

Readings for Sunday, August 23, 2020
The Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

AS WE GATHER

God's people have gifts that are signs of His loving presence and demonstrations of His gracious power. In a sermon preached in 1538, Martin Luther observed, "Whoever comes to faith can only say that the Holy Spirit comes when and where and to whom He pleases at the time He pleases. He comes when and where He pleases and also gives a person as many gifts as He pleases" (*WLS* § 2057). As people in whom the Spirit dwells, we have the joy of discovering special gifts of God in one another and in ourselves as well. May that mutual discovering and celebrating be truly God pleasing in every way!

Old Testament Reading, *Isaiah 51:1-6*
(The salvation of the Lord will be forever.)

¹Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the Lord:
look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.
²Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
that I might bless him and multiply him.
³For the Lord comforts Zion;
he comforts all her waste places
and makes her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.
⁴Give attention to me, my people,
and give ear to me, my nation;
for a law will go out from me,
and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.

5My righteousness draws near,
 my salvation has gone out,
 and my arms will judge the peoples;
the coastlands hope for me,
 and for my arm they wait.
6Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens vanish like smoke,
 the earth will wear out like a garment,
 and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;
but my salvation will be forever,
 and my righteousness will never be dismayed.”

Epistle Reading, *Romans 11:33-12:8*

(We are one Body in Christ.)

33Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34“For who has known the mind of the Lord,

or who has been his counselor?”

35“Or who has given a gift to him

that he might be repaid?”

36For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

1I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

4For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Holy Gospel, Matthew 16:13-20

(Jesus is confessed as the Christ, the Son of the living God, by Peter.)

13Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." 20Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.