

THE CONGREGATION AT PRAYER

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer

The week of Advent 3

December 11-17, 2016

Catechetical Notes for the week: The third article teaches us that the third Person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. He possesses all the attributes of God. He is one with the Father and the Son, deserving of our praise and worship and honor. His work is to point to Jesus as Savior. He takes the blessings of Christ's cross, and Christ Himself, and brings it to us week after week, day after day to create, strengthen, and sustain faith. To accomplish this He works through the Means of Grace - Baptism, the Word, and Communion. Yes, He has bound Himself only to these Means. Without His work, no one could come to Jesus or believe in Him. Without His Means of Grace, the Spirit will never come. The third article shows us that we need the Spirit to be saved. We cannot come to Christ, but must be brought to Him by the Spirit. Yet by neglecting the Means of Grace, we divorce ourselves from His work and thus starve our faith. So we have trusted in ourselves, abilities, knowledge, background as confidence for salvation instead of the Spirit's work. We have viewed it as unimportant or even boring as He comes to give us eternal treasures and unite us to Christ and believers in heaven and those on earth. It calls us to repentance and faith in the God who has given us faith to believe and confess Jesus our Lord and Savior.

Theme: The Lord is near. Rejoice!

In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTLES' CREED

BIBLE VERSE: John 6:63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

<p><i>What is the third article?</i> 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.</p>	Preschool+
<p><i>What does this mean?</i> I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.</p>	1st Grade+
<p>In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.</p>	2nd Grade+

DAILY READING		<i>The Story Bible page</i>
Monday	Acts 2:1-13	423
Tuesday	Acts 7	428
Wednesday	Luke 5:1-11	319
Thursday	Mark 2:13-17	331
Friday	Luke 15:11-31	374
Saturday	Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Philippians 4:4-7; John 1:19-28	(Gen 22:1-19) 61

PRAYER

Pray the Catechism: *(The catechetical notes are meant to assist you in this.)*

Example:

Repeat the 3rd Article

A teaching: Dear Father, in the first article You teach me that the Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, who takes the blessings Christ won and brings them to me. Without His work I would be eternal lost.

A thanksgiving: I thank You for sending the Spirit into my heart through the preaching of Your Gospel and Holy Sacraments to create and sustain my faith in Jesus.

A confession: I confess and ask for grace that I have trusted in my own Bible knowledge or heritage rather than in Him; and so I have neglected and view with indifference the Means of Grace and thus the Spirit.

A prayer: I ask You to not take Your Spirit from me, but to forgive me my sins for Jesus' sake, give me the Sacraments and so increase my faith.

Personal prayers: *(suggestions listed below)*

Sunday: *Pray for the joy of the resurrection among us; for true and godly worship throughout the world; and for the faithful preaching and hearing of God's Word.*

Monday: *Pray for faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for your calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for government; and for peace.*

Tuesday: *Pray for deliverance against temptation; for the addicted and despairing; for the tortured and oppressed; and for those struggling with besetting sins.*

Wednesday: *Pray for marriage and family, that all may live together under the grace of Christ according to the Word of God; for parents who must rear their children alone; and for godly schools, our church schools, and seminaries.*

Thursday: *Pray for the Church and her pastors; for missionaries; and for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood.*

Friday: *Pray for the preaching of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for its spread throughout the whole world, especially in our community; and for the persecuted.*

Saturday: *Pray for faithfulness to the end; for the sick and dying; for the revival of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; and for receptive hearts for worship and study on the Lord's Day.*

Prayer for Advent 3

Lord, we beseech You: give ear to our prayers; and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit: one God, now and forever.

Luther's Morning/Evening Prayer

Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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.