

## Trinity 11

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) Homilies are provided for Morning Prayer A and Evening Prayer A. Others are to be written.

### Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 26:12-16, [17-18] 19 [20-21]  
*indicating four verses the lectionary omits, but allows to be read.*

Second Lesson: Rom 8:26-39

### Homily

This morning's readings are especially rich.  
(If the four optional verses from Isaiah are read, they are even richer.)  
There are at least a dozen themes we could follow, but we simply can't cover them all today.  
These could perhaps be the subject of your meditation for the entire week to come.  
Let's just follow one line of thought this morning.

Isaiah begins with the observation that all of us have been ruled by other lords.  
And so it is.  
He, of course, had in mind the political domination of his nation.

They had been in slavery in Egypt, they had, at various times, been oppressed by various nations, by Edomites, Midianites, Philistines, and others; and the Babylonian, Assyrian, Grecian, and Roman oppressions were still to come, along with yet others.

This political oppression, however, is not the point.  
Other lords have had dominion over us, our sins, our ceaseless desire for things, for experiences, for pleasures, desires which often lead us away from God's commands. Our emotions rule us, our self-interest, our personal ideas of right and wrong, our patriotism, even, and other things ordinarily good. It is so easy to allow other lords to have sway over us, to let their influence on us outweigh that of God.

*"O LORD our God," said Isaiah,  
"other lords beside thee have had dominion over us:  
but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. "*

Though there have been many lords,

though there still are many lords,  
 there is only one true Lord,  
 only one real authority,  
 and it is only at his command  
 that we can even praise Him,  
 but, as for all those others,  
 Isaiah is forceful:

*"They are dead, they shall not live;  
 they are deceased, they shall not rise: "*

What is it that we want?  
 On what do we pin our hopes?  
 What is it that we think we have to have?  
 Is there anything that comes in the way  
 of unswerving obedience to God?

*"They are dead, they shall not live;  
 they are deceased, they shall not rise: "*

All flesh is grass.  
 Everything withers and dies.  
 The saying holds true about everything:  
 "This too shall pass."  
 All our desires, all our so-called needs  
 will pass.  
 Only the  
 Word of the Lord stands firm.

All the rest?  
*"They are dead, they shall not live;  
 they are deceased, they shall not rise: "  
 therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them,  
 and made all their memory to perish."*

So, none of what we value so highly will last.  
 None of what we seek so strongly  
 merits our devotion.  
 Ultimately we don't know what we really need,  
 only He does.  
 We don't even know what to seek,  
 or what to pray for, but, as St. Paul wrote:

*"...the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:  
 for we know not what we should pray for  
 as we ought:  
 but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us  
 with groanings which cannot be uttered.  
 And he that searcheth the hearts  
 knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,  
 because he maketh intercession for the saints  
 according to the will of God."*

Can we trust God to know our needs?  
 Can we trust Him to guide our prayers?  
 Are we willing to want what He wants?

Or do our own desires trump his?  
If we trust him, we have St. Paul's assurance:

*"And we know  
that all things work together for good  
to them that love God,  
to them who are the called  
according to his purpose."*

In the long run, in God's sight,  
this is unfailingly true,  
and thus we can pray, with Isaiah:

*LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us:  
for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.*

Lord, teach us to pray. Amen.

# **Trinity 11**

## **Morning Prayer B**

First Lesson: Job 5:8-18

Second Lesson: Matt 23:13-31

## **Homily to be written**

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# **Trinity 11**

## **Morning Prayer C**

First Lesson: Gen 37:3-4, 12-35

Second Lesson: James 1:1-15

## **Homily to be written**

# Trinity 11

## Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 35:10-19

Second Lesson: Mark 12:38-44

## Homily

We read this morning  
from the Book called Ecclesiasticus,  
one of the Greek-language books  
of the Old Testament,  
that we call Apocrypha:

*“Give unto the most High  
according as he hath enriched thee;  
and as thou hast gotten, give with a cheerful eye.”*

Have you taken note of how much  
the Bible has to say about money?  
It is one of the major themes of Jesus’ parables,  
and keeps cropping up here and there  
in both Testaments.

Money, the possession of material goods,  
and the responsibility that goes with them  
are among the most important indicators

of our relationship to God.

We don’t always like to hear that.  
One of the most common complaints  
against churches and other ministries  
is that they're always asking for money,  
and sometimes that is justified.  
Fundraising sometimes gets offensive.  
Big givers are often treated like  
the most important people in the church.  
Expensive projects are sometimes pushed  
for the appearance or the prestige involved.

But, to churches, to ministries,  
and to individual Christians,  
God has given many things,  
or, rather, has entrusted them with many things,  
a trust known as “stewardship”.  
That’s one of those church words, isn’t it?  
It gets used a whole lot as a way to raise money  
for the use of the church,  
and that’s not all bad.  
The Church has been given a job to do,  
and the job can’t be done without money,  
and the money has to come from the faithful.  
But, if we describe it that way,  
we have it just backwards  
Ecclesiasticus is talking about giving,

about giving to the Lord,  
 about the sacrifices that the Old Testament  
 required the people to make,  
 but listen to what we heard today,  
 listen hard,  
 and be ready to be shocked:

*“Do not think to corrupt [God] with gifts;  
 for such he will not receive;  
 and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices;  
 for the Lord is judge,  
 and with him is no respect of persons.”*

Does God need our money?  
 Does he respect us for the amount we give?  
 Do we receive from Him because we were so good  
 in our giving?  
 Is it the biggest givers  
 who deserve the most credit for giving?

We heard Jesus as He spoke of a poor widow  
 who gave an almost laughably tiny gift,  
 but what she gave was more, far more,  
 than she could afford to give,  
 and so it is that He declared her gift to be  
 far more than what any of the rich men had given.

Now, remember words

you have probably said many times,  
 one of the most used of the offertory sentences  
 in the Communion Service,  
 used in many of our churches every Sunday:

*“All things come of thee, O Lord,  
 and of thine own have we given thee.”*

Can we really give God anything?  
 It’s all already His,  
 and he has only loaned it to us, all of it.  
 Whether we use it for ourselves,  
 whether we give it away to others,  
 whether we make an offering to the Church,  
 it is entrusted to, every bit of it,  
 for His honor and glory,  
 as a way to express our worship,  
 our trust,  
 our obedience  
 to Him.

Our God owns, as the Psalm says,  
 the cattle on a thousand hills.  
 He owns the hills themselves.  
 He owns the clothes on our backs.  
 In fact He owns the backs themselves.  
 The air we breathe, every breath of it,  
 is His, and he bestows it on us,

out of unimaginable love  
He needs nothing.  
None of our gifts are necessary  
for Him to accomplish His purpose.  
Whatever He wishes to do, He can do.  
So why does He give to us,  
and why does He expect us to give back to Him?

Because we need to give  
in order to grow into what He intends us to be.  
What we think we own  
has no other purpose than that,  
and is in our hands and our pockets  
to enable us to be what He has called us to be,  
to offer all that we have,  
our possessions,  
our selves, our souls and bodies,  
to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice  
in union with His one true and perfect  
offered for us on the Cross of Calvary.

Let us pray.

We give thee but thine own,  
whate'er the gift may be.  
All that we have is thine alone,  
a trust, O Lord from thee.  
Accept us, Lord, and all we are, and all we have,

and make us, unworthy though we are,  
a reflection of thy merciful glory,  
and instruments of thy loving purpose,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# **Trinity 11**

## **Evening Prayer B**

First Lesson: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Second Lesson: Luke 18:9-14

## **Homily to be written**

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# **Trinity 11**

## **Evening Prayer C**

First Lesson: 2 Sam 7:18-29

Second Lesson: Acts 15:1-21

## **Homily to be written**