

The First Reading

Joshua 3:1-17

The First Reading is from Joshua, chapter 3.

3 Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. ²At the end of three days the officers went through the camp ³and commanded the people, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, ⁴so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it." ⁵Then Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." ⁶To the priests Joshua said, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on in front of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people.

⁷The Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. ⁸You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'" ⁹Joshua then said to the Israelites, "Draw near and hear the words of the Lord your God." ¹⁰Joshua said, "By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: ¹¹the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. ¹²So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap."

¹⁴When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. ¹⁵Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, ¹⁶the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Psalm 30

- ¹ I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.
- ² O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.
- ³ O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.
- ⁴ Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.
- ⁵ For his anger is but for a moment;
his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.
- ⁶ As for me, I said in my prosperity,
"I shall never be moved."
- ⁷ By your favor, O Lord,
you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face;
I was dismayed.
- ⁸ To you, O Lord, I cried,
and to the Lord I made supplication:
- ⁹ "What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it tell of your faithfulness?"
- ¹⁰ Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!
O Lord, be my helper!"
- ¹¹ You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy,
- ¹² so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Romans 6:1-11

The Second Reading is from Romans, the 6th Chapter

6 What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For whoever has died is freed from sin. **8** But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gospel of Matthew 3:1-17

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 3rd chapter. Glory to you O Lord.

3 In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to you O Christ.

Prayers of Intercession

O heavenly Father, you welcome us back home in your sanctuary, now hear our prayers that we lift up to you as we unite our hearts and cry out for the needs of our community and world.

Brief silence for reflection

O God of the waters, you bring forth life and new life once more through the sacred combination of oxygen and hydrogen. Shower us with renewal today, and gift us with a passion to restore waters damaged by pollution. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God of the lands, you bring forth fruit of the earth from the seeds that we plant. May our farms and home-gardens alike sustain our needs and provide for the whole world. Shower us with renewal today and gift us with a passion to provide enough that all may be fed. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God of our bodies, you created us in your image and provide healing where there is injury and disease. Protect those who are providing essential care to all infected by the coronavirus, help our researchers as they strive for an immunization and better treatments. Shower all who need your healing touch today with such newness of life. We especially pray for Bradly, Josie, Bev, Nancy, Elizabeth, John, Linda, Dave, Jim, Cassie, Delores, Graham, Jim, Bob, Nathan, Ila, Tucker, Marjorie, Norman, Carmen, Barbara, and Ron. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God of the nations, you provide governments to better society and protect the interests of all. Guide national and state leaders as they seek to improve our nation's healthcare and to provide equal rights and justice for all. Be with those who serve in the military, especially Sgt. Lacey Elliott; allow them to serve with honor and return home safely. Shower us with renewed zeal and passion for the liberties we proclaim as ideals. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God of the eternally living, through Christ's death and resurrection, you opened the way to everlasting life. In our baptism, we were connected to Christ and we wait in great anticipation of eternal life with all the saints, including those who have gone before us. Shower us again in the baptismal promise that we may never forget the joy of your presence. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

It is with grateful hearts that we lift all concerns, those named and those only the Spirit is able to lift for us, to you. We turn all these over to your care and yearn for your merciful answer, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior. Amen