

# First Readings

# 1

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES 12:43-46

Judas, the ruler of Israel, took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus, he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

The Word of the Lord.

# 2

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF JOB 19:1, 23-27A

Job answered Bildad and Shuhite and said:

Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: That with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever! But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust; Whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him, And from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed with longing.

The Word of the Lord

# 3

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8, 14-15

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

I recognize that whatever God does will endure forever; there is no adding to it, or taking from it. Thus, has God done that he may be revered. What now is has already been; what is to be already is; and God restores what would otherwise be displaced.

# 4

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM 3:1-9

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before people, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality. Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. In the time of their visitation they shall shine and shall dart about as sparks through stubble; they shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord shall be their King forever. Those who trust in God shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and God's care is with the elect.

The Word of the Lord

# 5

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM 4: 7-15

The just person, though he die early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age. He who pleased God was loved: he who lived among sinners was transported – Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul; For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind. Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take this into account.

The Word of the Lord

# 6

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH 25:6A,7-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples. A feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy rich food and pure choice wines. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the Lord has spoken. On that day it will be said: "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the Lord for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

The Word of the Lord

# 7

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS 3:17-26

My soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the Lord. The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall; remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me. But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent. They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore, will I hope in him. God is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; it is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord

# 8

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS 3: 22-26

The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore, will I hope in him. Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; it is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord

# 9

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL 12:1-3

In those days, I, Daniel, mourned and heard this word of the Lord: At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since the nation began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book.\*

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; Some to everlasting life, others to reproach and everlasting disgrace. But those with insight shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.

The Word of the Lord

# 10

DURING EASTER TIME: NEW TESTAMENT. (Note, During the Easter Season, one of the following four readings is used as a first reading instead of a passage from the Old Testament.)

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 10:34-36, 42-43

Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets will bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name."

The Word of the Lord.

#11

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION 14: 13

I heard a voice from heaven say to me, 'Write down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on.' Blessed indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them .

The Word of the Lord

# 12

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATIONS 20: 11-21:1

I, John, saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.) Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire.

The Word of the Lord.

# 13

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION 21:1-5A, 6b-7

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.

The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away." The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victors will inherit these gifts, and I shall be their God, and they will be my own."

The Word of the Lord