

Second Readings

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 10:34-43

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'The truth I have now come to realise,' he said, 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does right is acceptable to him.'

'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ – but Jesus Christ is Lord of all people. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judea: about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses – we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead – and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death: in other words, when we were baptised, we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. We believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 5:5-11

Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 5:17-21

It is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so that good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience any were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned whenever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

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 our 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 word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:31-35. 37-39

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, not any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

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 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.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 15:20-23

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ; but of all of them in their proper order; Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him.

The word of the Lord.

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.

The word of the Lord.

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 by 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.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 13:1-13

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians 3:20-21

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians 4:13-18

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, 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 Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then 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.

The word of the Lord.

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 in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it.

Here is a saying that 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 self.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to Timothy 4:5-8

Be careful always to choose the right course; be brave under trials; make the preaching of the Good News your life's work, in thoroughgoing service.

As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

The word of the Lord.

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, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we 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 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 by 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 a joy so 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.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St John 3:1-2

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called Gods children; and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St John 3:14-16

We have passed out of death and into life, and of this we can be sure because we love one another.

If you refuse to love, you must remain dead; to have your brother is to be a murderer, and murderers, as you know, do not have eternal life in them.

This had taught us love-

That he gave up his life for us;

And we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St John 4:7-12.17

My dear people,

let us love one another

since love comes from God

and everyone who loves is begotten by God and know God.

Anyone who fails to love can never have known God,

because God is love.

God's love for us was revealed

when God sent into the world his only Son

so that we could have life through him;

this is the love I mean;

not our love for God,

but God's love for us when he sent his Son

to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

My Dear people,

since God has loved us so much,

we too should love one another.

No one has ever seen God;

but as long as we love one another

he will live in us

and his love will be complete in us.

Love will come to its perfection in us when we can face the day of judgement without fear.

The word of the Lord.