

Sunday Readings

17th March 2024

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah 31:31-34

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 50:3-4. 12-15. R/. v.12

R/. A pure heart create for me, O God.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin. **R/.**

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R/.**

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews 5:7-9

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

*Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!
If a man serves me, says the Lord, he must follow me;
Wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!*

GOSPEL

John 12:20-33

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.
I tell you, most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain;
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.
Anyone who loves his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for the eternal life.
If a man serves me, he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.
Now my soul is troubled.
What shall I say:
Father, save me from this hour?
But it was for this very reason that I have come to
this hour.
Father, glorify your name!'

A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.

'Now sentence is being passed on this world;
now the prince of this world is to be overthrown.
And when I am lifted up from the earth,
I shall draw all men to myself.'

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday)

Lectionary Year B

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

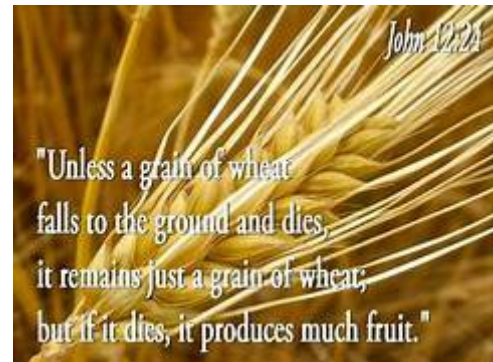
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St Joseph



Nothing is known of St Joseph except what is said of him in the Gospels. He was a carpenter; he accepted the will of God; and he supported Mary and brought up Jesus. From the human character of his son we can see that he was a good and responsible father. Joseph is venerated as a saint in the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran faiths. In Catholic and other traditions, Joseph is widely venerated as a patron of artisans who

honourably do good work with the gifts God has given them, and of workers in general. He was also declared to be the patron saint and protector of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius IX in 1870, and is the patron of several countries and regions.



Prayer of the Week

Prayer of St. John of the Cross

O blessed Jesus, give me stillness of soul in thee.
Let thy mighty calmness reign in me;
rule me, O King of gentleness, King of peace.
Give me control, great power of self-control,
control over my words thoughts and actions.
From all irritability, want of meekness, want of gentleness, dear Lord, deliver me.
By thine own deep patience, give me patience.
Make me in this and all things
more and more like thee. Amen.

We would like to see Jesus! These Greeks in the Gospel from Saint John today know that something is happening. They want to see this man who is causing such a stir. We don't know their motives but we cannot presume that they had bad motivation. We also would like to see Jesus at times.

Jesus tells us clearly: Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. This gives us pause in our following of Jesus because quite often we don't want to give up our life. Yet for this Sunday of Lent, the message is about dying to our present self and allowing the New Covenant to possess us entirely.

The Prophet Jeremiah tells us of God's desire for us and God's will that we be transformed. Jeremiah is very clear that this transformation will be the work of God. It is not something that we can accomplish by our own strength and will.

The Letter to the Hebrews, the second reading today, speaks of the role of Jesus in our salvation. It is not just God who saves us, it is God now revealed as Trinity, God revealed as compassion and love, God who takes on our humanity and suffers with us - it is this God we come to know in Jesus: Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

So we return to the Gospel of John. Do we really want to see Jesus? Do we just want to observe Him or do we want to see Him as He is? Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be.

The only way to see Jesus as He is, is to serve Him so that we can truly know Him. We want to see and know the heart of our Lord and that is only possible by this complete service. This Gospel passage is one of very few when the Father's voice is heard by the crowd. We are not sure what hearing the voice of the Father meant to them, but for sure there was something strange and from another world happening and people were aware of it. For us, there may at times be similar experiences, although perhaps not as striking. Walking in faith allows us to see and to experience the world in a different way.

This Lent is the time for our conversion. This Lent is the time to live more fully the New Covenant in the blood of Christ. God forgives us and forgets our sins. Let us rejoice in the Lord.