes the only certain thing in the midst of chaos. And with that same look, He directs His eyes to us and says, "*It is I; do not be afraid.*" Do not be afraid, O people of God, O disciples of Jesus, for our Lord is with us as we travel upon this sea of life. *Let us pray to the Lord...Lord have mercy.*

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

FRIDAY, MAY 1: ST. JOHN 6:30-40

I AM the Bread of Life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. St. John 6:35

John's Gospel is weird. I don't mean that in a derogatory sense. I happen to love John, but it certainly is different than the rest. This is why Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known by the adjective "synoptic." They all share the same basic synopsis of Jesus life. They all are written in a similar timeline even sharing certain passages word for word. John doesn't. He stands alone among the four. As an example on the night of our Lord's betrayal the Synoptic Gospels all record the same basic act, though admittedly in different ways. Jesus takes bread, takes wine, and says, "This is my body. This is my blood." It is the foundational text for the Church's celebration, administration, and understanding of Holy Communion. It is a significant act of Jesus' ministry in His last days on earth. And yet John glosses over it. He simply says, "when the supper was ended." That's it. Why? Because prior to that night in which he was betrayed, John spends an entire chapter almost exclusively devoted to saying what he wants to say regarding Holy Communion in chapter 6. Throughout chapter 6 we hear variations of the same theme, Jesus is the food and drink of salvation.

And notice what he says here, this food and drink of salvation from Jesus is unending. He begins the verse, "EGO EIMI!" I AM!" The same I AM which God told Moses at the burning bush. He ends the verse with the reassurance that in Him, the Great I AM, we will never go hungry and never thirst. Jesus not only satisfies us with salvation, but he continues to feed us with that salvation in His Body and Blood. The reason those who come to him will not hunger and will not thirst is because the supply of what He gives us is eternal. We may only starve in our relationship with him, if we cease coming to Him. But whoever comes to Him hungering and thirsting for what He gives will find an unceasing supply of love, mercy, grace, forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life. Jesus the source and distributor of our salvation never ceases offering to us what we so desperately need, life. Luther puts it quite beautifully in one of the better portions of the Smalcald Articles, "*We shall now return to the Gospel, which offers counsel and help against sin in more than one way, for God is surpassingly rich in his grace: First, through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin is preached to the whole world; second, through Baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar, fourth through the power of keys; and finally through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren. Matt 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered."* There is no possible chance for us to starve or thirst, because Christ in many and various ways continues to feed us with His everlasting life. He is rich and gracious in feeding us with the bread of life. May we never cease coming to him

MORNING DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

SATURDAY, MAY 2: ST. JOHN 6:52-59

He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life. St. John 6:54

From the Large Catechism of 1530, “We have briefly considered the first part, namely, the essence of this sacrament. Now we come to its power and benefit, the purpose for that which the sacrament was really instituted, for it is most necessary that we know what we should see and obtain there. This is plainly evident from the words just quoted, “This is my body and blood, given and poured out *for you* for the forgiveness of sins.” In other words, we go to the sacrament because we receive there a great treasure, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins. Why? Because the words are there through which this is imparted! Christ bids me eat and drink in order that the sacrament may be mine and may be a source of blessing to me as a sure pledge and sign—indeed, as the very gift he has provided for me against my sins, death, and all evils.

“Therefore, it is appropriate called the food of the soul since it nourishes and strengthens the new man. While it is true that through Baptism we are first born anew, our human flesh and blood have not lost their old skin. There are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and the world that we often grow weary and faint, at times even stumble. The Lord’s Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may refresh and strengthen itself and not weaken in the struggle but grow continually stronger. For the new life should be one that continually develops and progresses. Meanwhile it must suffer much opposition. The devil is a furious enemy; when he sees that we resist him and attack the old man, and when he cannot rout us by force, he sneaks and skulks about everywhere, trying all kinds of tricks, and does not stop until he has finally worn us out so that we either renounce our faith or yield hand and foot and become indifferent or impatient. For such times, when our heart feels too sorely pressed, this comfort of the Lord’s Supper is given to bring us new strength and refreshment.

“Here again our clever spirits contort themselves with their great learning and wisdom... ‘How can bread and wine forgive sins or strengthen faith?’ Yet they know that we do not claim this of bread and wine—since in itself bread is bread—but of that bread and wine which are coupled with Christ’s body and blood and with which the words are coupled. These and no other, we say, are the treasure through which forgiveness is obtained. This treasure conveyed and communicated to us in no other way than through the words, “given and poured out for you.” Here you have both truths, that it is Christ’s body and blood and that these are yours as your treasure and gift. Christ’s body can never be an unfruitful, vain thing, impotent and useless.”

RUBRICS & NOTES FOR THE ORDER OF PRAYER

- ❖ The order of service is based on Herbert Lindemann's, "The Daily Office," Concordia Publishing House, 1965.
- ❖ Portions of the Office include options for Morning and Evening Prayer. These are indicated by "†". Use whichever portion is given for Matins or Vespers depending upon what time of day you are praying. Morning use "Matins" options at evening use "Vespers."
- ❖ The suggested lessons for Matins & Vespers are taken from Lindemann's book. If you are already on a reading plan of some kind you may want to substitute those readings in the place of the ones suggested. However, those taken from Lindemann's book are more in sync with the One Year Lectionary that we use for Sunday services. A time of silence should follow the reading.
- ❖ The schedule of Psalms is also from Lindemann's book. It is a four week schedule which will carry you through the entire Psalter in four weeks.
- ❖ No hymns have been suggested for the day. As we are in the season of Easter right now, any hymn in the Easter section is most appropriate (LBW #128–155). Also appropriate are the morning and evening hymns (LBW #264–282)
- ❖ If you are already praying LBW Morning & Evening Prayer, I commend you to continue using that. It was my hope that this would be a simpler service for people to use.
- ❖ The daily devotions are written by me. Please disregard any typos or mistakes as this week I've chosen expediency over perfection. They may be read either after the readings or before or after the service.
- ❖ The Collects are to be prayed every day of the week, but there should be ample time given for other petitions and prayers that you may wish to include.
- ❖ Any portions of the Book of Concord that may appear in these devotions is taken from Theodore G. Tappert's edition of "The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1959.