

FIRST READINGS

Readings from the Old Testament

1) *A Reading from the Book of Lamentations* (3,17-26)

My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "Gone is my glory, and all that I hoped for from the Lord". The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is gall to me! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him".

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord

2) *A Reading from the Book of Job* (19,1.23-27)

Job said: "O that these words of mine were written down,
inscribed on some monument,
with iron and chisel and engraving tool,
cut into the rock for ever.

This I know: that my Avenger lives,
and he, at last, will take his stand on earth.
After my awakening, he will set me close to him,
and from my flesh I shall look on God.
He whom I shall see will take my part:
These eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof".

This is the Word of the Lord

3) *A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah* (25,6 -9)

On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food. On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations. He will destroy death for ever. The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek; he will take away his people's shame everywhere on earth, for the Lord has said so. That day, it will be said: See, this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation; the Lord is the one in whom we hoped. We exult and rejoice that he has saved us.

This is the Word of the Lord

SECOND READINGS

Readings from the New Testament

4) *A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8,14-23)*

Everyone moved by the Spirit is a Son of God. The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well; heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God: but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth: and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

This is the Word of the Lord

5) *A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (15,51-57)*

I will tell you something that has been secret: that we are not all going to die, but we shall all be changed. This will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed as well, because our present perishable nature must put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of Scripture will come true: *Death is swallowed up in victory. Death where is your victory? Death where is your sting?* Now the sting of sin is death, and sin gets its power from the law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord

6) *A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (4,14-5,1)*

We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

This is the Word of the Lord

7) A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (4,13-18)

We want you to be quite certain, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the first to rise, and those of us who are still alive, will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

This is the Word of the Lord

8) A Reading from the First Letter of St. Peter (1,3-9)

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons and daughters, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we can have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of the time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold – only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing fire – and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him: and still without seeing him, you are already filled with joy as glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

This is the Word of the Lord