**The Epiphany**

January 6

Heavenly Father, eternal God, whose alone and forever is the power, and the kingdom, and the glory, and to whom only belongs authority over all the earth and universe, over all forces and energies, over all suns and stars, and over all intelligences and knowledge, we give thee thanksgiving and praise.

We thank thee that by the leading of a star thou didst bring to the feet of our Lord the wise men from the East to manifest thy Light to the Gentiles. Lead the nations of the earth to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, and grant wisdom to all rulers of men, that they may serve him in love and fear. Prosper and bless thy Word and the preaching of the Gospel, that multitudes may come to faith in Jesus Christ and that he may be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. Endue all ministers, missionaries, catechists, and Christian workers with heavenly power and grace, that their labor may be abundantly and fruitfully blessed. Grant all who hear thy Word faith to believe it, strength to obey it, and courage to profess it in word and deed. Give to thy Son the nations for his inheritance and overcome and confound all enemies of his truth. Overthrow all powers of darkness that bind men in the chains of superstition and ignorance, and all forces of denial and unbelief that assault men's minds. Grant help to thy servants who here and in distant lands wage a holy war until at last every knee shall bow and every tongue proclaim that Christ is Lord to thy glory, O Father.

We beseech thee to behold thy people as they are gathered here before thee. Lead us to bring to thy Son the treasures of our time and talent and likewise yield to his service the whole of our lives, conforming our minds, our wills, and our hearts to his obedience. Grant that we may ever walk in the light which is in Jesus, and that steadfastly following in the path set before us we may at last receive the crown of life.

For our sick we pray that thou wouldst look upon them in mercy and show them the way out of all their trials. Comfort with thy presence the aged, the lonely, and the forsaken. Shepherd the young. Console the sorrowing. Heal the broken-hearted. Forgive us all our sins and grant us newness of life in Jesus Christ, in whose Name we bring these and all our petitions. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

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EPIPHANY

**First Sunday**

We bless thee, O God, for the revelation of thy will and wisdom in the life of thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, even in the days of his early youth.

By thy Holy Spirit implant in us more and more of the mind of Christ. Make us glad to go into thy house. Open our ears that we may gratefully hear and attend to the teaching and preaching of thy Word. In all things, instill in our hearts, O Lord, a continuing desire to be about thy business, to increase in wisdom, and to grow in favor with thee and our fellow men.

By thy mercy, O God, lead our children and young people as thou didst direct and lead thy holy Son Jesus. Give us grace as parents and elders to show thy will and way to the young by faithful worship and love for thy Word and gracious Gospel.

In all our doings, heavenly Father, enable us as young and old alike to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto thee. Deliver us from conformity to this world, and transform us by the renewing of our minds, that we may show forth thy good and acceptable and perfect will in our every thought, word, and deed.

Hear our prayer, O God, for all in the company and fellowship of thy church. Prosper and bless our worship and our witness to Christ and his power to save. Fill us more and more with zeal for the salvation of men and the extension of Christ's kingdom. Grant thy strength and blessing to all pastors, teachers, and missionaries, that they may proclaim thy Word with fervor and diligence and bring the light of the Gospel to people of all lands and nations.

Grant, Lord, that by thy Holy Spirit all weaknesses in thy church may be overcome, all lassitude dispelled, all fear of men cast out, all indifference removed, all lukewarmness banished, and all love of the world forsaken. Then by thy same Spirit, fill us all in thy church with a full measure of his power, that we may be obedient to our Lord's commandment to proclaim the Gospel to every creature.

Lord, thou art mighty to save. Thou art the mighty God who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast, who didst order the stars in their courses, the winds in their journeys, the waves in their ebb and flow. Help us to know and find strength in the greatness and wonder of thy might and majesty.

And in thy mercy, Lord, show thy strength and goodness to the sick and the afflicted. Give them grace to cast their cares upon thee in the knowledge and assurance of thy care for them. Help, heal, establish, and strengthen them, and in all things enable them and all of us to rejoice in thy holy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, whom we worship and adore with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

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EPIPHANY

**Second Sunday**

Almighty and ever-living God, who in Jesus Christ thy Son hast given the light of thy truth for all who are in the darkness of error and falsehood, so that all men may have life through his Name, we thank thee that thou hast called us into this true and living faith and graciously bestowed upon us manifold gifts of grace.

Hear now our prayer, heavenly Father, that thy people may be shining lights in this world's darkness. To this end grant that we may be united in brotherly love and zeal to do the holy work set before us, fervent in the purpose of our calling, loyal in every test of faithfulness, joyful in our promised hope, steadfast in every trial, benevolent toward all men, generous in hospitality, and holding fast to all that is good. Grant that we who are called out of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ may thus show forth his praises.

Bestow a special measure of thy grace, O God, upon our homes. As our Lord favored the marriage feast in Cana with his presence and first miracle, and manifested his power and glory amid the scenes of family love, grant that he may be the heavenly Guest in every home and the Guardian of its faith and life. Bless, we pray thee, all who live together in the bonds of holy matrimony, so that in obedience to thy Word they may serve one another in love, hold each other in honor, and acknowledge thy goodness and grace in one spirit even as they are one flesh. Grant that all who enter the holy estate of marriage ordained by thee may do so in reverence, purity, and godly love.

Give stability, peace, and tranquility to the nations of the earth, and deliver all people from famine, pestilence, fire, flood, storm, earthquake and every peril, and show thyself the God who alone doeth wonders, so that all men may know of thy power and glory. And send forth ministers of thy Word that the multitudes may learn of thy infinite goodness and love in the gift of thy Son and his Gospel of grace and mercy.

We implore thy mercy, O God, for all who may be in any special want or need of body or soul, that thou wouldst manifest thyself unto them in their deliverance from all evil, giving them the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for heaviness, the light of hope for despair and the song of victory for defeat. Save us from all the hidden perils that surround us, and defend us now and always, even to that hour when thou shalt call us from this earthly tabernacle to dwell in thy house forever and ever. In the Name of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Amen.

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EPIPHANY

**Third Sunday**

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who among all nations and peoples seekest them that would worship thee in spirit and in truth, we, who are here gathered for thy worship and praise, implore thee that we may be now so inwardly moved in spirit and so filled with thy Word and truth that thou wouldst find acceptable our imperfect sacrifices of thanksgiving, praise, and prayer.

We thank thee, Father, for the sending of thy Son Jesus, and for making known in him the mystery of thy gracious will, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life. For our redemption through the blood of his cross, for the forgiveness of our sins, for deliverance from all evil, and for the hope of glory, we give thee thanks. We praise thee that thou hast bestowed upon us thy saving Word, through which thy Holy Spirit has enlightened our understanding and sanctified our wills. We pray, O God, that thy Word may have free course in the lives and hearts of multitudes from east to west, to the end that Christ may reign "where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run," that thy house may be filled with believers out of every kindred and tribe, and that heaven and earth may ring with songs of praise for this great salvation.

Bestow upon us a sure faith in thy power and a perfect trust in thy love, so that we, living out our short span of years in this world, may by applying our hearts unto thy wisdom, and by the exercise of brotherly love, peaceableness, and charity, manifest thy grace, goodness, and glory. Graciously defend us so that we be not overcome of evil; inspire us that we overcome all evil with good. From perils known and unknown, from all hazards to body or soul, against all temptations and trials, preserve us, O Father, so that we may live to serve thee in all godliness and humility.

Watch over thy church throughout the whole world, and grant unto it faithful pastors who are true shepherds and sentinels for thy people.

For all who have the cares of State in their hands, guide them in wisdom and understanding, that they may give effect to thy will, and so govern that all men may eat their bread in quietness and peace. Graciously help us to redeem the time, using our days wisely toward the upbuilding of faith in our hearts and the hearts of others. Stir up in us such gifts as thou hast bestowed, that these may be used to the spiritual enrichment of our lives. Renew us in the spirit of our minds; turn our footsteps to the pathways of eternal life; cleanse us of all sin; heal us of every disease; comfort all who are afflicted; guard our loved ones wherever they may be; shield us from the powers of wickedness; give us each day our daily bread; and make us contented in whatever condition is appointed to us. As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let us walk in him, rooted and built up in faith, and abounding in all good works. All these things we pray in the Name of him who loved the church and gave himself for it, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

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EPIPHANY

**Fourth Sunday**

Almighty God, thou Fountain of all mercies, thou Well-spring of all comfort, who art ever ready to hear the prayers of thy people and hast promised thy saving help in every time of need, as we lift up our hearts unto thee we give thee our humble and heartfelt thanks for all thy gifts and graces.

For the spirit of wisdom and understanding in thy Word and will, for the gift of counsel and might in seasons of adversity, and for the grace of spiritual knowledge and holy fear, we thank thee. But most of all do we thank and praise thee, O Father, for the coming of thy Son and for the promise in him of the life that now is and that which is to come.

Make us mindful of thy desire to save all men in him. Show us the fields white unto the harvest. Open our eyes to the vast multitudes who await the sound of the Gospel. Then open our hearts to an enlarged sense of our responsibility to share the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to pray for laborers for the harvest.

To this end, O God, enlighten our minds, that we may know thy will and walk in thy paths. Lead us into all truth, and instill in us charity toward all mankind. Grant us a larger faith in thy mighty power, a deeper trust in thy merciful providence, and a more perfect love of thy Son. Help us to see in him the image of thyself, the revelation of thy grace, the reflection of thy glory, the incarnation of thy Word, the manifestation of thy presence, and the evidence of thy care for all the children of men.

We pray also for all our homes and families, that thou mayest hallow each one by thy presence. Give them the spirit of Christ, that the children may grow in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and man, that the parents may, by pure love and worthy example, maintain their homes in peace and godliness. Grant that both children and parents may delight to be in thy house and in the true service of thy Son.

Comfort and bless those who are afflicted among us, that they may in love perceive thy good and gracious will and find release from all their trials. Preserve and maintain for us, and for all men, good government, integrity, honest citizenship, and dignity. Put down all who are self-seeking opportunists, purge out all who intend revolution and strife, and suppress those who seek power through the weakness of men.

Keep us and all thy people, heavenly Father, in the unity of the faith and in oneness with Christ through his church. We ask all these things in his Name and for his sake. Amen.

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EPIPHANY

**Fifth Sunday**

O Father in heaven, whose we are and whom we serve, thy kingdom come.

We thank thee for the manifestation of Jesus as Lord and Christ, and as King forevermore; and we pray that his dominion may be established from sea to sea, and from the rising to the setting of the sun. We thank thee that thou hast given mankind a divine Sovereign whose law is love, whose crown is truth, and whose scepter is righteousness; and we pray that every nation, kindred, and tribe may con- fess that he is Lord to thy glory. We give thee thanks that though he is King of kings, yet he was tempted in all points as we are, so that he might be a worthy Savior, able to save all that come unto thee by him.

May thy kingdom come unto the multitudes of the earth. Give the heathen for Christ's inheritance. Cause the kings of the earth to bow before him, and let all the earth see that he only is for the healing of the nations. Bare thy holy arm in the eyes of all lands, and let all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God.

And as thy kingdom is within us, a spiritual realm of the heart, may thy kingdom come in new power and strength to us also, O Lord. May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts in thankfulness and praise. By his example teach us to trust in thy Word and to be obedient to thy commandments. For his sake give us grace to be merciful and kind, to be humble in mind and lowly in spirit. In his Word show us the pathways to true wisdom. In his sufferings, death, and resurrection grant that we, redeemed in body and soul, may be dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness. And by the inspiration of Christian fellowship in worship lead us to rejoice in thy grace and to give thanks for thy mercy. Grant that thus thy kingdom may come to us.

For thy church on earth we pray, O God. Save it from weakness and error, from unfaithful shepherds and false prophets. Deliver us from heresy and schism. Defend us against the seed of Satan and the terror of godless men. Grant that thy church may be secure against the powers of hell. Teach thy people to be patient in hope, steadfast in faith, and instant in prayer, until the time when thou shalt send forth thy angels to gather thine own into thine everlasting kingdom, and when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun and be joyful forever and ever.

To this end give comfort to those who mourn, patience to the sick, peace to the anxious, strength to the weak, abundance to the needy, and forgiveness to the repentant. Bestow thy mercy on all of us, and teach us ever to set our affection on the things which are above, where Christ our Lord ever reigns to help us. In his most holy, precious, and glorious Name we pray. Amen.

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**The Transfiguration**

Almighty God, whose eyes are upon the righteous and whose cars are open to their prayers, hear now the prayer of thy people and grant us all such things as we need for the health of our souls and bodies.

We praise thee, O God, for the precious gift of thy Son. And we bless thee especially this day for the revelation of thy will in our Savior's glorious transfiguration on the holy mount. By this mighty sign give to us, Lord, and to all thy people a clearer vision and higher knowledge of Christ. Give us grace to behold him with the eyes of faith in the splendor of his eternal deity and to worship and adore him in sincerity and truth. And grant that as we behold the radiance of his heavenly beauty, we may know him and believe in him as the Light of the World, the Sun of Righteousness, and the express image of thine own divine Being.

By the sign of thy voice and command, Lord God, give us quickened faith in the doctrine of thy Son, a joyful readiness to believe his promise, and a spirited willingness to heed his commandments. By the sign of the bright cloud manifest to us each day the radiant presence of thy holy angels, and assure us of their charge concerning us. And in the sign of Moses and Elijah show us that blessed are the dead who die in faith, blessed are they who live in Christ, blessed are all who believe, for they shall know the power of his resurrection and shall be "changed from glory into glory."

O God and Father, as thou didst in Jesus make humanity the shrine of thy Godhead, let thy Holy Spirit find a tabernacle in our poor bodies and transform our weak, sinful lives into the radiance of goodness, purity, and righteousness. Transform our minds by the renewing grace that flows from thee. Transform our vision, our understanding, our judgments, yea, our whole persons, to reflect the mind of Christ. Take our sicknesses, pains, wounds, and hurts; take our disappointments, defeats, and despair; take our sorrows and mourning; take our pride and anger; take our selfishness and envy; take our hate and fear; take all these, O Father, and transform them by the touch of Jesus into noble impulses, pure motives, kind thoughts, constructive deeds, high courage, and true faith.

Look upon thy church, O Lord, here and in all places, and grant that we and all who bear the Name of Christ may daily offer up to thee the acceptable sacrifices of repentance, thanksgiving, and loving obedience.

Behold our nation, O God. Deliver it from all workers of iniquity and purge it from all unrighteousness. Have mercy upon us, and by thy great power save and defend us.

For our whole world we pray. Grant that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving help among all nations.

Thou who art nigh unto all them that call upon thee in truth, hear our prayer and by thy mercy grant our petitions for Christ's sake. Amen.

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**﻿Septuagesima Sunday**

O God, heavenly Father, who art our Rock and our Fortress, our Joy and our Salvation, our Light and our Life, our Sun and our Shield; and who art plenteous in mercy toward all them that call upon thee, we give thee thanks and praise.

We thank thee that thou hast called us to faith in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, made us citizens in his eternal kingdom, clothed us with the armor of righteousness, and given us the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Preserve us therein. Fill us with the fruits of righteousness. Make us living epistles of thy Son Jesus Christ.

We thank thee that thou hast called us to be laborers in thy vineyard, and hast assured us that our labor for thee is not in vain. Grant that our work for the salvation of souls and the advancement of thy church may be acceptable in thy sight. Give us willingness, diligence, obedience. Give us good heart to accept every service, wisdom to perform it well, and the mind to do it faithfully. Give us gladness for all who come soon or late to join us in the labors of thy church. Give us grace to welcome them as brothers in Christ and co-heirs of his salvation. Give us patience and strength to bear the burden and heat of the day. Keep us under thy providence and care, and as we pass through this world's sea of trials and tribulations, may be find true refreshment at the Fountain of life and truth which is Jesus Christ.

We pray, O God, that we may be ever mindful that the church is the body of Christ and that he is its only head. Help us, then, in all testing, in all temptation, and in all trial to be loyal to him, steadfast in faith, and to acquit ourselves as true soldiers of the cross. In every opportunity to advance the borders of his kingdom, lead us forward to possess the land. Aid us to lay hold of every challenge to rise to newness of life, so that we, thy people, may not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the power of the Gospel. Give us the mind of Christ. Let none of us glory in his own wisdom, or power, or riches, but only in this, that he may know and receive of thy wisdom, power, and riches in the life, the death, and the resurrection of thy Son Jesus.

Be with us, O God, in all that we do; in our daily toil, strengthen and counsel us; in our leisure, defend us; in our homes, shelter us; in our travels, guide us; in our study, counsel us; in our afflictions, shield us; in our sorrows, comfort us; in our prayers, hear us; and in our worship, lift up our souls to thee. May we run the race that is set before us with faith and courage so that we may obtain the crown of life.

Accept now the sacrifices of broken spirits and contrite hearts, and grant unto us thy grace and truth in the saving knowledge of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray all these things. Amen.

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**Sexagesima Sunday**

O Lord God, who art gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy; who art good to all and whose tender mercies are over all thy works, fulfill now the desire of them that call upon thee, and hear the secret prayer that rises in each heart.

In thankfulness and humility we bow in spirit before thee, O God, for commending thy love to us in the death of thine only-begotten Son, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. We acknowledge before thee our transgressions; our sin is ever before us. Grant us a true understanding of the character of our sinfulness and our need of repentance. Show us that, in Christ, if we will confess our sins, thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Bestow upon us the gifts of thy Holy Spirit, that as thou dost sow the seed of thy Word in us, we may receive it in honest and good hearts and, having heard it, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience.

Save and defend thy church from evil, and grant unto all who serve thee in thy church faithfulness to thy truth, diligence in labors, patience in sufferings, and the blessed hope of eternal life. Especially do we ask thy aid upon all missionaries in distant lands, that their work may be prospered in the harvest of souls. Guard them by thy power from all perils of body or soul.

Let thy light shine in every institution of the church, in schools, in hospitals, and in homes for the burdened and afflicted, and grant unto them thy favor, that in all things those who serve and those who are served may taste of thy goodness and grace.

For our government we pray. Give us, O God, unselfish governors and trustworthy magistrates, honorable legislators, a law-abiding citizenry, a public education that will aid the church in the development of Christian character, and a society that will mirror all goodness and virtue.

Bless our homes and make them the dwelling places of thy Spirit where Christ is honored in the teaching and love of the parents and in the obedience of their children.

We beseech thy mercy upon our sick. Help them to know the power of Christ, that they may glory in their infirmities. Set divine healing forces to work in their lives and cause them to find the joy of thy salvation. Comfort the sorrowing; be with the lonely; strengthen the aged; and to any who are in great perplexity or anxiety, temptation or trial, give faith in thy power and mercy, and lead them to see that the grace of Christ is sufficient for any adversity.

Let the word of Christ, then, dwell in us richly in all wisdom, and help us to receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. In the Name and for the sake of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

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﻿**Quinquagesima Sunday**

O Lord God, whose ways are mercy and truth to such as keep thy covenant and thy testimonies, let thy peace, like the gentle dew from heaven, fall upon all who have come this day into thy house to offer unto thee the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

For thy Name's sake pardon our iniquity. Remember not the sins of our youth, nor our transgressions, but in thy great mercy look upon our desolation, the sharpness of our afflictions, and the reproach our sins have earned, and forgive us. Restore our souls; lead us in thy truth; teach us thy way; show us thy paths; make thy face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us; and bring us out of all our distresses.

O Lord Jesus Christ, thou Son of David, who didst prophesy thy Passion and death, have mercy upon us. Open our sin-darkened eyes to behold thy glory and to rejoice in thy salvation. Bring divine light to our blinded souls, that we and all men may see in thee all the treasures of heavenly wisdom and knowledge. Teach us to pray. Give us faith that we may believe in thy power, in thy goodness and love; that thou art able to grant our petitions, and art willing to save unto the uttermost them that come unto the Father by thee.

O Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life, who by thy inspiration hast delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of Christ, give us thy grace. Enlighten our understanding Grant unto us the spirit of a great faith, an abiding hope, and a pure love. Teach us of the great love wherewith Christ hath loved us, and guide us so that we may walk in that light.

O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whom we live and move and have our being, bless this day to our growth in grace. Bless this house, that it may be continually a place where thine honor dwells, thy Name is praised, and thy truth is proclaimed. Bless our homes, that they may be rooted and grounded in love and every good work. Help all those among us who may be enduring any affliction, trial, or ad- versity, and reveal the exceeding greatness of thy power to all who believe.

Look in mercy, O Lord, thou who art the Lord of all the living and of all the dead, upon the nations of the earth, and cause all peoples and rulers to yield to thy authority that they may obtain lasting peace, true progress, and spiritual prosperity. Grant thy al- mighty aid to the hungry, the homeless, the stranger, the oppressed, the orphan, and the imprisoned everywhere. Cause thy church to this end to go forth to the nations preaching thy Gospel with courage and boldness under thy Holy Spirit, and manifesting by works of love and compassion thy grace and glory.

Now unto him whose name we bear, whose doctrine we confess, and whom, though we now see but darkly, we shall one day see face to face, even Jesus Christ, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

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