

EPISTLE READINGS

Epistle Reading 1: Romans 5:5-11

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Much more surely then, now that **we have been justified by His Blood, will we be saved through Him from the wrath of God.** For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life.

But more than that, we ever boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation.

Epistle Reading 2: Romans 5:17-21

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all people, so one man's act of righteousness lead to justification and life for all people.

For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, **so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.**

But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; **but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,** so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Epistle Reading 3: Romans 8:14-25

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption.

When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — if, in fact, we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the One Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while **we wait for adoption, to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.**

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Epistle Reading 4: Romans 8:26-30

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

And God, Who searches the heart, knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn within a large family.

And those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those whom He justified He also glorified.

Epistle Reading 5: Romans 8:31-39

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who is against us? He Who did not withhold His own Son, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not with Him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God Who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, Who died, yes, Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who indeed intercedes for us. **Who will separate us from the love of Christ?** Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, 'For Your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Epistle Reading 6: Romans 14:6-9

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord.
Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, **whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.**

For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Epistle Reading 7: 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-22

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

For if the dead are not raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished.

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

Epistle Reading 8: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.

Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after He has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. **The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

For ‘God has put all things in subjection under His feet.’ But when it says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that this does not include the One Who put all things in subjection under Him.

When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the One Who put all things in subjection under Him, **so that God may be all in all.**

Epistle Reading 9: 1 Corinthians 15:47-57

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.**

When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ **‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But **thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Epistle Reading 10: 1 Corinthians 15:39-45

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. **If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.**

Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Epistle Reading 11: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the second epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling — if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He Who has prepared us for this very thing is God, Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So 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 judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Epistle Reading 12: Philippians 3:10 to 4:1

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Philippians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

I want to know Christ and the power of His Resurrection and the sharing of His sufferings by becoming like Him in His death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.

Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, by the power that also enables Him to make all things subject to Himself.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, **stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.**

Epistle Reading 13: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

We do not want you to be uninformed about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have died.

For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord Himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; **and so we will be with the Lord forever.**

Epistle Reading 14: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the second epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to Timothy.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David - that is my Gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained.

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

The saying is sure: **If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him;** if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful - for He cannot deny Himself.

Epistle Reading 15: 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the second epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to Timothy.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for His appearing.

Epistle Reading 16: Hebrews 4:12-16

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And before Him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the One to Whom we must render an account.

Since, then, we have a great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One Who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Epistle Reading 17: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the second universal epistle of the holy Apostle John.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy **He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading**, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith - being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Although you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Epistle Reading 18: 1 John 2:28 to 3:3

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the second universal epistle of the holy Apostle John.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

And now, beloved children, abide in Him, so that when He is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before Him at His coming.

If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right has been born of Him.

See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.

What we do know is this: when He is revealed, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. And all who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.

Epistle Reading 19: 1 John 3:14-16, 18-24

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the second universal epistle of the holy Apostle John.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Brothers and sisters:

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death.

All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers, do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

Beloved children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before Him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we obey His commandments and do what pleases Him.

And this is His commandment: that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us.

All who obey His commandments abide in Him, and He abides in them. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit He has given us.

Reading 20: Revelations 4:1-11

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Book of Revelations.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: After this, I looked, and **there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”**

At once I was in the Spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with One seated on the throne! And the One seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald.

Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads.

Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, **“Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.”**

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the One Who is seated on the throne, Who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the One Who is seated on the throne and worship the One Who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created.”

Reading 21: Revelations 21:1-7

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Book of Revelations.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them; He will wipe every tear from their eyes.

"Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

And the One Who was seated on the throne said, **"See, I am making all things new."**

Also He said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be My children."

Reading 22: Revelations 21:9-14, 21-27

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Book of Revelations.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: At that time, one of the seven angels came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites; on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Its gates will never be shut by day — and there will be no night there.

People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations.

But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Reading 21: Revelations 22:1-5, 12-14

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Book of Revelations.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.

On either side of the river is the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His servants will worship Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

“See, I am coming soon; My reward is with Me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.”