

Third Sunday of Easter May 3, 2025

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

The First Lesson, Epistle and Gospel will be read from The Amplified Bible

The Collect: O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

9 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord [and relentless in his search for believers], went to the high priest, 2 and he asked for letters [of authority] from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any men or women there belonging to the Way [believers, followers of Jesus the Messiah], men and women alike, he could arrest them and bring them bound [with chains] to Jerusalem. 3 As he traveled he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him [displaying the glory and majesty of Christ]; 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice [from heaven] saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting and oppressing Me?" 5 And Saul said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6 now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 The men who were traveling with him [were terrified and] stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was unable to see for three days, and he neither ate nor drank.

10 Now in Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he answered, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul; for he is praying [there], 12 and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him, so that he may regain his sight." 13 But Ananias

answered, "Lord, I have heard from many people about this man, especially how much suffering and evil he has brought on Your saints (God's people) at Jerusalem; 14 and here [in Damascus] he has authority from the high priests to put in chains all who call on Your name [confessing You as Savior]." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for this man is a [deliberately] chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will make clear to him how much he must suffer and endure for My name's sake." 17 So Ananias left and entered the house, and he laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came [to Damascus], has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit [in order to proclaim Christ to both Jews and Gentiles]." 18 Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized; 19 and he took some food and was strengthened.

For several days [afterward] Saul remained with the disciples who were at Damascus.
20 And immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "This Man is the Son of God [the promised Messiah]!"
Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 30

1 I will exalt you, O Lord,
because you have lifted me up *
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.
2 O Lord my God, I cried out to you, *
and you restored me to health.
3 You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; *
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.
4 Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; *
give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.
5 For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, *
his favor for a lifetime.
6 Weeping may spend the night, *

but joy comes in the morning.

7 While I felt secure, I said,

“I shall never be disturbed. *

You, Lord, with your favor, made me as strong as
the mountains.”

8 Then you hid your face, *

and I was filled with fear.

9 I cried to you, O Lord; *

I pleaded with the Lord, saying,

10 “What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit? *

will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?

11 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; *

O Lord, be my helper.”

12 You have turned my wailing into dancing; *

you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me with joy.

13 Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; *

O Lord my God, I will give you thanks for ever.

Epistle: Revelation 5:11-14

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and [the voice] of the living creatures and the elders; and they numbered myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands (innumerable), 12 saying in a loud voice,

“Worthy and deserving is the Lamb that was sacrificed to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

13 And I heard every created thing that is in heaven or on earth or under the earth [in Hades, the realm of the dead] or on the sea, and everything that is in them, saying [together],

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb (Christ), be blessing and honor and glory

and dominion forever and ever.”

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped [Him who lives forever and ever].

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: John 21:1-19

21 After this Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee). And He did it in this way: 2 Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus (the twin), and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, as well as [John and James] the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said, “And we are coming with you.” So they went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

4 As morning was breaking, Jesus [came and] stood on the beach; however, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 So Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish [to eat along with your bread]?” They answered, “No.” 6 And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat (starboard) and you will find some.” So they cast [the net], and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great catch of fish. 7 Then that disciple (John) whom Jesus loved (esteemed) said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer tunic (for he was stripped for work) and threw himself into the sea [and swam ashore]. 8 But the other disciples came in the small boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

9 So when they got out on the beach, they saw a charcoal fire set up and fish on it cooking, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”

11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three [of them]; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared to ask Him,

“Who are You?” They knew [without any doubt] that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples, after He had risen from the dead.

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these [others do—with total commitment and devotion]?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You [with a deep, personal affection, as for a close friend].” Jesus said to him, “Feed My lambs.” 16 Again He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me [with total commitment and devotion]?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You [with a deep, personal affection, as for a close friend].” Jesus said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me [with a deep, personal affection for Me, as for a close friend]?” Peter was grieved that He asked him the third time, “Do you [really] love Me [with a deep, personal affection, as for a close friend]?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You [with a deep, personal affection, as for a close friend].” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.

18 I assure you and most solemnly say to you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and walked wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and arms, and someone else will dress you, and carry you where you do not wish to go.” 19 Now He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, “Follow Me [walk the same path of life that I have walked]!”

The Gospel of the Lord

On May 8 we celebrate the life of Dame Julian of Norwich. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

Of Dame Julian’s early life we know little, only the probable date of her birth (1342). Her own writings in the Revelations of Divine Love are concerned only with her visions, or “showings,” that she experienced when she was thirty years old.

She had been gravely ill and was given the last rites; suddenly, on the seventh day, all pain left her, and she had fifteen visions of the Passion. These brought her great peace and joy. “From that time I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord’s meaning,” she wrote, “and fifteen years after I was answered in ghostly understanding: ‘Wouldst thou learn the Lord’s meaning in this thing? Learn it well. Love was his meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. What showed he thee? Love. Wherefore showed it he? For Love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same.’ Thus it was I learned that Love was our Lord’s meaning.”

Julian had long desired three gifts from God: “the mind of his passion, bodily sickness in youth, and three wounds—of contrition, of compassion, of will-full longing toward God.” Her illness brought her the first two wounds, which then passed from her mind. The third, “will-full longing” (divinely inspired longing), never left her.

She became a recluse, an anchoress, at Norwich soon after her recovery from illness, living in a small dwelling attached to the Church of St. Julian. Even in her lifetime, she was famed as a mystic and spiritual counselor and was frequently visited by clergymen and lay persons, including the famous mystic Margery Kempe. Kempe says of Julian: “This anchoress was expert in knowledge of our Lord and could give good counsel. I spent much time with her talking of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Lady Julian’s book is a tender and beautiful exposition of God’s eternal and all-embracing love, showing how his charity toward the human race is exhibited in the Passion. Again and again she referred to Christ as “our courteous Lord.” Many have found strength in the words the Lord had given her: “I can make all things well; I will make all things well; I shall make all things well; and thou canst see for thyself that all manner of things shall be well.”

Let us pray: Lord God, in your compassion you granted to the Lady Julian many revelations of your nurturing and sustaining love: Move our hearts, like hers, to seek you above all things, for in giving us yourself you give us all; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**