

Thoughts & Prayers

April 19, 2018

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you show those in error the light of your truth, that they may return into the way of righteousness. Grant to all who are admitted into fellowship with Christ the power to avoid all things that are contrary to the faith and to follow you according to the will of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Leonine Sacramentary, 6th Century)

Prayer Concerns

Anita Johnson (continuing to recover from surgery)

Tommie Compton (continuing to recover from recent health set back)

Thoughts on the Readings

The Common Thread

We call upon no other name than Jesus when it comes to being saved from eternal damnation and death. Even when we walk through that death's valley, we who believe in that Name, have no need to fear. Even when our heart condemns us because the law is accusing us of sins—we have confidence before God, and peace. Why? Because we keep the greatest commandment: that we believe in him who laid down his life for us.

First Reading - Acts 4:1-12

Peter turned the healing of a crippled man into an opportunity to proclaim Christ. Accused of disorder and arrested, Peter's subsequent trial became a prophetic testimony prompted by the Holy Spirit. The point of the proceedings became salvation in Christ alone instead of why and how a man was healed. We also have the authority and the imperative to bring all things back around to Jesus.

Psalms - Psalm 23:1-6

Courtroom trials and private conscience are nothing against the grace of God. The needs of life and the threat of death are easily comforted by the God who cares for his people. Though these blessings from God do not always come at once, they surely do arrive at the right time and in good measure.

Second Reading - 1 John 3:16-24

God's grace is greater than our feelings. We may have absolute confidence before God even when we neglect our duty. Though we sometimes fail to keep his commands, we do not fail him altogether. We try harder and continue to believe despite ourselves. For we do not believe in our good works or our bad ones, but in God's Son Jesus Christ. It is not enough to love your neighbor as yourself — you must keep loving God. When you sense the law accusing you, remember the first two commandments: Keep loving the Lord and then try again to love your neighbor, even if it means laying down your life for her.

Gospel - John 10:11-18

We learn to sacrifice for others because Jesus did so for us. He laid down his life for us, for his sheep. He is the Good Shepherd. Shepherds drive off that which threatens their sheep (1 Samuel 17:36), but they do not purposely sacrifice their lives for those sheep. Jesus voluntarily gave his life for his flock, in obedience to his Father's will.