



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
PENTECOST 20 —YEAR B**

INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father
and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 139b

**A: I will praise you, O Lord,
for I am wonderfully made.**

L: O LORD, you created my inmost being;

**G: you knit me together in my mother's
womb.**

L: I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;

**G: your works are wonderful, I know that full
well.**

L: My frame was not hidden from you;

G: your eyes saw my unformed body.

L: All the days ordained for me

**G: were written in your book before one of
them came to be.**

L: How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

G: How vast is the sum of them!

L: Were I to count them,

G: they would outnumber the grains of sand.

**A: I will praise you, O Lord,
for I am wonderfully made.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty God, in your bountiful goodness keep us safe from every evil of body and soul. Make us ready, with cheerful hearts, to do whatever pleases you; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION *see next page*

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**A: 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.**

VERSE OF THE DAY

**A: I will proclaim your name to my people; in
the midst of the congregation I will praise
you. (Hebrews 2:12 cf. RSV)**

BENEDICTION

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

A: Amen

READING AND MEDITATION:

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost: The closest we can get to a mirror of the love of God for us is the mirror of the love that he wants us to have for one another in the family. The goal of family members is to reflect the love of God for us in self-giving love for one another in the family. How tragic that in our society such a mirror is clouded indeed! There is much to repent of and much to strive toward.

As you study this week, seek to find the *connecting theme* in all the lessons by using Luther's Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

THE GOSPEL: MARK 10:2-16

God takes marriage seriously. Each marriage should be seen by those in it as a most precious gift of God. To violate and destroy that gift is a crime of the first order that brings God's judgment on those who are responsible for breaking the mirror of his union with us in the Church. Such people do damage to their partner and to their children by hindering them in coming to the arms of Jesus by their bad example, by their destruction and despising of God's gift, and by clouding the mirror of the marriage between Christ and his Church. The gospel lesson is a warning not only to those who actually divorce but also to those whose behavior inside of marriage displays a lack of appreciation for the beautiful gift of God in one another and their children. It is also an encouragement to those who are faithful in their family to appreciate God's special blessing through their family for this life and as a mirror for the life of the family with Christ in his marriage with the Church.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: GENESIS 2:18-24

Note how careful God is in his institution of marriage and how eager he is that husband and wife see each other as a special blessing from God. He does not give Adam a wife until Adam first recognizes his need for one. Then he takes the greatest care in providing for that need. It is even greater care than he employed when he created Adam in the first place. Then God himself, without consulting either Adam or Eve, regulates the marriage he himself has instituted in a way that will best serve the interests of the married and ultimately of the Church and society as well. Adam got the point and spoke the first humanly authored love poem addressed chiefly in praise of God. (The first love poem was God's own at the creation in Genesis 1:26.)

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: HEBREWS 2:9-11

The work of Christ was so difficult and painful because its goal was to make us members of his family. For that to happen he had to make us holy by his work and by his message of forgiveness; otherwise there could be no familial connection between God who is holy in his essence and man who is fallen and sinful in his nature. Now we share this connection with Christ. He is our brother, holy by nature, and we are members of his household, holy by imputation.

My takeaways:

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:
EPHESIANS 5:21—6:4**

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?

This lesson repeats much of the second lesson for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. But the text certainly merits use on a Sunday devoted to a family emphasis. Christ himself sets the example in his marriage to us. He did everything he did not for his own benefit but for ours. We, as the bride of Christ, gladly submit to such a head, not least in the way we conduct ourselves in our family life. May the head of the family ever see it as his goal and role to do all for the benefit of those Christ has given him in his household, that the family may become a worthy reflection of the love of Christ for the Church and hers for him. Notice, by the way, that there is not word in the reading to suggest that when the husband fails to imitate Christ, the wife has an excuse to fail in her imitation of the Church. Nor is there a hint of a suggestion that the husband has a reason not to act like Christ when his wife fails to submit as willingly and eagerly as does the Church. Clearly the wife has an incentive to carry out her role that her husband may the more easily carry out his, and vice versa. But neither has an excuse to ignore the beautiful, the vital, the most important assignment of striving to imitate the marriage of Christ and the Church in their marriage. The washing of water by the Word makes such imitation a daily, if imperfect, possibility.

My takeaways: