

COLLECT

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son
into our hearts whereby we call you
Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom
to your service,
that we and all creation may be
brought to the glorious liberty of
the children of God;
through Jesus Christ your Son our
Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Either Ezekiel 17:22-end

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.

Or 1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:13

PSALM Psalm 92:1-4. 11-end

R *It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord.*

It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord,
and to sing praises to your name,
O Most High;
To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning
and of your faithfulness in the night season; **R**

On the psalter and on the lyre
and to the melody of the harp.
For you have made me glad by your acts, O Lord;

and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands. **R**

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
shall flourish in the courts of our God; **R**

They shall still bear fruit in old age;
they shall be green and succulent;
That they may show how upright the Lord is,
my rock, in whom there is no fault. **R**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters, we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil. [Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.] The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we

know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

GOSPEL Mark 4:26-34

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Such a large crowd gathered around Jesus that he got into a boat and began to teach them using many parables. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come." Jesus also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

POST COMMUNION

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.