



SEASON OF CREATION

Lectionary Notes

Revised Common Lectionary, Year B

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This document highlights, in **blue text**, key words or phrases from the weekly readings that are well suited for reflection and emphasis for the Season of Creation 2018. These are all drawn from the authorized lectionary and so are especially suited to those places where deviation from the lectionary is not allowed or desirable. Other ideas and themes relevant for preaching and reflection are also **highlighted in red**.

September 2nd

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 22 (Green)

Collect

Author and Giver of all good things,
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion,
nourish us in all goodness,
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Song of Solomon 2:8-13

The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

Relevant Themes: Seasons; Creation cycle; Flora and fauna

Psalm: Psalm 45:1-2, 7-10

REFRAIN *God has blessed you for ever.*

My heart is stirring with a noble song; let me recite what I have fashioned for the king; my tongue shall be the pen of a skilled writer.

You are the fairest of men; grace flows from your lips, because God has blessed you for ever. R

Your throne, O God, endures for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom; you love righteousness and hate iniquity.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. R

All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and the music of strings from ivory palaces makes you glad.

Kings' daughters stand among the ladies of the court; on your right hand is the queen, adorned with the gold of Ophir. R

Second Reading: James 1:17-27

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be **doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But **those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act - they will be blessed in their doing**. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Relevant themes: Doers of the word; Stewardship of creation; Grace, gift and care

Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but **eat with defiled hands?**" He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "**Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.**"

Relevant themes: Food; Eating; Stewardship; Inside/Outside

Prayer Over the Gifts

Merciful God,
receive all we offer you this day.
Give us grace to love one another
that your love may be made perfect in us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer After Communion

Almighty God,
you renew us at your table with the bread of life.
May your holy food strengthen us in love
and help us to serve you in each other.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

September 9th

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 23 (Green)

Collect

Stir up, O Lord,
the wills of your faithful people,
that richly bearing the fruit of good works,
we may by you be richly rewarded;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favour is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all. *Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity*, and the rod of anger will fail. *Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor*. Do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them.

Relevant themes: True generosity; Receiving the gift of life

Psalm: Psalm 125

REFRAIN *Those who trust in the Lord stand fast for ever.*

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but stands fast for ever.

The hills stand about Jerusalem; so does the Lord stand round about his people, from this time forth for evermore. **R**

The sceptre of the wicked shall not hold sway over the land allotted to the just, so that the just shall not put their hands to evil. **R**

Show your goodness, O Lord, to those who are good and to those who are true of heart.

As for those who turn aside to crooked ways, the Lord will lead them away with the evildoers; but peace be upon Israel. R

Second Reading: James 2:1-10 (11-13), 14-17

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you? You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

[For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgement will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgement.]

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Relevant themes: Speaking vs. acting; Integrity

Gospel: Mark 7:24-37

Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go the demon has left your daughter." So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. *Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.* Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Relevant themes: Opened; Insight; Revelation

Prayer Over the Gifts

Great and holy God,
accept our offering of labour and love.
May we bring you true and spiritual worship
and be one with you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Prayer After Communion

Father,
your word and sacrament give us food and life.
May we who have shared in holy things
bear fruit to your honour and glory,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

September 16th

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 24 (Green)

Collect

Almighty God,
you call your Church to witness
that in Christ we are reconciled to you.
Help us so to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may turn to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Proverbs 1:20-33

Wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice. At the busiest corner she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? Give heed to my reproof; I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you. Because I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded, and because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you, when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices. For waywardness kills the simple, and the complacency of fools destroys them; but those who listen to me will be secure and will live at ease, without dread of disaster."

Relevant themes: True wisdom; Wisdom on the street

Psalm: Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork.

One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.

Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,

Their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world.

In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.

The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can tell how often he offends? cleanse me from my secret faults.

Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Or **Canticle: Wisdom of Solomon 7:26-8:1**

REFRAIN *Wisdom is an image of God's goodness; she orders all things well.*

Wisdom is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. **R**

Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets;

for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom. **R**

She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior,

for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail.

She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well. **R**

Relevant themes: Wisdom in creation; Light, beauty

Second Reading: James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. *Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.*

Relevant themes: Creation speaks, invites, directs, informs

Gospel: Mark 8:27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Relevant themes: Discipleship; Denial/restraint

Prayer over the Gifts

Holy God,
accept all we offer you this day.
May we who are reconciled at this table
bring wholeness to our broken world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Prayer After Communion

God of peace,
in this eucharist we have been reconciled
to you and to our neighbours.
May we who have been nourished by holy things
always have the courage to forgive.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

September 23rd

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 25 (Green)

Collect

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth,
and ourselves in your image.
Teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and to serve you with reverence and thanksgiving;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Proverbs 31:10-31

A capable wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from far away. She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and tasks for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all her household are clothed in crimson. She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the city gates, taking his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she supplies the merchant with sashes. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

Psalm: Psalm 1

REFRAIN *Happy are they who trust in the Lord.*

Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

Their delight is in the law of the Lord, and they meditate on his law day and night. R

They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; everything they do shall prosper.

It is not so with the wicked; they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgement comes, nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is doomed. R

Second Reading: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8A

Who is wise and understanding among you? *Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.* But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.* Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.* Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Relevant themes: Peacemakers in creation

Gospel: Mark 9:30-37

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then [he took a little child and put it among them](#); and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Relevant themes: [The next generation and creation](#)

Prayer over the Gifts

God of power,
the glory of your works fills us with wonder and awe.
Accept our offering this day,
and help us to [live in peace and harmony](#)
[with all your creation](#),
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer after Communion

[Ruler of the universe](#),
[all creation yearns for its fulfilment in your Son](#).
May we who have shared in holy things
grow into maturity in him.
This we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

September 30th

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 26 (Green)

Collect

Grant, O merciful God, that your Church,
being gathered by your Holy Spirit into one,
may show forth your power among all peoples,
to the glory of your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Esther 7: 1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favour, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me - that is my petition - and the lives of my people that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated. Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them [days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.](#)

Relevant themes: [Food and feasting and ritual](#)

Psalm: Psalm 124

REFRAIN *We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler.*

If the Lord had not been on our side, let Israel now say;

If the Lord had not been on our side, when enemies rose up against us;

Then would they have swallowed us up alive in their fierce anger toward us; **R**

Then would the waters have overwhelmed us and the torrent gone over us; Then would the raging waters have gone right over us. **R**

Blessed be the Lord! he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. **R**

Second Reading: James 5:13-20

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. *The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.* My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

*Relevant themes: **Creation and dependence***

Gospel: Mark 9: 38-50

John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. *For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.*"

Relevant themes: Salt, saltiness, advocacy and voice

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
in Jesus Christ we behold your glory.
Receive the offering of your people gathered before you,
and open our hearts and mouths
to praise your great salvation,
the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Father in heaven,
strengthen the unity of your Church,
so that we who have been fed with holy things
may fulfil your will in the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.