**A reading from the Book of Wisdom.**

The just person, though they 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 us,

 and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age.

He who pleased God was loved;

 he who lied 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 their midst of wickedness.

But the people saw and did not understand,

 nor did they take this into account.

Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,

 and his care is with his elect.

**THE WORD OF THE LORD.**