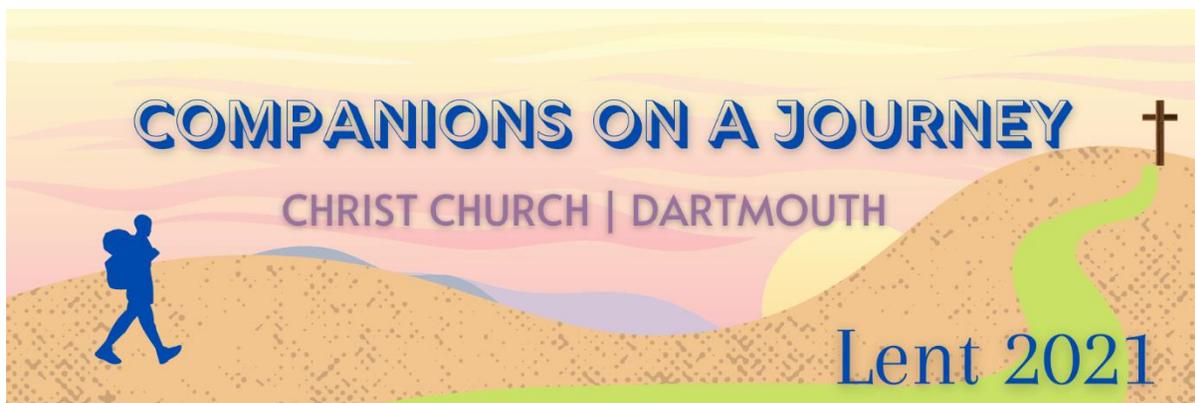
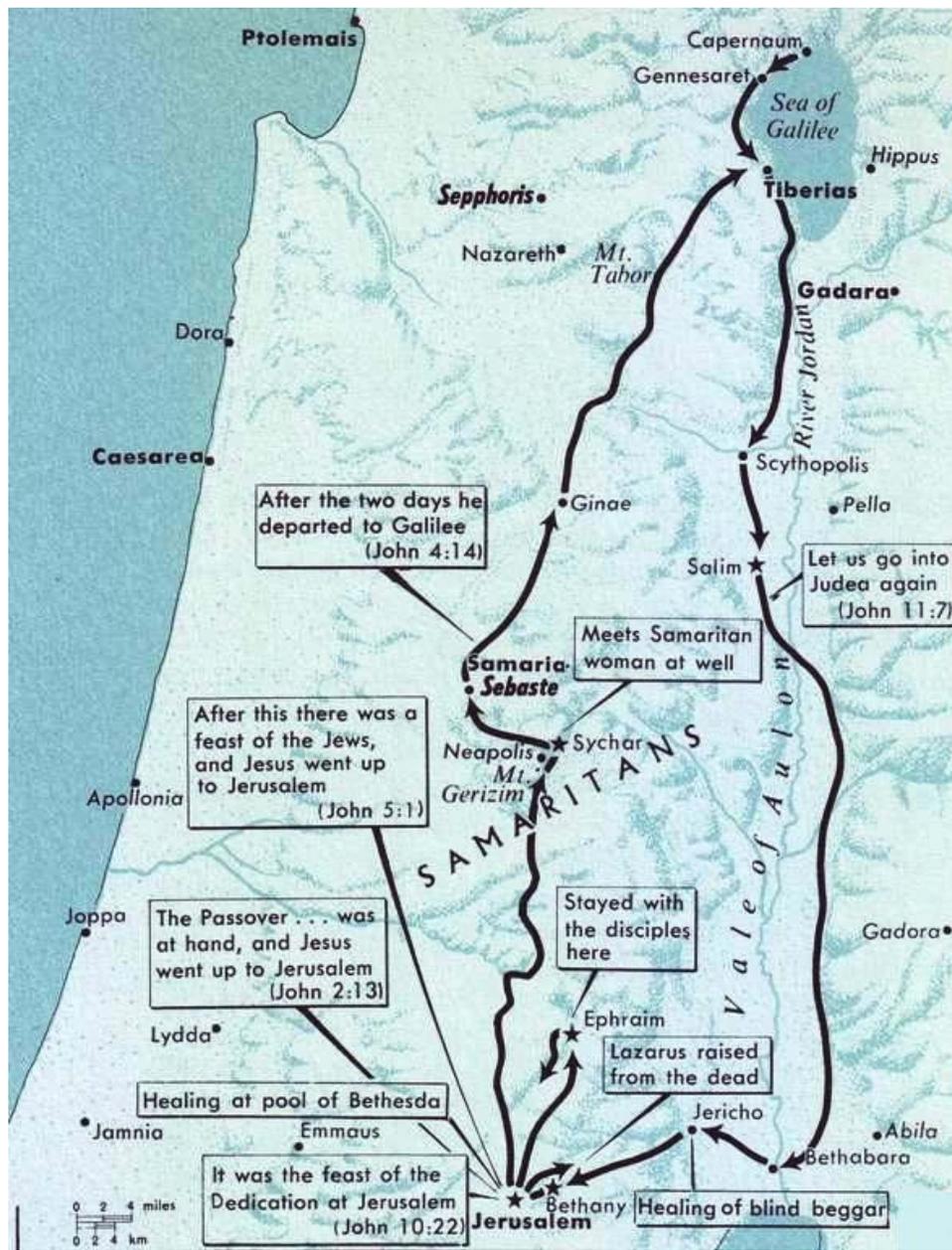


# Evening Prayer Readings for Lent



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## Thursday February 25, 2021

Readings GENESIS 17:1-7, 15-16; PSALM 22:22-30; ROMANS 4:13-25; MARK 8:31-38

### “Breaking bread and sharing life”

#### Collect

Faithful God,  
may we set our minds and wills to yours,  
and take up our cross,  
following Christ with confidence  
for the glory you reveal in him;  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.  
*FWM Proposed Prayers alt.*

#### First Reading Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

*The story of God’s covenant with Abraham and Sarah is read this Sunday to strengthen the Lenten focus on covenant and to present examples of those who receive life from God. That the passage speaks of God’s everlasting covenant with the descendants of Abraham reminds Christians of God’s continuing faithfulness also to Jews and Muslims.*

**W**hen Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

#### Psalm 22: 22-30

I will declare your name to my kindred; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

**Praise the Lord, you that fear God; stand in awe of God, O offspring of Israel; all you of Jacob’s line, give glory.**

For God does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither turns away from them; when they cry to the Lord, they are heard.

**My praise is of God in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship the Lord.**

The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall give praise: "May your heart live for ever!"

**All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall bow before God.**

For sovereignty belongs to the Lord, who rules over the nations.

**To God alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust fall before God.**

My soul shall live for God; my descendants shall serve God; they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

**They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn the saving deeds that God has done.**

**Second Reading** ROMANS 4:13-25

*In Lent we receive the grace of God, which like the surprise of a birth to a couple in old age, comes from the mercy of God rather than from our human efforts.*

**T**he promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned

to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

### **Gospel MARK 8:31-38**

*The gospel promises that following in the way of Christ offers life. During Lent, many Christians place limits on their lives—"fasting from self-indulgence" (ELW, p. 254)—as a sign of incorporation into Christ. We need to beware of counseling those who are suffering more than we are about willingly taking up their cross, by which Mark meant religious persecution.*

**J**esus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."



**Thursday, March 4, 2021**

**Readings** EXODUS 20:1-17; PSALM 19; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25; JOHN 2:13-22

**“No longer strangers to each other”**

**Collect**

Almighty God,  
your dear Son went not up to joy,  
but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory before he was crucified.  
Mercifully grant that we,  
walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.  
*Common Worship (2002) alt.*

**First Reading** EXODUS 20:1-17

*The Decalogue, which arose in a period of Israelite history prior to the building of the temple, is appointed for this Sunday to highlight both the similarities and the differences between the evolving biblical Judaism and the community of Christian believers. The Commandments understand all human life as conducted before God. In the New Testament itself (for example Matthew 5) we encounter the earliest of continuing Christian appropriation and reinterpretation of the Ten Commandments. Historically, attention to the Commandments has been part of baptismal catechesis.*

**G**od spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work - you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You

shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

## **Psalm 19**

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows the handiwork of the Lord.

**One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,

**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world.**

In the deep has God set a pavilion for the sun; it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

**It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.**

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.

**The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.**

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**

By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.

**Who can tell how often they offend? Cleanse me from my secret faults.**

Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

**Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight; O Lord, my strength and my redeemer**

## **Second Reading** 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25

*This reading helps connect the Ten Commandments with Christ as the replacement of the temple: Paul contrasts the faith of the baptized with both Greek learning and Jewish signs. In Lent we affirm the gospel with its offer of the weakness of the crucified Christ.*

**T**he message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

## **Gospel** JOHN 2:13-22

*This gospel is a primary example of John's use of narrative to proclaim Christology. Christ is the temple. Coming to church in Lent is coming to Christ, whose body is raised from death and who lives now in the community of believers. Our Passover is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

**T**he Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

**Thursday, March 11, 2021**

**Readings**

NUMBERS 21:4-9; PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22; EPHESIANS 2:1-10; JOHN 3:14-21

**“We have been gifted with each other”**

**Collect**

Steadfast God,  
you reach out to us in mercy.  
When we rebel against your holy call  
and walk in disobedience,  
soften our hearts with the warmth of your love,  
so that we may know your Son  
alive within us, redeeming us,  
and raising us up into your eternal presence. **Amen.**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt.*

**First Reading** NUMBERS 21:4-9

*The narrative from Numbers provides the story to which the gospel refers. With John in mind, we can say that the Israelites “loved darkness” and are “perishing.” The fiery serpent, like Christ, was “lifted up.” Those dying of snakebite, like Christians, are invited to believe.*

**F**rom Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

**Psalm 1-3, 17-22**

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, and whose mercy endures for ever.

**Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe.**

The Lord gathered them out of the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

**Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; they were afflicted because of their sins.**

They abhorred all manner of food and drew near to death's door.

**Then they cried to you, O Lord, in their troubles, and you delivered them from their distress.**

You sent forth your word and healed them and saved them from the grave.

**Let them give thanks to you, O Lord, for your mercy and the wonders you do for your children.**

Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving and tell of your acts with shouts of joy.

#### **Second Reading** Ephesians 2:1-10

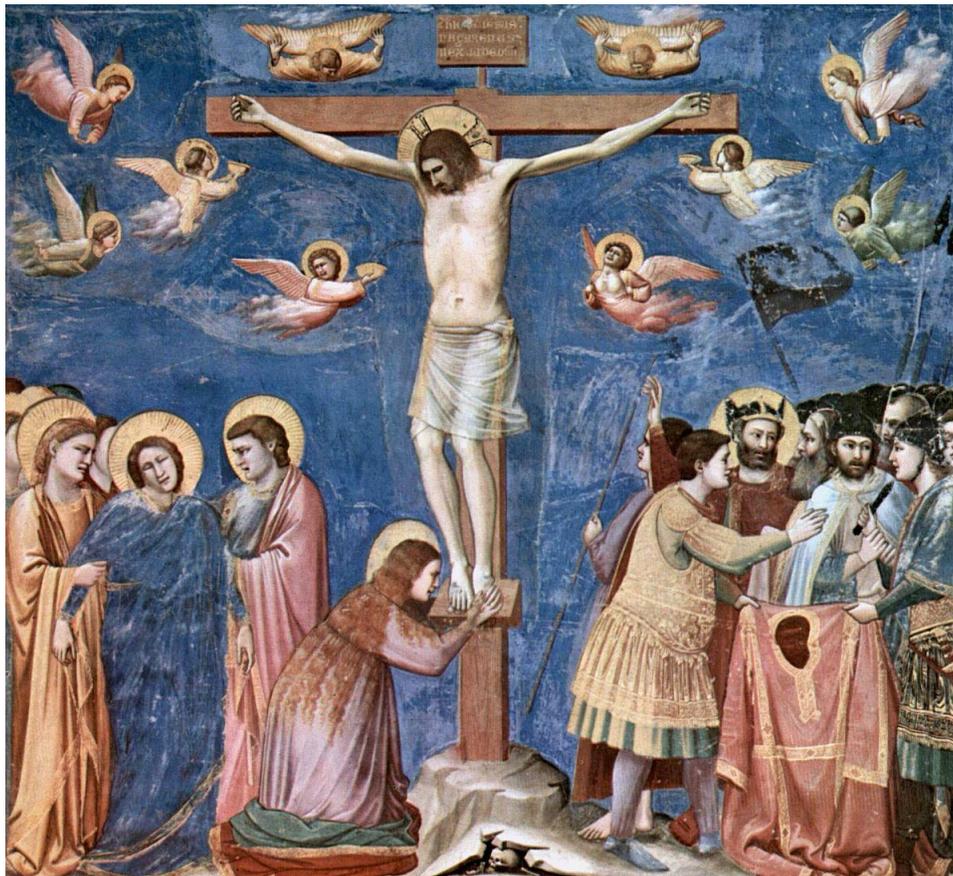
*This passage is a magnificent compendium of Lenten baptismal proclamation. Baptism has given us life in Christ so that by grace we will do the good works of God.*

**Y**ou were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God - not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

## Gospel John 3:14-21

*The context of the beloved John 3:16 includes reference to Israelite sin, death by poison, the darkness of this world, hatred of God, and the evil that people commit. In John, eternal life begins now, in and among the baptized. In contrast to the story from Numbers in which people die of snakebite, John describes God as choosing to save, rather than condemn. The world, which does not know God, is loved by God.*

**J**esus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."



**Thursday, March 18, 2021**

**Readings** JEREMIAH 31:31-34; PSALM 119:9-16; HEBREWS 5:5-10; JOHN 12:20-33

**“To act with justice, to love tenderly”**

**Collect**

God of suffering and glory,  
in Jesus Christ you reveal the way of life  
through the path of obedience.

Write your law on our hearts,  
so that we may not stray from you,  
but be your people. **Amen.**

*Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002) alt.*

**First Reading** JEREMIAH 31:31-34

*Lent has provided time for us to prepare for and remember baptism. In baptism we are wed to God and we receive God’s covenant of love written in our hearts. Although we have repeatedly broken the covenant, God promises to remember our sin no more. This passage was formative for the Christian language of the “new covenant” in Christ’s blood.*

**T**he days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

**Psalm 119: 9-16**

How shall the young be cleanse their ways? By keeping to your words.

**With my whole heart I seek you; let me not stray from your commandments.**

I treasure your promise in my heart, that I may not sin against you.

**Blessed are you, O Lord; instruct me in your statutes.**

With my lips will I recite all the judgements of your mouth.

**I have taken greater delight in the way of your decrees than in all manner of riches.**

I will meditate on your commandments and give attention to your ways.

**My delight is in your statutes; I will not forget your word.**

**Second Reading** Hebrews 5:5-10

*The suffering and death of Jesus are likened to the ministry of the high priest, whose prayers provided the people's access to forgiveness from God. We are comforted by the word that Christ suffered both for us and with us.*

**C**hrist did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

**Gospel** John 12:20-33

*As we ready for Holy Week, the archaic simile of the grain of wheat depicts God's way of bringing life from what seems death. With the Greeks, we too wish to see Jesus. To do so, we must look up, for Jesus has been lifted up on the cross in order to draw everyone to God. The "hour" of salvation is Christ's death.*

**N**ow among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say - 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the

ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

