

FIRST READING



Please choose the one you feel is most appropriate.

[1] A reading from the book of Job

19:1, 23—27

Job answered 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.

[2] A reading from the book of Wisdom

3:1-6, 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 men, 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 people, and the Lord shall be their King forever. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love; because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

[2a] A reading from the book of Wisdom

3:1-6, 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 men, 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. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love; because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

[3] A reading from the book of Wisdom

4: 7—15

The just man, 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 measure 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 lives 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.

[4] 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. 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 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!”

[5] A reading from the book of Lamentations

3:22-26

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul; “therefore I will hope in him.” The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

[6] A reading from the book of Daniel

12: 1—3

[I, Daniel, mourned and I 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 nations 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 shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.

But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.”

[8] A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes

3:1-11

There is an appointed time for everything and a time for everything 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. What advantage has the worker from his toil? I have considered the task that God has appointed for the sons of men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without man’s ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

[9] A reading from the book of Proverbs

31: 10-13, 30-31

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skilled hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

[10] A reading from the book of Sirach

26: 1-4, 13-16

Blessed the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days; a worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life. A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the Lord; Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face. A gracious wife delights her husband, her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones; a gift from the Lord is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth. Choicest of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste soul. A holy and decent woman adds grace up grace; indeed, no price is worthy of her temperate soul. Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

[11] A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to captives and release to prisoners; to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

[12] 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 Lords, 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.

