Tuesday, November 24TH

CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA
BARBARA OF NICOMEDIA & MARGARET OF ANTIOCH

MARTYRS, c. 305

COLLECT: *(Remain Standing)*
Embolden your church, O God, with the stories of your saints Catherine, Barbara, and Margaret, that we might face all trials and adversities with a fearless mind and an unbroken spirit, knowing that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

Judith 12:16–13:12 *(Please be seated)*
Reader: A reading from the Book of Judith.

Judith came in and lay down. Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and his passion was aroused, for he had been waiting for an opportunity to seduce her from the day he first saw her. So Holofernes said to her, "Have a drink and be merry with us!" Judith said, "I will gladly drink, my lord, because today is the greatest day in my whole life." Then she took what her maid had prepared and ate and drank before him. Holofernes was greatly pleased with her, and drank a great quantity of wine, much more than he had ever drunk in any one day since he was born.

When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew. Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence. They went to bed, for they all were weary because the banquet had lasted so long. But Judith was left alone in the tent, with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was dead drunk.

Now Judith had told her maid to stand outside the bedchamber and to wait for her to come out, as she did on the other days; for she said she would be going out for her prayers. She had said the same thing to Bagoas. So everyone went out, and no one, either small or great, was left in the bedchamber. Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord God of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. Now indeed is the time to help your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us."

She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there. She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!" Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterwards she went out and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, who placed it in her food bag.

Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to do for prayer. They passed through the camp, circled around the valley, and went up the mountain to Bethulia, and came to its gates. From a distance Judith called out to the sentries at the gates, "Open, open the gate! God, our God, is with us, still showing his power in Israel and his strength against our enemies, as he has done today!"

When the people of her town heard her voice, they hurried down to the town gate and summoned the elders of the town.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God

Psalm 43

Reader: Let us pray together the words of Psalm 43.

1 Give judgment for me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people;
deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.

2 For you are the God of my strength; why have you put me from you? and why do I go so heavily while the enemy oppresses me?

3 Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling;

4 That I may go to the altar of God, to the God of my joy and gladness; and on the harp I will give thanks to you, O God my God.

5 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? * and why are you so disquieted within me?

6 Put your trust in God; for I will yet give thanks to him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

Romans 8:31-39 *(Please be seated)*

Reader: A reading from the Book of Romans.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

> As it is written,
> "For your sake we are being killed all day long;
> we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God

Matthew 5:1-12 *(Please stand as you are able)*

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.
All: Praise to you, Lord Christ