

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

2) *A Reading from the book of Ruth*

(1,8-17 *passim*)

Naomi said to her two daughters-in law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's house. And may the lord be kind to you, as you have been kind to those who have died and to me." And she kissed them but they started to weep aloud. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people. But Ruth clung to her.

Naomi said to her, "Look, your sister-in-law returns to her people and her gods. You too must return. Go after her."

But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Wherever you die, I will die and there I will be buried. And may the Lord deal severely with me if even death should come between us.

This is the Word of the Lord

3) *A Reading from the Book of Wisdom*

(4,7-15)

The virtuous man, though he dies before his time, will find rest. Length of days is not what makes age honourable, nor number of years the true measure of life; understanding, this is man's grey hairs, untarnished life, this is ripe old age. He has sought to please God, so God has loved him; as he was living among sinners, he has been taken up. He has been carried off so that evil may not warp his understanding or treachery seduce his soul; For the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade, and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart. Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life; his soul being pleasing to the Lord, he has taken him quickly from the wickedness around him. Yet people look on, uncomprehending; it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord, And protection his holy ones.

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* (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

5) *A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (5,1.6-10)

We know that when the tent we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made of human hands, in the heavens.

We are always full of confidence, then, when we remember that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going as we do by faith and not by sight – we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body and make our home with the lord. Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing him. For all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.

This is the Word of the Lord

6) *A reading from the Second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy* (4,6-8)

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteousness judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but to all who have longed for his appearing.

This is the Word of the Lord