

FIRST READINGS

Readings from the Old Testament

1) *A Reading from the book of Wisdom*

(3,1-6,9)

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they did appear to die, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us, to be their destruction, but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. Those who trust in him will understand the truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love; because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

This is the Word of the Lord

SECOND READINGS

Readings from the New Testament

2) *A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans*

(14,7-12)

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. We shall all have to stand before the judgement seat of God; as scripture says: By my life – it is the Lord who speaks – every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God. It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of himself.

This is the Word of the Lord

3) *A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to Timothy*

(2,8-13)

Remember the Good News that I carry: "Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David": it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal – but they cannot chain up God's news. So I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen so that they also may obtain the glory that comes with it.

Here is a saying you can rely on:

If we have died with him, then we shall live with him.

If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.

If we disown him, then he will disown us.

We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful,

For he cannot disown his own self.

This is the Word of the Lord

4) *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

5) *A reading from the Book of Revelation*

(21,1-4)

There I saw a new heaven and a new earth, the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, "You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.

This is the Word of the Lord