

# **The City Church, New York**

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday September 17, 2006**

On this day in 592 BC, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision from the Lord concerning the idolatry at the Jerusalem Temple. The Lord said: "Is it nothing to the people of Judah that they do this evil?" Ezekiel is told that the idolatry exiles the people but that the Lord will eventually return them to singleness of heart and will put a new spirit within them.

It was also on this day, in AD 335, that Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre was consecrated at the site of our Lord's empty tomb. Let us pray.

Lord God, Almighty and Everlasting Love:

We turn to You who, Isaiah tells us, makes known the end from the beginning. We turn to You who promises that Your purpose will stand forever. So because You are forever turned to our well-being, we turn to You again this Lord's Day. To whom else could we turn? You meet every need we have. And yet, foolishly, we do tend to turn to false gods – idols we make up in our distorted image – and thus wind up in exile from You, O Living God. But we're grateful that, even when we turn our backs on You, when we're indifferent and negligent of Your wise will, even when we wallow in all our own self-serving stupidity and utterly fail to keep the Covenant, You do not turn Your back on our need for You. You do not abandon us to these worthless idols that cannot save. You always remain faithful. You keep the Covenant. And You lovingly purge us of what draws us aside from You and You draw us back to fellowship in Christ Jesus – again and again. May we never stop longing for Your longsuffering love. May we grow out of our meaningless misadventures and learn to love as our Master loves. May we reach out for Your Light from within our darkness. May we continue to be conformed to the beautiful image of our Elder Brother, the Light of the world, in whom we can be lights.

And we thank You for the garden of Your empty grave where early Christians built a church. We thank You for Calvary – older than Eden – where You overcame sin and death for the Life You had in mind for us "from the creation of the world." May we always glory in the cross that we might know the worth of the gift of the crown of Life.

Thank You for answering us as we pray as we were taught to pray, saying:

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. Amen.