

SSRA.UK

Sunday Scriptures for Reading Aloud

Lectioary 2023

**Readings for Sundays
from 27 November 2022
to 26 November 2023**

encouraging more confident participation
in the public reading of scripture by more readers

encouraging a greater appreciation
of the public reading of scripture by more hearers

establishing familiarity with more than
400 key passages of scripture across a three-year cycle
for an investment of just five minutes of the Sunday gathering each week
compatible with thousands of lectionary-based resources in print and online

additional resources and downloads at ssra.uk

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Encouraging more confident participation in the public reading of scripture by more readers

Encouraging a greater appreciation of the public reading of scripture by more hearers

Offering all three readings, to establish familiarity with more than 400 key passages of scripture across a three-year cycle, for an investment of just five minutes of the Sunday gathering each week

Lectionary 2023

SSRA is compatible with Common Worship Principal Service Lectionary (CW), Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), and Lectionary for Mass (LFM), giving access to a vast library of lectionary-based resources, both in print and online, for sermons, prayers, children's work and more.

As a practical, ready-to-use resource, SSRA selects from amongst the lectionary options and variations, prioritising the systematic reading of the gospels and epistles for the year, reducing interruptions and omissions to a minimum. 2023 is Year A: the gospel for the year is Matthew, and the epistles are 1 Corinthians 1-3, 1 Peter, Romans, Philipians, and 1 Thessalonians.

In particular in 2023, SSRA stays with Matthew through January (readings from John are transferred to Year B), stays with the Sermon on the Mount all the way up to Lent (rather than replacing these readings with Candlemas, Creation, or Transfiguration), and keeps the Transfiguration on the Second Sunday of Lent (as in RCL and LFM). Eastertide readings from Acts this year highlight the early days in Jerusalem; and SSRA handles the practical lull experienced in most churches between Christmas and Epiphany by celebrating Saint John on the first Sunday after Christmas (providing a different set of readings for each year), and moving the Holy Family readings from Saint Luke (including The Presentation) into January of Year C.

Readings are also provided for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday are each provided with three sets of readings across the three-year cycle. The Maundy Thursday theme this year is the Lamb of God, with 'service to others' to follow in Year B, and Bread of Life in Year C.

More details and background information are online at ssra.uk

Numbering

The 34 Sundays of the main programme are here numbered 1 to 34 (as in LFM), highlighting the systematic reading of the gospel and epistles for the year. RCL and CW have different names for the same Sundays, though the programme of readings is fundamentally the same. After Trinity, you can subtract five from the 'Ordinary Time' number to give the 'Proper' number, for accessing CW and RCL resources. In 2023, the 'after Trinity' number is the Ordinary Time number minus nine.

Translation

Where other translations are offered primarily as study texts, or to be read alone at home, the SSRA translation is offered specifically for reading aloud: to be easy on the eye, and on the voice, for the reader; and to be easy on the ear, for the hearer, who should be able to follow the reading, without needing a printed text, even on first hearing. Verses are occasionally rearranged to make a passage easier to follow when read aloud. A preacher may wish to refer to a more literal study translation when making a word-by-word or line-by-line analysis of the text. More details and background information are online at ssra.uk

Available as

A5 Desk Edition

A4 Lectern Edition

order online at ssra.uk

additional resources and downloads at ssra.uk

SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER

First Sunday of Advent

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 2.2-5*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The time will come
when the mountain
of the house
of the Lord
will be the greatest
of all mountains,
high above the hills.

People of all nations will say,
'The teaching of the Lord
comes from Mount Zion,
and the word of the Lord
from Jerusalem.

So let us go up
to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house
of the God of Jacob,
to learn there
how to walk
in the right path.'

Then the Lord
will bring justice and peace
to the nations.

They shall take their weapons of war,
their swords and their spears,
and re-work them
into ploughs
and pruning-hooks.

No longer
shall nation
lift up sword
against nation;
neither shall they
learn war
any more.

So come, O people of Jacob;
let us walk
in the light
of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 13.11-14*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Now is the time
to be fully alert,
for the day of our salvation
is closer to us now
than when we first
became believers.

The night is almost over -
the day is near.

So let us throw off
the works of darkness,
and put on
the armour of light.

Let there be no
drunkenness, indecency,
quarrelling, or jealousy,
or any other
work of darkness.

But let us live honourably,
as in the day,
in the light
of our Lord
Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 24.36-44*

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

Jesus said:

'About that day,
and that hour,
no one knows -
not the angels in heaven,
nor even the Son,
but only the Father.

In the days of Noah, before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
at banquets and weddings,
right up to the day
that Noah entered the ark.

They knew nothing
until the flood came,
and swept them away.

So it will be
at the coming
of the Son of Man.

On that day, two men
will be working in a field;
one will be taken,
and one will be left.

Two women
will be grinding grain together;
one will be taken,
and one will be left.

So stay alert,
because you do not know
on what day
the Lord is coming.

If you knew
that a thief
was coming in the night,
you would stay awake,
to protect your home.

In the same way,
be ready,
for the Son of Man
is coming
at an unexpected hour.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER

Second Sunday of Advent

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 11.1-5,10a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

A new son of David
will appear.

And the spirit of the Lord will be with him:
the spirit of wisdom, and understanding,
of authority, and strength,
of knowledge, and honouring the Lord.

He will not judge by appearances,
but with righteousness
he will bring justice
for the humble, the weak, and the poor.

The power of his words
will shake the earth,
and strike down the wicked.

Righteousness
and faithfulness
will be his strength,
and all the nations will turn to him.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 15.4-9a*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

The scriptures were written to instruct us,
and to encourage us,
that we might trust in God
with confidence,
patience, and endurance.

So may the God
of encouragement, patience, and endurance,
help you to live
in harmony with one another,
in Christ Jesus;

and then,
with one united voice,
give glory to God,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You should accept and welcome one another,
just as Christ
has accepted and welcomed you.

For Christ became a servant
to the descendants of Abraham,
to fulfil the promises God made long ago.

And Christ also
became a servant to all,
so that every nation
might give glory to God
for God's great mercy,
as the scriptures foretold.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 3.1-12*

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

The prophet Isaiah spoke
of the voice of one
crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord.'

In fulfilment of this word,
John the Baptist appeared,
in the wilderness of Judea,
saying, 'Repent,
for the kingdom of heaven
is near.'

John wore clothing made from camel's hair,
and a leather belt around his waist.

And his food
was locusts
and wild honey.

People from Jerusalem,
and all Judea,
and all the region along the Jordan,
went out to hear John,

and they were baptised, by John,
in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.

When John saw
that many religious leaders
were coming to him for baptism,
he said to them, 'You brood of vipers!
Who warned you
to flee

from the judgement
that is to come?

You must bear fruit
that shows
your repentance!

Do not imagine
that it is enough
to have Abraham as your father.

God could raise up, from these stones,
children to Abraham!

The axe is ready,
and any tree
that does not
bear good fruit
will be cut down
and thrown into the fire.

I baptise you with water, for repentance,
but after me
comes one who is more powerful.

I am not worthy
even to carry his shoes.

He will baptise you
with the Holy Spirit
and with fire.

And he will separate the wheat from the chaff,
gathering the wheat into his barn,
and throwing the chaff
into the fire.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER

Third Sunday of Advent

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 35.1-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The driest lands
of the wilderness
will burst into bloom,
and sing for joy,
to declare
the glory of the Lord.

The desert will be as green
as the fields, the forests, and the mountains,
to proclaim
the majesty of God.

So encourage the weak,
and all who live in fear.

Say to them, 'Be strong,
and do not
be afraid!

For God is surely coming,
with justice,
to save you.'

On that day,
the blind will see, the deaf will hear,
the lame will run like the deer,
and the voiceless
will sing for joy!

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *James 5.7-10*

A reading from the letter of James.

My brothers and sisters,
be patient,
as you wait
for the coming of the Lord.

As the farmer waits patiently
for the crops to grow,
through the spring and autumn rains,
so you also
must be patient -
trusting, with confidence,
that the coming of the Lord
is near.

As you wait,
do not complain against one another,
for you will surely
be judged yourself
when that day comes.

But follow
the example of the prophets, who
showed patience,
even when they suffered
for speaking in the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 11.2-11*

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

When John the Baptist,
in prison,
heard what Jesus the Messiah was doing,
he sent his disciples
to ask Jesus, 'Are you the one
foretold by the prophets,
or should we continue
to watch
for another?'

Jesus said to them, 'Go and tell John
what you see and hear.

The blind receive their sight,
the lame walk,
the deaf hear;
people with leprosy are cleansed,
the dead are raised,
and the poor
receive good news.

Blessed are those who find
no offence in this!

As John's disciples
went on their way,
Jesus turned to the crowds
to speak
about John the Baptist.

Jesus said, 'You went into the wilderness,
not to see a reed,
blowing in the wind,
or someone dressed in palace robes,
but to see a prophet;
and indeed
more than a prophet,
for John is the one who fulfils
the scripture,
where it says, "I am sending
my messenger ahead of you,
to prepare your way before you."

John the Baptist
is the greatest
amongst all who have
ever been born.

And I tell you, everyone
in the kingdom of heaven
will be greater still!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER

Fourth Sunday of Advent

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 7.10-14*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord said to Ahaz,

‘Ask a sign of the Lord your God.

Let it be as deep as the underworld,

or as high as heaven.’

But Ahaz replied, ‘I will not

ask for a sign,

for I will not

put the Lord

to the test.’

Now hear this, people of David.

You try the patience of mortals.

You even try the patience of God!

And yet the Lord will give you a sign.

A young woman will bear a son,

and name him Emmanuel,

which means,

“God is with us”.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 1.1-7*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

From Paul,

a servant of Jesus Christ,

called by God

to be an apostle.

The gospel we proclaim

was promised

long ago,

through the prophets,

in the holy scriptures.

It is the gospel

of the Son of God,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the flesh,

he was descended from David.

In the Holy Spirit,

he was declared, in great power,

by his resurrection from the dead,

to be the Son of God.

Through him,

we have received God's grace,

and we have been

commissioned as apostles,

to call people of all nations to faith,

including yourselves, who are

called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all God's beloved

in Rome, who are called to be saints.

Grace to you, and peace,

from God our Father,

and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 1.18-23*

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

The birth of Jesus the Messiah

took place

in this way.

Mary, his mother,

was pledged in marriage

to Joseph.

But before they came together,

she was found to be expecting a child

by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph, being a righteous man,

and not wishing

to expose her

to public disgrace,

planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just as he had

resolved to do this,

an angel of the Lord

appeared to him

in a dream,

and said, ‘Joseph,

son of David,

do not be afraid

to take Mary

as your wife,

for the child

conceived within her

is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son,

and you are to name him

Jesus,

which means,

“the Lord is our Saviour”,

for he will save his people

from their sins.’

All this took place to fulfil

the word of the Lord

through the prophet Isaiah:

‘A young woman shall bear a son,

and name him Emmanuel,

which means,

“God is with us”.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SATURDAY 24 DECEMBER
Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 9.2,6-7a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.

On those who dwell
in the land of deep darkness -
on them, the light will shine.

For a child is born to us,
a son to rule over us,
and he shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
and Prince of Peace.

From the throne of David,
he will extend for ever
his kingdom of righteousness,
justice, and peace.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 4.4-8, 9b*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord -
always!

I say again, rejoice!

And let your gracious gentleness
be known
to everyone.

The Lord is near,
so do not worry about anything.

But in everything,
with prayer, and thanksgiving,
let your requests
be made known to God.

And the peace of God,
which surpasses
all understanding,
will guard your hearts
and your minds
in Christ Jesus.

Finally,
my brothers and sisters,
set your minds
on all that is true,
honourable,
just, and pure.

Set your minds
on all that is pleasing, and admirable,
and on all that is excellent,
and worthy of praise.

And the God of peace
will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Luke 2.1,3-20*

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

An order went out, from the emperor,
that all the world
should be registered,
each in their own town.

Joseph, a descendant of David,
was engaged to Mary, who was expecting a child,
so they travelled together
to the city of David,
Bethlehem, in Judea.

While they were there,
the time came
for the child
to be born,
and Mary gave birth
to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped the child in bands of cloth,
and laid him in a manger,
because there was no room for them
at the inn.

Out in the fields, there were shepherds,
keeping watch
through the night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them,
and the glory of the Lord
shone around them,
and they were afraid.

The angel said, 'Do not be afraid.
I bring good news
of great joy
for all people.

Today, in the city of David,
there is born a Saviour,
the Messiah,
the Lord.

This will be the sign for you:
you will find the child
wrapped in bands of cloth,
and lying in a manger.'

A vast choir of angels appeared, proclaiming,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven!
Peace on earth,
and God's blessings
on all people!'

The shepherds made their way quickly
to Bethlehem,
where they found Mary and Joseph,
and the child, lying in the manger.

When the shepherds made known
the message of the angels,
all who heard it
were amazed.

And Mary treasured all these words,
and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all that they had
seen and heard.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 25 DECEMBER

Christmas Day

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 52.7-10*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Those who keep watch
are shouting out
with joy.

For they see, on the mountains,
the messenger
approaching,
bringing good news
of salvation, and peace;
good news
of the triumph
of our God.

Join in their song,
O ruins of Jerusalem!

For all the world
will see the Lord
returning to Zion,
with mercy and strength,
declaring
that your freedom
has been won.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 1.1-4*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Long ago,
God spoke to our ancestors,
in many and various ways,
by the prophets,

but in these last days,
God has spoken to us
by a Son,

appointed by God
as inheritor of all things,
the reflection
of God's glory,
the exact imprint
of God's very being.

Present with God
at the creation of the universe,
and sustaining
all creation
by his powerful word,
he has reconciled us to God,
and is seated now,
higher even than the angels,
at the right hand
of God's Majesty
on high.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 1.1-12,14*

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

In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word
was with God,
and the Word
was God.
The Word
was in the beginning
with God.

Through the Word,
all things
came into being.

In the Word
was life -
the life
that was the light
of all people.

That light
now shines in the darkness,
and the darkness
has not
overcome it.

There was a man sent from God,
whose name was John.

John himself
was not the light,
but came
to bear witness
to the light,
that all might believe.

The true light,
bringing light
to all,
was coming
into the world.

He was in the world -
the world that came into being through him -
and yet the world
did not know him.

He came to his own,
and his own
did not receive him.

But all who did
receive him -
all who believed in his name -
he called
to become
children of God.

The Word became flesh,
and dwelt amongst us.
And we have seen his glory -
the glory
of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 1 JANUARY

Saint John the Evangelist

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 6.1-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

In the year that King Uzziah died,

I saw the Lord,
sitting on a high throne,
in robes that filled the temple.

Angels, around the Lord,
called out to one another,
saying: 'Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God almighty;
the whole earth
is full of his glory.'

Their voices shook the very foundations
of the temple,
and the temple was filled with smoke.

I said: 'I am ruined!

For I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live amongst a people
of unclean lips;
yet my eyes have seen
the King, the Lord almighty!'

Then one of the angels flew to me,
and touched my lips
with a burning coal
that had been taken from the altar,
saying, 'Now that this has touched your lips,
your guilt is removed,
and your sin is forgiven.'

Then I heard
the voice of the Lord,
saying, 'Is there anyone I can send?'

And I said,
'Here I am; send me.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 John 1.6-9, 2.1b-2*

A reading from the first letter of John.

We cannot say that we have fellowship with God
if we are walking in darkness.

But if we walk in the light,
we have fellowship with God,
and with one another.

And the blood of Jesus
cleanses us
from all sin.

If we say
that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins,
God, who is faithful and just,
will forgive us our sins,
and cleanse us
from all unrighteousness.

We even have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous; and he himself
is the sacrifice for our sins,
and for the sins of the whole world.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 15.1-17*

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I am the true vine, and my Father
is the keeper of the vineyard.

He removes every branch in me
that bears no fruit.

Every branch that does bear fruit,
he cleans, and prunes, to bear more fruit.

You have been cleansed
by the words that I have spoken to you.

Now remain in me,
as I remain in you.

As a branch cannot bear fruit
unless it remains in the vine,
neither can you bear fruit, unless you remain in me.

I am the vine,
you are the branches.

Those who remain in me, and I in them,
will bear much fruit.

Apart from me, you can do nothing -
like a cut and withered branch.

But if you remain in me,
and my words remain in you,
whatever you ask,
it will be done for you.

There is glory for my Father in this:
that you bear much fruit
as my disciples.

As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you;
now remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments,
you will remain in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and remain in his love.

All this I say
so that you may be my delight,
and your own joy may be complete.

So this is my commandment -
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

And there is no greater love than this:
that you lay down your life for your friends.

You are my friends,
if you keep my commandments.

I do not call you servants any longer,
because the servant does not know
what the master is doing;
but I have called you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me, but I chose you,
and I appointed you to go and bear fruit,
fruit that will last,
and the Father will give you
whatever you ask in my name.

All of this, I say to you
to direct you
to love one another.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 8 JANUARY

First Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

You are my servant,
my chosen one.
I uphold you,
I delight in you.
I will set my spirit upon you,
and you will bring justice
to the nations.
You will not shout out,
or lift up your voice.
You will not break
a bruised reed,
or extinguish
a dimly burning flame.
I will sustain you,
in courage and confidence,
while you establish
justice on earth.
And all the nations
will look to you.
I have called you
to this work
of justice
and righteousness.
I will lead you
and protect you.
I will give you
as a covenant
to the people,
as a light
to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
and to lead the captive
out of darkness
into freedom
and light.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Titus 3.4-7*

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

In the love and generosity of God,
we are saved,
not by any good works that we have done,
but by God's mercy.
God cleanses us,
re-creates us,
renews us,
and pours out the Holy Spirit upon us.
And so, by God's grace,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
we are reconciled with God,
and we are made inheritors
of eternal life.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 3.13-17*

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

Jesus came from Galilee,
to the Jordan,
to be baptised by John.
John pleaded
that it should be Jesus
baptising John,
not John
baptising Jesus.
But Jesus said, 'Let it be so'.
As Jesus
came up out of the water,
after being baptised by John,
he saw the heavens opened,
and the Spirit of God
descending
like a dove,
and settling upon him.
And a voice from heaven
said, 'This
is my beloved Son,
I delight
in him.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 15 JANUARY

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 9.1-4*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

O land of Zebulun and Naftali,

on the shores of Galilee,

beyond the Jordan,

in the land of the Gentiles:

you have suffered anguish,

affliction, and despair;

but now

you will be raised to glory.

You have walked

in darkness,

but you will see

a great light.

You have lived

in a land

of deep darkness,

but on you,

the light will shine.

You will enlarge the nation;

and there will be joy

like the joy

on the day

of the harvest,

or on the day

when the enemy

is driven away.

For the bar

across your shoulders,

and the power

of your oppressor,

will be broken.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 1.1-9*

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

To the church of God in Corinth,

made holy, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And to all those,

in every place, who call on his name.

Grace to you, and peace,

from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every day

I give thanks

for all that God is doing amongst you.

For in Christ,

you have grown

in every way.

You have grown

in your confidence

in the message of Christ.

And you have grown

in every spiritual gift,

as you look

for the coming of our Lord.

God has called you into the fellowship

of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we can trust

that God will continue

to give you the strength

that will keep you in holiness

for the day of our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 4.12-17*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

When Jesus heard

that John the Baptist

had been arrested,

he left Nazareth,

and made his home at Capernaum,

on the north shore of Galilee,

fulfilling the words

of the prophet Isaiah:

'O land of Zebulun and Naftali,

on the shores of Galilee,

beyond the Jordan,

in the land of the Gentiles:

you have walked

in darkness,

but you will see

a great light;

you have lived

in a land

of deep darkness,

but on you,

the light will shine.'

And there,

Jesus began to teach,

saying, 'Repent,

for the kingdom of heaven is near.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 22 JANUARY

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 49.5-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord called me,
even before I was born,
to gather Jacob and Israel
back to the Lord;
a great task,
for which the Lord God
is my strength.
And now the Lord says,
'It is too light a thing
that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob,
and to restore the survivors of Israel.
I will give you
as a light to all nations,
that my salvation may reach
to the ends of the earth.'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 1.10-13, 17-18*

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

I hear that there have been
quarrels amongst you,
with some saying they belong to Paul,
while others say
they belong to Apollos,
or to Peter,
or only to Christ.
But Christ is not divided!
Paul was not crucified for you!
And you were not baptised in the name of Paul!
Indeed Christ did not send me to baptise,
but to proclaim the gospel;
and not even with eloquent words of wisdom,
which might have distracted
from the power of the message itself -
the message of the cross of Christ.
For the message of the cross
is foolishness
to those who are perishing,
but to those who are
being saved,
it is the power of God.
So I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to find agreement with one another,
so that there may be
no more divisions amongst you,
and you may be united
in mind and resolve.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 4.18-25*

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

As Jesus walked
by the Sea of Galilee,
he saw two fishermen
casting a net
into the lake -
Simon, who is called Peter,
and his brother, Andrew.
Jesus said to them,
'Come, follow me,
and I will
send you out
to fish for people!'
Immediately,
they left their nets
and followed him.
As Jesus went on from there,
he saw the brothers, James and John,
in the boat, with their father,
mending their nets.
And he called them.
Immediately
they left the boat,
and their father,
and followed him.
Jesus travelled throughout Galilee,
teaching in their synagogues,
proclaiming
the good news of the kingdom,
and curing
every disease
and every sickness
amongst the people.
His fame spread north
into Syria.
And they brought to him
all who suffered
with demons,
diseases,
or pain;
and he healed them.
And great crowds followed him,
from Galilee,
Jerusalem,
and Judea,
and from the east side of the Jordan,
and beyond.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 29 JANUARY

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Micah 6.6-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

What shall we bring
as an offering to the Lord,
when we bow down
before God most high?
Shall we bring burnt-offerings,
calves a year old,
a thousand rams,
or ten thousand rivers of oil?

Or even our firstborn,
as a sacrifice for sin?

No, for these are not
the offerings that please the Lord!
The Lord has shown us what is good,
and this is what the Lord requires of us:
to act with justice,
kindness, love, and mercy,
and to walk humbly
with our God.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 1.18,21-27*

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

The wisdom of the world
did not
lead people to God.
Instead, God has used
not the wisdom of the world,
but the foolishness
of our proclamation
to save
those who believe.
Greeks demand wisdom,
and Hebrews demand miraculous signs
of great power.
But we proclaim Christ crucified.
The proclamation of Christ crucified
is foolishness to Greeks,
and a stumbling-block to Hebrews.
But to those who are called -
both Hebrew and Greek -
the proclamation of Christ crucified
is both the wisdom of God,
and the power of God.
For God's foolishness
is wiser
than human wisdom;
and God's weakness
is stronger
than human strength.

When you were called,
not many of you were wise
by human standards;
not many were powerful,
or of noble birth.

But God chose
what is foolish in the world
to shame the wise.

God chose
what is weak in the world
to shame the strong.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.1-12*

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

When Jesus saw
the great crowds
that followed him,
he went up on the mountainside,
and sat down.

His disciples gathered around him,
and he began to teach them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor, in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the humble, meek, and gentle,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called
children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted
for righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you
when people insult you,
and persecute you,
and condemn you, falsely, on my account,

for in the same way,
they persecuted
the prophets of old.

Rejoice, and be glad,
for your reward
is great in heaven.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 58.1b,3b-9a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says

to the people of Jacob:

I see your rebellion,

and I know your transgressions.

On the day of holy fasting and prayer,

you serve your own interests,

you oppress your workers,

and you quarrel, and fight.

This is not the fasting

that will make your voice

heard on high.

If you deny yourself,

bow your head,

and lie down in sackcloth and ashes,

even this

is not the fasting

that I honour,

says the Lord.

The fast that I honour

is to remove

the bonds of injustice,

and to let the oppressed

go free.

The fast that I honour

is to share your bread with the hungry,

to bring the homeless poor into your house,

and not

to hide away

from the needs

of those around you.

When this becomes your fast, then

your light and your healing will come,

your righteousness will lead you on,

and the glory of the Lord will protect you.

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer.

You will cry for help, and the Lord will hear.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 2.1-7,9-10a,13a*

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

When I was with you, brothers and sisters,

I did not proclaim the message of God

with lofty words of human wisdom.

I had decided to know nothing amongst you

except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

I came to you in weakness,

with fear, and trembling.

My proclamation was not

in persuasive words of human wisdom,

but relied on the power of the Spirit,

so that your faith might rest

not on human wisdom

but on the power of God.

Yet amongst the mature, we do speak wisdom.

For while the wisdom of this age, and its rulers,

comes to nothing,

God's eternal and glorious wisdom,

is now being revealed.

The scripture says, 'No eye has seen,

no ear has heard, no human heart

has understood'

all that has been prepared

for those who love God.

These hidden things,

God has now revealed to us

through the Spirit.

And we speak of them

in words

not taught by human wisdom,

but taught by the Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.13-20*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Jesus said,

'You are the salt of the earth.

But salt that loses its taste

is fit only

to be thrown out, and trampled under foot.

You are the light of the world.

When you light a lamp,

you do not put it under a barrel,

but on a lampstand,

to give light to the whole house.

Like a city on a hilltop, it cannot then be hidden.

In the same way,

let your light shine out,

that all may see the good that you do,

and give glory to your Father in heaven.

I have not come

to abolish

the law or the prophets,

but to fulfil them.

While heaven and earth remain,

not one letter,

not one stroke of a letter,

will pass from the law,

until everything is fulfilled.

Indeed, whoever breaks

even the least

of these commandments,

and teaches others to do the same,

will be called the least

in the kingdom of heaven;

while whoever both

keeps them and teaches them

will be called great

in the kingdom of heaven.

I tell you, your righteousness

must be greater than that

of the scribes and the Pharisees,

if you are to enter

the kingdom of heaven.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Exodus 20.2-17*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

I am the Lord your God.

I brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself any idol,
in the form of anything
that is in the sky above,
or the earth below, or the waters under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them
or worship them,

for I am the Lord your God,
grieving at the rebellion
of those who reject me
to the third and fourth generation;

and showing steadfast love
to a thousand generations
of those who honour me
and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name
of the Lord your God
in vain.

You shall remember the sabbath day,
and keep it holy.

Six days
you shall labour, and do all your work,
but the seventh day
is a sabbath
to the Lord your God.

On the sabbath day,
you shall do no work.

All shall rest on the sabbath day: you,
your sons, your daughters, your servants;
the foreigners living in your towns;
even your livestock;

for in six days, the Lord made the heavens,
the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
but rested on the seventh day;
therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day,
and made it holy.

You shall honour your father and mother,
that your days may be long
in the land
that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not envy
your neighbour's spouse.

You shall not envy
your neighbour's household, or home,
or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 3.3-6,10-11,16-17*

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

My brothers and sisters,

let there be no jealousy or quarrelling amongst you,
with one saying 'I follow Paul',
and another saying 'I follow Apollos'.

For Paul and Apollos are only servants
within the work of the Lord.

I may have planted,
and Apollos may have watered,
but God gave the growth.

I may have laid the foundation,
and Apollos may be building upon it,
but the foundation is Jesus Christ,
and you are being built together
on that foundation
as God's temple.

So let no one harm
God's temple.

For God's temple is holy,
with God's Spirit
dwelling within.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37a*

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

Jesus said,

'I tell you,
your righteousness
must be greater than that
of the scribes and the Pharisees
if you are to enter
the kingdom of heaven.

You have heard it said,
"You shall not murder";
and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgement."

But I say to you
that if you are angry
with a brother or sister,
you will be liable to judgement.

You have heard it said,
"You shall not commit adultery."

But I say to you
that any man who looks at a woman improperly
has already committed
the sin of adultery
in his heart.

You have heard it said,
"You must fulfil your vow
when you swear an oath to the Lord."

But I say to you,
do not swear
oaths or vows
at all,
but in your ordinary speaking,
let your "yes" mean "yes",
and let your "no" mean "no",
without the need
for any oath or vow.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 19 FEBRUARY

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Leviticus 19.2b-4,9-12,17-18*

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

You shall be holy,

for I am holy,
says the Lord your God.

You shall honour your mother
and your father,
and you shall keep my sabbath,
says the Lord.

You shall not turn to idols,
or make gods out of metal
for yourselves,
says the Lord.

When you gather in the harvest,
you shall not cut
to the very edge of your field,
or return
for the little
that remains.

And you shall not strip your vineyard bare,
or gather the fallen grapes.

These you shall leave
for the poor and the stranger,
says the Lord your God.

You shall not steal,
or be dishonest in your dealings,
or lie to one another.

You shall not swear
a false oath
by my name,
taking the name
of the Lord your God
in vain.

You shall not hate,
in your heart,
any one of your people.

You shall challenge any wrongdoing
that you see in your neighbour,
or be guilty
of the offence
yourself,
says the Lord.

You shall not take revenge,
or bear a grudge
against any
of your people.

And you shall love your neighbour
as yourself,
says the Lord your God.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 3.18-22*

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

The wisdom of this world
is foolishness to God.

So do not long for the world
to call you wise,
for when you find true wisdom, the world
will call you a fool.

The scripture says
the Lord catches the wise in their craftiness,
and their arguments come to nothing.

So let no one boast about human leaders.

For everything is yours in Christ -
not just Paul, and Apollos, and Peter,
but the whole world,
even life, and death,
and the present,
and the future.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 5.38-48*

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'You have heard it said,
"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

But I say to you,
do not take revenge
against the one who has wronged you.

If they strike you on the right cheek,
offer the left as well.

If they demand your shirt,
give your coat as well.

If they force you to walk one mile,
walk two.

Give to those who ask,
and welcome
those who come to borrow.

You have heard it said,
"You shall love your neighbour -
and hate your enemy."

But I say to you,
love your enemies,
and pray for those who persecute you.

This will make you true children
of your Father in heaven.

For you see how your Father
makes the sun come up each day
on the good, and on the wicked, alike.

And you see how your Father makes the rain to fall
on both the righteous
and the unrighteous.

If you love only those who love you,
that deserves no reward.

If you greet only your brothers and sisters,
you are doing no more
than all people everywhere.

So in all these things, aim for perfection -
the perfection of your Father in heaven.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY

Ash Wednesday

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 1.11-18*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Trample through my temple no more,
says the Lord.

I take no pleasure in your endless sacrifices.

Your offerings are futile.

I despise your incense,
your festivals, and your solemn assemblies,
while iniquity remains.

When you reach out your hands in prayer,
I will not listen.

I will cover my eyes,
for your hands are red with blood, says the Lord.

Wash yourselves, and make yourselves clean:

cease to do evil, learn to do good;

seek justice,

rescue the oppressed,

defend the orphan, and plead for the widow.

Then, says the Lord,

all that was stained blood-red with sin

will be made pure,

like new lamb's wool,

or the freshly-fallen snow.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Timothy 6.6-12a, 17-19*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to Timothy.

True riches

are to be found

in godliness

combined with contentment.

We brought nothing into the world,

and we take nothing out.

So if we have food

and clothing,

let us be content with that.

Those who long to be rich

fall into temptation, and are trapped

by many foolish and harmful desires

that plunge them into ruin and destruction.

The love of wealth

is the root

of all manner

of evil,

pulling people

away from the faith,

and repeatedly causing them

distress and pain.

So flee from all this,

and instead

seek righteousness, godliness,

faith, love,

endurance, and gentleness.

Work always

to be strong in the faith,

holding fast to the eternal life

to which you are called.

As for those who are wealthy, in this present age,

let them not be arrogant,

or try to find security

in the uncertainty of riches,

but let them find their security

in God, who richly provides us

with all things

to enjoy.

By generosity, and sharing, let the wealthy

be rich in good works,

and from this foundation, hold fast

to the life

that is truly life.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Take care

not to do

your good works

to be seen by others;

for if that is your purpose,

you will have no reward

from your Father in heaven.

When you give to those in need,

do not announce it with a fanfare,

in the synagogues and in the streets,

as the hypocrites do, seeking praise.

I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you give,

do not let your left hand know

what your right hand is doing.

Do your giving in secret,

and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

In the same way, when you pray, do not

be like the hypocrites, who love to

stand and pray in the synagogues,

and at the street corners, to be seen by others.

I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you pray,

go into your room, and shut the door,

and pray to your Father, who is in secret;

and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

And when you fast, do not look miserable,

like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces

to show others they are fasting.

I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you fast, clean your hair, and wash your face,

so that your fasting is seen

not by others,

but by your Father;

and your Father, who knows all things,

will reward you.

And do not put your heart

into storing up treasure on earth,

where everything decays,

and thieves break in and steal.

But put your heart, instead, into storing up

everlasting treasures in heaven,

that no thief can take away.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY

First Sunday of Lent

FIRST READING – *Genesis 3.1-6*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The serpent

was more cunning
than any other creature
the Lord God had made.

The serpent said to Eve, 'Did God say
that you shall not eat
from any of the trees
in the garden?'

Eve said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit
of any tree
in the garden;

except the tree
in the middle of the garden,
for God said
that if we even touch it,
we shall die.'

The serpent said to Eve, 'You will not die;
but when you eat
the fruit of that tree,
your eyes will be opened,
and you will be like God,
knowing good and evil.'

Understanding now
that the fruit of the tree
would bring knowledge,
and seeing that it was beautiful,
and good to eat,

Eve took fruit from the tree,
and gave some to Adam, who was with her,
and they ate.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 5.12-19*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Sin came into the world through Adam;
and death came into the world through sin,
and spread to all; and now all have sinned.

And so we see
that there was sin in the world
long before
the law
was given to Moses.

And we see
that sin was leading to death,
long before
there was any law
by which to measure it.

But now, the power of sin and death,
that began with the sin of Adam,
is swept away
by the far greater power
of the gift of God's grace
in Jesus Christ.

The sin of Adam led to death,
but now there is life
for those who receive forgiveness
in Christ.

Adam's trespass

led to condemnation and death for all.

But Christ's work of righteousness
leads to forgiveness and life for all.

By the disobedience of Adam,
many were made sinners, and died.

Now, by the obedience of Christ,
many will be made righteous, and live.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 4.1-11*

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

Jesus was led by the Spirit, into the wilderness,
to be tempted by the devil.

He ate nothing
for forty days, and forty nights.

The tempter came to him, in his great hunger,
and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God,
command these stones to become bread.'

But Jesus answered, 'The scripture says
that life is sustained,
not by bread alone,
but by the word of God.'

Then the devil led him to the holy city,
and to the highest point on the temple,
saying, 'If you are the Son of God,
throw yourself down; for the scripture says
that God will command the angels
to raise you up in their hands,
so that you will not even
hurt your foot on a stone.'

Jesus said, 'The scripture also says
that you shall not
put the Lord your God
to the test.'

Then the devil led him to a high mountain,
and showed him all the kingdoms of the world,
and their splendour;
and said, 'All these, I will give to you,
if you will fall down and worship me.'

Jesus said, 'Away from me, Satan;
for the scripture says, "Worship
the Lord your God,
and serve no other."'

And the devil left him;
and angels came,
and ministered to him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 5 MARCH

Second Sunday of Lent

FIRST READING – *Genesis 12.1-5*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said to Abram,

‘You are to leave

your country,
your people,
and your father’s house,
and go to the land
that I will show you.

And I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you.

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing to many.

I will bless those who bless you,
and I will rebuke
those who dishonour you.

And in you,
all the nations of the earth
will be blessed.’

And Abram departed, with his wife Sara,
and his nephew Lot,
and all their household,
and all their possessions,
as the Lord had directed.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *2 Timothy 1.8b-10*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy.

When we suffer
for the sake of the gospel,
we can trust
in the power of God.

For we know that God saved us,
and called us,
not because of anything we had done,
but by God’s grace,
and for God’s purposes.

All this was established
in Christ Jesus
before the beginning of time,
and has now been revealed,
in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has
broken the power of death,
and shown the way
to eternal life.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 17.1-9*

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

Jesus took Peter,
and the brothers James and John,
and led them up a high mountain
by themselves.

And there,
Jesus was transfigured before them.

His face
shone like the sun.

His clothes
became dazzling white.

And Moses
and Elijah
appeared,
talking with him.

Peter said, ‘Lord,
it is good
that we are here.

Let me make
three shelters,
one for you,
one for Moses,
and one for Elijah.’

While Peter
was still speaking,
a bright cloud
covered them,
and a voice
spoke from the cloud,
saying, ‘This is my beloved Son.
Listen to him.’

When the disciples
heard the voice,
they fell to the ground
in fear.

But Jesus came to them,
and touched them,
saying, ‘Get up,
and do not be afraid.’

When they looked up,
they now saw
only Jesus, alone.

As they were coming down the mountain,
Jesus said, ‘Tell no one
what you have seen,
until the Son of Man
has been raised from the dead.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 12 MARCH

Third Sunday of Lent

FIRST READING – *Exodus 17.1-7*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The whole people of Israel
made the journey
through the wilderness
in stages, as the Lord commanded.

In one place where they rested,
there was no water
for the people to drink.

The people argued,
and complained
against Moses,
saying, 'Why did you bring us
out of Egypt,

to this place, where we,
our children, and our livestock,
will all
die of thirst?'

Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel
and complain against me?
Why do you doubt the Lord,
and put the Lord to the test?'

And Moses cried out to the Lord,
'What shall I do with this people?
They are almost ready to stone me.'

The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people.
Take with you
some of the elders of Israel.

Carry with you
the same stick
that you used
to strike the river Nile.

I will stand before you,
on the rock, at Mount Sinai.

You will strike the rock,
and water
will come out of the rock,
for the people to drink.'

Moses did as the Lord commanded.

And he called the place 'Quarrel', and 'Testing',
because there, the the people quarrelled,
and doubted the Lord, asking,
'Is the Lord with us or not?'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 5.1-2,5-8*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

It is rare for anyone
to die for another -
even for one who is good.

And so we see the proof
of God's great love for us
in this:

that while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.

While we were still weak,
Christ died
for the ungodly.

And now we have received God's love
into our hearts
through the gift of the Holy Spirit.
We have been reconciled with God, by faith
in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now
we stand, with joyful confidence,
in the grace, the peace, and the glory of God.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 4.5-14*

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

Jesus approached a town in Samaria,
on land that Jacob had once given
to his son Joseph.

Tired out by the journey,
Jesus sat down by Jacob's Well,
while his disciples
went into town
to buy food.

At about midday,
a Samaritan woman
came to draw water from the well.

Jesus asked her
to draw some water
for him to drink.

Now Jews do not share things with Samaritans,
so the Samaritan woman asked Jesus,
'How is it that you, a Jew,
ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?'

Jesus said, 'If you knew
the generosity of God,
and who it is
that is asking you
for a drink,

you would have asked him
for the gift
of living water.'

The woman said to him, 'Sir,
you have no bucket, and the well is deep.
Where would you get that living water?'

Are you greater
than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well,
and drank from it himself,
with his sons,
and their livestock?'

Jesus said, 'Everyone
who drinks this water
will be thirsty again.
But those who drink the water
that I will give
will never be thirsty.

The water that I will give
will become, within them,
a flowing fountain
of water
for eternal life.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 19 MARCH

Fourth Sunday of Lent

FIRST READING – 1 Samuel 16.1b, 6-7, 10-13a

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

The Lord sent Samuel to Bethlehem,
to the household of Jesse,
saying, 'I have provided for myself
a king, amongst the sons of Jesse.'

At the place of sacrifice in Bethlehem,
Samuel first saw
Jesse's eldest son, Eliab.

Samuel thought that Eliab
would surely be the Lord's anointed.

But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not
look upon his height
or his appearance,
for I have rejected him.'

Mortals may look
on the outward appearance,
but the Lord
looks on the heart.'

Jesse presented six more of his sons
to Samuel.

But Samuel said, 'Are all your sons here?
For the Lord has not
chosen any of these.'

Jesse replied, 'There remains only the youngest,
and he is out, watching over the sheep.'

Samuel said, 'Send for him;
and we will not eat
until he arrives.'

When the youngest son arrived,
the Lord immediately said to Samuel,
'Rise, and anoint him, for he is the one.'

Samuel took the horn of oil,
and anointed David
in the presence of his brothers.

And the Spirit of the Lord
came powerfully upon David
from that day forward.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Ephesians 5.8-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Once, you were in darkness;
but now, you are in
the light of the Lord.

So live
as children of the light,
in the fruitful ways
of goodness, righteousness, and truth,
seeking always
what is pleasing
to the Lord.

And take no part
in the fruitless
works of darkness;
but bring them, instead, to the light.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 9.1-7, 14, 16-17, 33-39

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

After leaving the temple,
Jesus and his disciples
saw a man who had been blind from birth.

The disciples asked Jesus,
'Why was this man born blind?

Was it for his own sins,
or for the sins of his parents?'

Jesus answered, 'Neither;
but that the works of God
might be revealed in him.'

I am the light of the world,
and while it is day,
we must do the works
of the one who sent me.'

Then Jesus spat on the ground,
made mud with the saliva,
and spread the mud
on the man's eyes,
saying to him, 'Go and wash
in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent).

The man went,
and washed;
and came back,
able to see.

All of this happened
on the sabbath day.

The Pharisees
began to argue amongst themselves.
Some insisted, 'This Jesus
cannot be from God,
for he does not
observe the sabbath.'

But others said, 'If he were a sinner,
he could not perform
such signs.'

The man who had been healed said, 'Surely
his good works show
that he is a prophet.'

The Pharisees
said to him, 'You were born in sin,
and you presume to teach us?'

And they drove him out.
Jesus found him, and said to him,
'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'

He answered, 'Who is that, sir?
Tell me, so that I may believe.'

Jesus said, 'You have seen him,
and you are speaking with him.'

He said, 'Lord, I believe.'
And he worshipped him.

Jesus said, 'For judgement
I have come into the world:
to bring sight to the blind,
and to expose the blindness
of those who think they can see.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 26 MARCH

Fifth Sunday of Lent

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 37.11-14*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

The people of Israel say, 'Our bones
are dried up,
and our hope is gone.'
But the Lord God says, 'I am going to
bring you up
from your graves,
and lead you back
to the promised land.
I will put my spirit within you,
and you will live.
And then you will know
that I am the Lord.'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.6,10-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

To set the mind on the flesh
is death;
but to set the mind on the spirit
is life, and peace.
The spirit of Christ is within you,
and though your body is dead in sin,
your spirit is alive
in the righteousness of Christ.
The spirit of God,
having raised Jesus from the dead,
now dwells within you,
to give life
to your mortal body also.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 11:20b-45*

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

Martha went out to meet Jesus,
while Mary stayed at home.
Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord,
if you had been here,
my brother would not have died.
But even now,
I know that God will give you
whatever you ask.'
Jesus said to Martha, 'Your brother
will rise again.'
Martha said, 'I know
that he will rise again
at the resurrection,
on the last day.'
Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection,
and the life.
Those who live and believe in me
will never die.
And even if they die,
they will live.
Do you believe this?'

Martha said to Jesus, 'Yes, Lord,
I believe

that you are the Messiah,
the Son of God, who has
come into the world.'

Then Martha went back into the village,
and said to her sister Mary,
'The Teacher is here,
and is calling for you.'

Mary left the house,
and went quickly to the place
outside the village
where Martha had met with Jesus.

Those who had been consoling Mary
thought she was going to the tomb to weep,
so they also left the house, and followed her.

When Mary saw Jesus,
she knelt at his feet,
and said to him, 'Lord,
if you had been here,
my brother would not have died.'

When Jesus saw Mary weeping,
and those who were with her, also weeping,
he was deeply moved.

Jesus asked them, 'Where have you laid him?'
They said, 'Lord, come and see.'

Jesus also began to weep,
leading some to say, 'See how he loved him!'

But others said, 'He opened
the eyes of the blind.

Surely he could have kept Lazarus from dying.'

Jesus arrived at the tomb,
greatly distressed.

It was a cave,
with a stone across the entrance.

Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.'

Martha said, 'Lord, it will be unpleasant;
he has been dead
for four days.'

Jesus replied, 'Those who believe
will see the glory of God.'

So they took away the stone.

For the sake of the gathered crowd,
that they might understand
that this was the work of the Father,
Jesus looked up, and said,
'Father, I thank you for hearing me'.

Then Jesus shouted
into the cave, 'Lazarus, come out!'

And Lazarus came out of the cave,
his hands and his feet

still bound
in strips of linen,
and a cloth around his head.

Jesus said, 'Unbind him,
and let him go.'

Many of those who had been comforting Mary
saw what Jesus did,
and came to believe in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 2 APRIL

Palm Sunday

PALM PROCESSION – *Matthew 21.4-11*

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

The disciples brought the donkey and the foal to Jesus,
as Jesus had instructed them,
and made a saddle from their cloaks,
fulfilling the words
of the prophet Zechariah,
'Your king is coming to you, Jerusalem,
humble, and riding on a donkey,
on the foal of a donkey.'

Many in the crowd
spread their cloaks on the road,
and others cut branches from the trees
and spread those on the road.

The crowds that went in front of him,
and the crowds that followed behind him,
shouted out, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!'

When they entered Jerusalem,
the whole city was in turmoil,
with everyone asking, 'Who is this?'

And the crowds were saying, 'This is
the prophet Jesus,
from Nazareth, in Galilee.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MAIN LITURGY

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 50.4-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary
with a word.

Morning by morning
the Lord God awakens my ear,
that I may listen and learn.

The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I did not turn away.

I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks
to those who pulled out the beard.

I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me;
I have not been disgraced.

I have set my face like flint,
and I know
that I shall not
be put to shame.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 2.5-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul
to the Philippians.

Christ Jesus
did not regard
equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant.
Born in human form,
he humbled himself,
in faithful obedience, even to death on the cross.

And now, God has highly exalted him,
and has given him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus,
all shall bow down,
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth,
and declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory
of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord.

PASSION – *Matthew 26.14 - 27.66*

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Judas Iscariot,
one of the twelve,
went to the chief priests, and said,
'What will you give me
if I betray him to you?'

They paid him
thirty pieces of silver.

And from that moment,
he looked for an opportunity
to betray Jesus to them.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread,
the disciples came to Jesus, saying,
'Where shall we make the preparations
for you
to eat the Passover?'

Jesus said, 'Go into the city
to a certain man,
and say to him,
"The Teacher says, My time is near;
I will keep the Passover at your house
with my disciples."'

The disciples did
as Jesus had directed them,
and they prepared
the Passover meal.

When it was evening,
Jesus took his place at the table
with the twelve;
and while they were eating, he said to them,
'Truly, I tell you:
one of you will betray me.'
They were greatly distressed,
and each began to say to Jesus,
'Lord, is it I?'
Jesus said, 'One of you
who has shared this meal with me
will betray me.
The Son of Man will go
as it is written.
As for the one who betrays him,
it would have been better
not to have been born.'
Judas, the betrayer, said,
'Teacher, is it I?'
Jesus replied,
'You have said it.'

While they were eating,
Jesus took bread,
blessed it, broke it,
and gave it to the disciples, saying,
'Take, eat; this is my body.'
Then he took a cup,
gave thanks,
and gave it to them,
saying, 'Drink from this cup, all of you;
for this is my blood
of the covenant,
which is poured out for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
I tell you,
I will not drink again
of the fruit
of the vine
until the day
when I drink it with you anew,
in my Father's kingdom.'

When they had sung a hymn,
they went out
to the Mount of Olives.
Then Jesus said to them,
'You will all fall away
because of me
this night.
As the scripture says,
"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep
will be scattered."
But after I am raised up,
I will go ahead of you
to Galilee.'

Peter said to Jesus,
'Others may fall away,
but I will not!'
Jesus said to Peter,
'Truly I tell you,
this very night,
before the cock crows,
you will deny me three times.'
Peter said,
'Even if I must die with you,
I will not deny you!'
And all the disciples
said the same.

Jesus went, with his disciples,
to the place called Gethsemane,
and said to them, 'Sit here,
while I go over there to pray.'
He took with him
Peter, and the brothers James and John,
and began to be greatly distressed.
He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieving,
even to death. Remain here,
and stay awake with me.'
And going a little further,
he fell to the ground,
and prayed, 'My Father,
if it is possible,
take this cup from me;
yet not my will, but yours, be done.'
Returning to the disciples,
he found them sleeping.
He said to Peter, 'Could you not
watch with me, even one hour?
Stay awake, and pray,
that you may not
come into the time of trial;
for the spirit indeed is willing,
but the flesh is weak.'
Again he went away, and prayed, 'My Father,
if this cannot pass
unless I drink it,
your will be done.'
And he returned, and again
found them sleeping,
for their eyes were heavy.
So leaving them again,
he went away,
and prayed a third time,
saying the same words.
Then he returned to the disciples,
and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping,
and taking your rest?
The hour has come,
and the Son of Man is betrayed
into the hands of sinners.
Let us be going;
my betrayer is at hand.'

While Jesus was still speaking,
Judas, one of the twelve, arrived.
With him was a large crowd,
with swords and clubs,
from the chief priests,
and the elders of the people.
Judas had given them a sign,
saying, 'The one I will kiss
is the man;
arrest him.'
Judas approached Jesus,
saying, 'Greetings, Rabbi,'
and kissed him.
Jesus said to Judas, 'My friend, do
what you are here to do.'
Then they took hold of Jesus,
and arrested him.
One of the disciples
drew his sword,
and struck
the servant of the high priest,
cutting off his ear.
But Jesus said, 'Put away your sword;
for all who live
by the sword
will die
by the sword.
I could appeal to my Father,
and he would send
twelve legions
of angels.
But the scriptures must be fulfilled,
that it must happen
in this way.'
Then Jesus turned
to the gathered crowd,
and said, 'Day after day
I was teaching in the temple,
and you did not arrest me.
And now you come out
with swords and clubs
to arrest me
like an outlaw.
But all this has taken place
that the scriptures
might be fulfilled.'
Then all the disciples
deserted him, and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus
took him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest,
where the scribes and the elders had gathered.
Peter followed them at a distance,
to the courtyard of the high priest,
where he sat with the guards,
to see how this would end.
The chief priests, and the whole council,
were looking for false testimony against Jesus,
so that they might
put him to death.
But they found none,
even though
many false witnesses came forward.
Finally, two came forward, who claimed
that Jesus had said
he could destroy
the temple of God,
and rebuild it,
in three days.
The high priest stood up,
and demanded of Jesus, 'How do you respond
to this testimony?
Have you no answer?'
Jesus remained silent.
Then the high priest said,
'I put you under oath
before the living God.
Tell us now,
whether you are the Messiah,
the Son of God.'
Jesus said to him, 'You have said it.
But I say to you,
that after all this,
you will see the Son of Man
seated
at the right hand of power,
and returning
on the clouds of heaven.'
Then the high priest
tore his robes,
and said to the scribes,
and the elders, 'We need
no more witnesses.
You have heard
his blasphemy.
What is your verdict?'
The scribes and the elders
answered, 'He must die.'
And they spat
in his face,
and struck him.
And some mocked him, saying,
'If you are a prophet,
tell us who struck you.'

Peter was sitting outside,
in the courtyard.
A servant-girl
approached Peter,
and said, 'You were with Jesus, the Galilean.'
Peter denied it,
saying, 'I do not know
what you are talking about,'
and went out
to the gate-house.
Another servant-girl saw him there, and said,
'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.'
Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath,
saying, 'I do not know the man.'
After a while, those standing there
said to Peter, 'Surely you are with him,
for your accent betrays you.'
Peter began to curse, and again swore,
with an oath, 'I do not know the man!'
At that very moment,
the cock crowed.
And Peter remembered
what Jesus had said:
'Before the cock crows,
you will deny me three times.'
And Peter went out,
and wept bitterly.

When morning came,
the chief priests,
and the elders of the people,
again conspired together, against Jesus,
to bring about his death.
They bound Jesus, led him away,
and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

When Judas saw
that Jesus was condemned,
he repented,
and brought back
the thirty silver coins
to the chief priests and the elders.
Judas said, 'I have sinned,
by betraying innocent blood.'
The chief priests, and the elders, said,
'What is that to us? See to it yourself.'
Judas threw the coins
into the temple.
And he went away
and hanged himself.

The chief priests,
taking the coins,
said, 'We cannot put these
into the treasury,
as they are blood money.'
And after discussing this together,
they used them
to buy the potter's field,
as a place to bury foreigners;
and it is for this reason
that the field has been called
The Field of Blood
to this day.
And so the words of the prophet
were fulfilled: 'They took thirty silver coins,
the price that had been set on him,
and gave them for the potter's field,
as the Lord directed.'

Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor;
and Pilate asked Jesus,
'Are you the King of the Jews?'
Jesus replied, 'You have said it.'
The chief priests and the elders
set out their accusations
against Jesus;
but Jesus gave no reply.
Pilate said to Jesus, 'Do you not hear
the accusations
they are making against you?'
And still, Jesus gave no reply.

And a message was sent to Pilate
by his wife:
'Have nothing to do with this innocent man,
for today I have suffered many things
in a dream, because of him.'

Now at the festival, it was the custom
of the governor
to release to the crowd
a prisoner, of their choosing.
Pilate was holding a notorious prisoner,
called Barabbas.
Pilate asked the gathered crowd,
'Who do you want me to release for you?
Barabbas?
Or Jesus, called the Messiah?'
Pilate recognised
that it was out of envy
that the chief priests and the elders
had arrested Jesus,
and had brought Jesus to him.
And now the chief priests and elders
persuaded the crowds
to ask for the release of Barabbas,
and to have Jesus
put to death.
Pilate asked the crowd again, 'Which of these two
shall I release to you?'
And the crowd demanded Barabbas.
Pilate asked them, 'What then shall I do
with Jesus, called the Christ?'
And they cried out, 'Crucify him!'
Pilate asked, 'What evil has he done?'
But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify!'

When Pilate saw that he could do nothing,
and that a riot was beginning,
he took water,
and washed his hands before the crowd,
saying, 'I am innocent
of this man's blood.'
The people answered, 'His blood be on us
and on our children!'
Pilate released Barabbas for them,
and had Jesus flogged;
then handed Jesus over
to be crucified.

Pilate's soldiers
took Jesus to their barracks, where
the whole company of soldiers
gathered around him.
They stripped him,
and put a scarlet robe on him,
then twisted some thorns into a crown,
and put it on his head.
They put a reed in his right hand,
then knelt before him, and mocked him,
saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'
They spat on him,
and took the reed,
and struck him on the head.
Having mocked him,
they stripped him of the robe,
put his own clothes on him,
and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out,
a man from north Africa, named Simon, was there,
and they made him carry the cross.
When they came to the place called Golgotha
(which means the Place of the Skull),
they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall;
but when he tasted it,
he would not drink it.
And when they had crucified him,
they divided his clothes amongst themselves
by casting lots.
Then they sat and kept watch over him.
Above his head,
they put the charge against him,
which read, 'This is Jesus,
the King of the Jews.'
Two thieves
were crucified with him,
one on his right, and one on his left.
Those who passed by
mocked him, saying,
'You who would destroy the temple
and build it in three days,
save yourself.
If you are the Son of God,
come down from the cross.'
The chief priests, the elders,
and the teachers of the law,
also mocked him, saying,
'He saved others, but he cannot save himself.
If he is the King of Israel,
let him come down from the cross,
and we will believe in him.
He trusts in God;
he claims to be the Son of God;
let us see
whether God
will deliver him now.'
And those who were crucified with him
also taunted him.

At midday,
darkness came over the whole land
for three hours.
Then Jesus cried with a loud voice,
'My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?'
Jesus cried out in Aramaic,
addressing God as 'Eli'.
Some of the bystanders
thought he was calling
for Elijah.
One of them brought a sponge,
filled it with sour wine,
put it on a stick,
and held it up for Jesus to drink.
But the others said, 'Wait,
let us see whether Elijah
will come to save him.'
Then Jesus
let out a loud cry
once again,
and breathed his last.
At that very moment,
the curtain of the temple
was torn in two.
The earth shook,
and rocks split apart.
Tombs broke open,
and the bodies of many godly people who had died
were awakened.
After his resurrection,
they came out from their tombs,
and entered the holy city,
and appeared to many.
Now when the centurion guarding Jesus,
and the other soldiers with him,
saw the earthquake,
and all that had taken place,
they said, 'Truly this was
the Son of God.'
Many women were also there,
looking on from a distance.
They had followed Jesus from Galilee,
and had provided for him.
Amongst them were Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of James and Joseph,
and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening,
Joseph of Arimathea,
a disciple of Jesus,
went to Pilate,
and asked for the body of Jesus;
and Pilate ordered
that it should be given to him.
So Joseph of Arimathea
took the body of Jesus,
wrapped it
in a clean linen cloth,
and laid it
in his own new tomb,
which had been carved out
from the rock.
He rolled a great stone
across the door of the tomb,
and went away.
Mary Magdalene,
and the other Mary,
were there,
sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day,
the chief priests and the Pharisees
went to Pilate, and said,
'Sir, while that impostor was still alive,
he said that after three days
he would rise again;
so order that the tomb
be made secure
until the third day;
or his disciples may come
and remove the body,
and tell the people
he has risen
from the dead,
and this last deception
would be worse
than the first.'
Pilate said,
'You have soldiers;
go, make it secure.'
So they went with soldiers
and made the tomb secure.

The Passion of the Lord.

THURSDAY 6 APRIL

Maundy Thursday

FIRST READING – *Exodus 12.2-3,5a,6-8,11-14*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

You are to call this month

the first month
of the year.

On the tenth day
of this month,

each family, each household,
is to take a lamb,
a year-old male, without blemish.

On the fourteenth day,
each household
is to slaughter the lamb
at sunset.

With the blood of the lamb,
you are to mark the door-frame of the house
where you will eat.

That same night,
you are to roast the lamb
over a fire,

and eat it
with bitter herbs,
and bread without yeast.

You are to eat it hurriedly,
with your belt fastened
and your shoes on your feet.

That night will be the Passover of the Lord -
for I will pass through the land of Egypt that night,
and I will strike down
every first-born male
in the land of Egypt,
both people and animals.

Against all the gods of Egypt,
I will bring judgement -
for I am the Lord.

But when I see the blood of the lamb
on the houses where you live,
I will pass over you,
and no plague will destroy you,
even as I strike
the land of Egypt.

And then,
you are to keep this day
as a day of remembrance,
a festival to the Lord for ever,
through every generation.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Revelation 5.5a,6a,7-13*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Looking like

a lamb that has been slain,
and is alive again,

the one who is
the Lion of Judah, and the root of David,
took the scroll

from the one who was seated on the throne.

The four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders,
holding musical instruments,
and golden bowls of incense
(which are the prayers of the saints),

fell down before the Lamb,
and sang: 'You are worthy,
for you were slain,

and by your blood
you have restored to God
a people to serve
as a royal priesthood on earth
from every nation, tribe, and language.'

Then I heard thousands of angels,
all around the throne,
with the living creatures, and the elders,
singing in full voice: 'Worthy
is the Lamb that was slain,
to receive
all wisdom and power,
all honour and glory and praise!'

Then I heard every creature
in heaven and on earth,
and under the earth, and in the sea,
singing to the one who was seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb, 'Blessing and honour
and glory and power,
be yours for ever and ever!'

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 1.23,26b-27,29*

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

John the Baptist said,

'I am the voice of the one
crying out in the wilderness,
"Make straight the way of the Lord,"
as the prophet Isaiah has said.

But amongst you
stands one you do not know,
the one who is coming after me.

I am not worthy
even to be his servant.'

The next day,
John saw Jesus coming towards him,
and declared,

'Here is the Lamb of God
who takes away
the sin of the world!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

FRIDAY 7 APRIL

Good Friday

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 53.3-5*

He was despised
and rejected.
He knew anguish
and pain.
We counted him as worthless,
as struck down
by God.
We turned our faces
from him.
Yet truly
he bore our anguish,
and carried our pain.
He was wounded
for our transgressions,
and crushed
for our iniquities.
He bore the punishment
that makes us whole.
And by his wounds,
we are healed.

SECOND READING – *Hebrews 4.14-16; 5.7-9*

We have
a great high priest, who has
ascended into heaven,
Jesus, the Son of God.
And he is able to sympathise
with our weakness,
for he himself
has been tested,
in every way, as we are -
yet without sin.
So let us trust in him,
and approach the throne of grace with boldness,
that we may receive mercy,
and find grace to help
in time of need.
In the time of his earthly life,
he offered up prayers,
with loud cries, and tears,
to the one who was able to rescue him from death.
Even as a Son,
he grew in devotion
through all he learned and endured.
The Father heard his prayer.
And now he has become
the source of eternal salvation
for all who trust in him.

*Good Friday Passion Readings
begin on the next page*

FRIDAY 7 APRIL

Good Friday Passion Reading Part 1

John 18:1-27

Jesus went
with his disciples
to a garden
on the far side
of the Kidron valley.
Judas also knew the place,
because Jesus
would often meet there
with his disciples.
So Judas led the soldiers and the temple guards there,
with weapons and torches.
Jesus, knowing what was happening,
stepped forward, and asked them, 'Who is it
that you are looking for?'
They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'
Jesus said, 'I am he.'
And they stepped back
and fell to the ground.
Jesus asked them again, 'Who is it
that you are looking for?'
And again they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'
Jesus replied, 'I say again, I am he.
Now let these others go.'
In this way, he fulfilled the words
he had earlier spoken in prayer:
'I have protected those
you entrusted to me.'
Simon Peter
now drew his sword,
and struck
the servant
of the high priest,
cutting off his right ear.
Jesus said, 'Put your sword away,
for I must surely drink
from the cup
that the Father
has given me.'
Then the soldiers
and the temple guards
arrested Jesus,
and bound him.
They took him first to Annas,
the father-in-law
of Caiaphas,
the high priest that year.
Caiaphas was the one who had said
that it was better
to have one person die
for the people.

Simon Peter,
and another disciple,
followed Jesus.
The other disciple
was known to the high priest,
and was able to follow Jesus
all the way
into the courtyard.
But Peter was left standing outside the gate,
until the other disciple
went out
and spoke to the woman who was
guarding the gate.
The woman said to Peter, 'Are you also
one of his disciples?'
Peter said, 'I am not.'
The servants and temple guards
had made a charcoal fire
in the courtyard,
and they were standing around it
to keep warm.
Peter went
and stood with them.
Inside, they were questioning Jesus
about his disciples
and his teaching.
Jesus said, 'I have always spoken openly.
I have taught
in the synagogue,
and in the temple,
where people gather.
I have said nothing in secret.
Why ask me,
when you can ask
those who heard me?'
One of the temple guards
struck Jesus on the face,
saying, 'That is not
how you answer
the high priest.'
Jesus said, 'If what I have said
is untrue, then say so;
but if it is true, why strike me?'
Annas now sent Jesus, bound,
to Caiaphas the high priest.
Simon Peter
was still standing
with the temple guards,
by the charcoal fire,
in the courtyard.
Those who were standing there
asked Peter, 'Are you also
one of his disciples?'
Peter again denied it,
saying, 'I am not.'
One of the servants of the high priest
(a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off)
said to Peter, 'Did I not
see you with him, in the garden?'
Again Peter denied it;
and at that very moment,
the cock crowed.

FRIDAY 7 APRIL

Good Friday Passion Reading Part 2

John 18:28 - 19:16

At first light, they took Jesus
from the court of
Caiaphas, the high priest,
to the headquarters of
Pilate, the Roman governor.
But they did not go in,
as that would have been
a ritual defilement, preventing them
from eating the Passover.
So Pilate went out to them,
and asked, 'What charges do you bring
against this man?'
They answered, 'If he were not
an offender, we would not have
brought him to you.'
Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves,
and judge him by your own law.'
They replied, 'It is not lawful for us
to put anyone to death.'
Pilate went back inside his headquarters.
There, he summoned Jesus,
and asked him, 'Are you
the king of the Jews?'
Jesus said, 'Do you ask this for yourself,
or as something that others have said?'
Pilate replied, 'I am a Roman, not a Jew.
Your own people
and chief priests
have handed you over to me.
What have you done?'
Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not
of this world,
or I would surely have guards,
fighting to protect me.
My kingdom is not here.'
Pilate said, 'So you are a king!'
Jesus said, 'Those are your words.
I was born, and I came into the world,
to bear witness to the truth.
Everyone who seeks the truth
hears my voice.'
Pilate said, 'And what is truth?'
Pilate then returned
to those who were waiting outside,
and said, 'I find no case against him.
But you have a custom
that I release a prisoner for you
at Passover.
Do you want me to release to you
the king of the Jews?'
And they shouted, 'Not him,
but Barabbas!'
And Barabbas
was a common criminal.

Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.
The soldiers made a crown, out of thorns,
and put it on his head;
and they dressed him
in a purple robe.
They came up to him, saying,
'Hail, King of the Jews!'
and struck him on the face.
Pilate returned to those who were waiting outside,
and said, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you
to let you know
that I find no case against him.'
Jesus came out,
wearing the crown of thorns
and the purple robe.
Pilate said, 'Behold the man!'
As soon as the chief priests,
and the temple guards, saw him,
they shouted, 'Crucify!'
Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him.
I find no case against him.'
They said, 'By our law, he must die,
for he claims to be
the Son of God.'
When Pilate heard this,
he was greatly concerned.
He entered his headquarters again,
and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?'
But Jesus gave no answer.
Pilate said, 'Do you refuse to speak to me?
Do you not see
that I have the power to release you,
or to crucify you?'
Jesus said, 'You would have had
no power over me,
had it not been given to you.
The one who handed me over to you
is guilty of a greater sin.'
On hearing this, Pilate again
sought to release Jesus,
but the chief priests
and the temple guards
said, 'If you release him, you are no friend
of the emperor,
for he sets himself against the emperor,
by calling himself a king.'
Pilate took Jesus outside,
and sat on the judgement seat,
at the stone pavement.
It was about midday
on the day of preparation
for the Passover.
Pilate said, 'Here is your king!'
They cried out, 'Away with him!
Crucify him!'
Pilate asked them, 'Shall I
crucify your king?'
They answered, 'We have no king
but the emperor!'
And Pilate handed Jesus over to them,
and they led him away
to be crucified.

FRIDAY 7 APRIL

Good Friday Passion Reading Part 3

John 19:17-end

With Jesus carrying his own cross,
they led him out
to The Place of the Skull
(which in Hebrew is Golgotha).
There they crucified him,
between two others,
one on his right, and one on his left.
Pilate had an inscription
placed on the cross: 'Jesus of Nazareth,
the King of the Jews.'
Many people were able to read this,
as the place of the crucifixion
was near the city,
and the sign was written
in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.
The chief priests complained to Pilate,
insisting that the inscription
should not be
'The King of the Jews',
but
'This man claimed to be
the King of the Jews'.
But Pilate said, 'What I have written,
I have written.'
The soldiers who crucified Jesus
divided his clothes
between them.
But his tunic was woven as a single piece,
so rather than tear it,
they cast lots for it.
As it says in the psalm, 'They divided my garments
amongst themselves,
and for my clothing, they cast lots.'
Standing by the cross of Jesus
were his mother,
and his mother's sister,
Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary Magdalene.
When Jesus saw the beloved disciple
standing beside his mother,
Jesus said to his mother, 'Here is your son',
and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'
And from that time on,
the disciple took her into his own home.
Knowing that everything was now completed,
and in order to fulfil the scripture,
Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.'
From a jar that was standing there,
they filled a sponge with sour wine,
fixed it
on a branch of hyssop,
and lifted it to his mouth.
When Jesus had received it,
he said, 'It is finished,'
And he bowed his head,
and gave up his spirit.

The temple authorities
did not want the crucifixions
continuing into the sabbath,
so they asked Pilate to order
that the legs of the crucified
be broken,
and the bodies removed.
The soldiers came
and broke the legs
of the two who had been crucified
alongside Jesus.
But when they came to Jesus,
seeing that he was already dead,
they did not break his legs,
but pierced his side with a spear;
and blood and water
flowed out.
This account is given
by one who
witnessed these things,
so that you may know it to be true.
And so the scriptures were fulfilled:
'Not one of his bones shall be broken,'
and, 'They will look upon
the one they have pierced.'
After all these things
had taken place,
Joseph of Arimathea
sought and received
from Pilate
permission to take away
the body of Jesus.
Joseph was a disciple of Jesus,
but secretly, for fear
of the religious authorities.
Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus
by night,
brought linen cloths,
and ointment, with myrrh, and aloe.
and together
they anointed and wrapped
the body of Jesus
for burial.
In a garden,
close to the place of crucifixion,
there was a new tomb,
in which no one
had ever been laid.
And as the sabbath
was soon to begin,
and the tomb was nearby,
they laid Jesus there.

SUNDAY 9 APRIL

Easter Day

FIRST READING – Acts 2.22-24,29-32,36

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said, 'People of Israel,
you are all witnesses
to the signs, wonders, and deeds of power,
that God did amongst us
through Jesus of Nazareth.

You had him crucified,
by the hands of those
outside the law.

But God raised him up,
setting him free
from death, which could not
hold him
in its power.

All this was in fulfilment
of a plan
that God formed
long ago.

King David died, and was buried,
and his tomb is with us to this day.

But as a prophet, King David knew
that God would put
one of his descendants
on his throne.

When King David wrote
that he would not
be abandoned to death,

he was writing of that descendant,
the Messiah,
and the resurrection
of the Messiah.

And now, we are all witnesses
that God has raised up
this Jesus
from the dead.

So let it be known, to all Israel,
that God has made this Jesus -
the one you crucified -
to be both Messiah and Lord.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Colossians 3.1-4

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Now that you have been raised up with Christ,
seek the things that are above.

Set your minds
on the things of heaven,
not on the things of earth.

For you have died,
and your new life, in the risen Christ,
is secure, in the presence of God.

And when Christ, who is your life, appears,
you also
will appear with him
in glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 20.1-18

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

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark,
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb
and saw that the stone
had been removed.

She hurried back to Simon Peter,
and the disciple Jesus loved, and said,
'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,
and we do not know
where they have laid him.'

Peter and the other disciple
set off running
towards the tomb.

The other disciple outran Peter,
reaching the tomb first.

Bending down to look in,
he could see the linen wrappings, lying there,
but did not go in.

Then Simon Peter came, following him,
and went into the tomb.

He saw the linen wrappings,
and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head
rolled up separately, in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple
also went in,
and saw, and believed;
(for until this point,
they had not understood the scripture,
that he must rise from the dead).

When these two disciples returned to their homes,
Mary stayed, weeping, outside the tomb.

As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;
and she saw two angels, in white robes,
sitting one at the head, and one at the feet,
of where the body of Jesus had been.

The angels said to Mary, 'Why are you weeping?'
Mary said, 'They have taken away my Lord,
and I do not know where they have laid him.'

When she had said this, she turned around,
and saw Jesus standing there,
but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus asked her, 'Why are you weeping?
Who is it that you are looking for?'

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him,
'Sir, if you have carried him away,
tell me where you have laid him,
and I will take him away.'

Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'

Mary turned, and said to him, 'Teacher!'

Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me,
for I have not yet ascended to the Father.
But go, and tell my brothers
that I am ascending
to my Father and your Father,
to my God and your God.

Mary Magdalene went
and said to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord';
and she told them the words
the Lord had spoken to her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 16 APRIL

Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 2.36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said, 'Let it be known, to all Israel,
that God has made this Jesus -
the one you crucified -
to be both Messiah and Lord.'

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart,
and they asked Peter, and the apostles,
'Brothers, what should we do?'

Peter said to them, 'Save yourselves
from this corrupt generation.

Repent, and be baptised,
in the name of Jesus Christ,
that your sins may be forgiven;
and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This promise is for you, and for your children,
and for all who are far away -
for all are now called
by the Lord our God.'

Those who welcomed Peter's message were baptised.

And that day, about three thousand
were added to their number.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 1.3-9

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Let us praise the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy,
and by the resurrection of his son Jesus Christ
from the dead,

he has given us new birth
into a new and living faith,
and into an inheritance, kept for us in heaven,
that will never perish, spoil, or fade.

And you, yourselves, are being protected,
by the power of God, and by your faith,
until the day when our salvation
will be fully revealed, at the end of the age.

So rejoice, even though, for a little while,
you suffer many and various trials.

Gold
is also tested, by fire.

And your faith
is more precious than gold!
Your present trials demonstrate
that your faith is genuine,
and that will be
to your praise and honour
when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Although you have not seen him,
you love him, you trust in him,
and you are filled with the glory
of a joy beyond words,
as your faith leads you on
towards the perfection of your salvation.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 20.19-31

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

The disciples met together
on the evening
of the first day
of the week,
with the doors locked,
because they were afraid.

And Jesus came,
and stood amongst them,
and said, 'Peace be with you.'

He showed them his hands,
and his side.

And the disciples were filled with joy
at seeing the Lord.

Jesus said to them, 'Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me,
so I send you.'

Then he breathed on them,
saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

And he said to them, 'Whatever you forgive
is forgiven, and whatever you retain remains.'

Now one of the twelve,
Thomas (called the Twin),
was not with them
when Jesus came.

When the other disciples told Thomas
that they had seen the Lord,
Thomas said to them, 'Unless I see and touch
the marks of the nails in his hands,
and put my hand in his side,
I will not believe.'

A week later,
Thomas was with the disciples
when they gathered.

And again, though the doors were locked,
Jesus came, and stood amongst them,
and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Jesus said to Thomas, 'See and touch my hands,
and place your hand in my side.
Do not doubt, but believe.'

Thomas replied, 'My Lord, and my God!'
Jesus said to Thomas, 'Have you believed
because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who do not see,
and yet believe.'

Jesus did many other signs,
in the presence of his disciples,
which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written
that you may believe
that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,
and through believing,
may have life in his name.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 23 APRIL

Third Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 2.42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

All those who were baptised
devoted themselves
to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
the breaking of bread, and the prayers.
All were deeply moved
at the many wonders and signs
being done through the apostles.
The believers were all together, day by day,
in the temple,
and breaking bread in their homes,
where they would eat together
with glad and generous hearts.
They held everything in common,
selling their goods and possessions,
and distributing the proceeds
to any who were in need.
They were continually praising God.
They had the goodwill
of all the people.
And day by day,
the Lord was adding to their number
those who were being saved.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 1.17b-21

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

We have been rescued
from the futile ways
that we inherited from our ancestors.
And the cost of our rescue
was not silver or gold,
but the precious blood of Christ, who was
like a sacrificial lamb, without defect or blemish.
This was God's plan and purpose
from before the foundation of the world:
that through Christ, we should find
faith and trust in God, who has raised Christ
from death to glory.
So during this time of our exile, let us live a life
that honours
our Father in heaven.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.13-35

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

That same day, the first day of the week,
two of the disciples
were walking to a village called Emmaus,
about seven miles from Jerusalem,
talking with each other
about everything that had happened.
While they were talking and discussing,
Jesus himself came near, and walked with them,
but their eyes were kept from recognising him.

Jesus asked them what they were discussing
as they were walking along.

They stood still, looking downcast.

One of them said, 'You must be the only person,
in all Jerusalem, who does not know
the things that have happened there
in recent days.'

Jesus asked them, 'What things?'

They said, 'About Jesus of Nazareth,
a prophet, mighty in word and deed,
before God, and all the people.

And how our chief priests and elders
handed him over
to be condemned to death, and crucified.

We had hoped
that he was the one to deliver Israel.

It is now the third day
since these things took place,
and some women from our group astounded us.

They were at the tomb early this morning.

They did not find his body, but came back and told us
that they had seen
a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us
went to the tomb,
and found it just as the women had said.'

Jesus said to them, 'How foolish you are,
and how slow to believe
all that the prophets have declared!

For it was necessary that the Messiah
should suffer these things, and only then
enter into his glory.'

And beginning with Moses, and the prophets,
Jesus explained to them
all the scriptures concerning himself.

As they came near to the village, Jesus
walked on ahead, as if he were going on.

But they persuaded him to stay with them,
as it was already late, and the daylight
was nearly gone.

When they came to eat, Jesus took bread,
blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened,
and they recognised him.

And he disappeared
from their sight.

They said to each other, 'Were not
our hearts
burning within us,
while he was talking to us on the road,
and opening the scriptures to us?'

That same hour, they returned to Jerusalem,
and found the eleven, and those with them,
gathered together.

They were saying, 'The Lord has risen,
and has appeared to Peter!'

And the two disciples told them
what had happened on the road,
and how the Lord had been
made known to them
in the breaking of bread.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 30 APRIL

Fourth Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 3.1-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter and John went up to the temple
at the time of the afternoon prayers.

They saw a man who had been lame from birth
being carried to one of the temple gates,
where he would beg each day
as people entered the temple.

Peter and John
looked at him intently.

Peter said, 'Look at us'.

And he looked up,
expecting to receive something from them.

Peter said, 'I have no gold or silver,
but I will give you
what I have.

In the name
of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!

Taking him by the hand,
Peter helped him up,
and immediately, the man's feet and ankles
became strong.

He stood up, and began to walk.

And he entered the temple,
holding on to Peter, and John,
walking, even jumping,
and giving thanks to God.

People began to gather around, amazed,
when they saw him, and recognised him
as the man who sat begging at the temple gate.

Peter addressed those who gathered,
saying: "People of Israel,
why are you surprised
by what you see?

It is not
our power or godliness
that made this man walk,

but by this sign, the God of our ancestors,
the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

is glorifying his son Jesus -
the one you handed over to Pilate,
and rejected
even when Pilate
offered to release him.

You rejected the holy and righteous one,
asking for a murderer instead.

You killed the prince of life.

But God raised him from the dead.

And now, it is by faith in the name of Jesus
that this man has been healed,
and made strong.

I know that you, and your leaders, acted in ignorance;
but this is how God fulfilled
all that is written in the prophets,
that the Messiah would suffer.

So repent, now;
turn again; and your sins
will be forgiven.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 2.20-25

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

It is not a virtue, if you endure
when you are punished for doing wrong.

But if you endure
when you suffer for doing right,
that is a worthy sacrifice,
for you are following the example
of Christ who suffered for you.

As it says in the scriptures, 'He committed no sin,
in word or deed.'

When he was abused,
he gave no insult in return.

When he suffered, he did not curse,
but trusted
in the one who is
the righteous judge of all.

It was for our sins
that he suffered, in his body, on the cross.

It is by his wounds
that we are healed.

And it is by his worthy sacrifice
that we can now be dead to sin,
and alive to righteousness.

Like sheep, we were going astray;
but now, we have returned
to the shepherd and guardian of our lives.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 10.1-10

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

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

'When the shepherd
goes to the sheepfold,
the gatekeeper allows him in.

The shepherd calls his sheep by name,
and leads them out,
and they follow him,
because they know his voice.

The thief climbs in another way,
but the sheep will not follow him;
they keep away from him,
because they do not know his voice.'

The Pharisees
did not understand
what Jesus was saying to them.

So Jesus said to them, 'I am
the gate for the sheep.

Whoever enters by the gate will be safe,
free to come in,
and go out,
and find pasture.

All who came before me
were thieves and robbers,
coming only to steal, kill, and destroy.

But the sheep did not listen to them.

I came that they may have life,
and life in all its fullness.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 7 MAY

Fifth Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 4.1-12

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter and John continued to speak

to the crowd that had gathered, in the temple,
about Jesus, and the resurrection of the dead.

The priests and the Sadducees were greatly annoyed,
and taking the commander of the temple guard,
they arrested Peter and John,
and put them in a cell
for the night.

But many had already heard the message,
and the number of believers
was now about five thousand.

The next day,
the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law
met in Jerusalem
with Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas,
and others from the high priest's family.

They had Peter and John brought in,
and began to question them: 'By what power,
or in what name, did you do this?'

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,
'Rulers and elders of the people,
you question us today
about an act of kindness
towards a man who was lame.

We say to you, and to all the people of Israel:
this man stands before you,
healed in the name
of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
the one you crucified,
and God raised from the dead.

This Jesus is "the stone the builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone,"
and there is no other name under heaven
by which
we can be saved.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 2.4-9

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Come to the one who is
the living stone,

rejected by mortals,
but chosen by God
as the foundation stone.

And like living stones yourselves,
be built into a spiritual temple, on that foundation;
a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices,
acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

For the scripture says: 'See, I am laying in Zion
a cornerstone, chosen and true;
and whoever relies on it
will never be put to shame.'

And for all who believe,
this stone has indeed become
a sure foundation.

The scripture also says, 'The stone
the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.'

And for those who do not believe,
as the scripture also says, it is 'a stone
that makes them stumble and fall'.

And so indeed they stumble and fall
when they reject the word of God.

But you are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
declaring the praises
of the one who called you
and led you
out of darkness
into freedom and light.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 14.1-14

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God.

Trust also in me.

There is room for many
in my Father's house.

I go now to prepare a place for you.

And I will return for you,
and take you to myself,

so that where I am,
there you may be also.

And you already know the way
to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know
where you are going.

How can we know the way?'

Jesus said, 'I am the way,
and the truth, and the life.

Everyone who comes to the Father
comes through me.

And if you know me,
you know my Father also,
and indeed you have seen him.

Philip said, 'Lord,
show us the Father,
and we will be satisfied.'

Jesus said, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,
and still

you do not know me?

Whoever has seen me
has seen the Father.

I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.

The words that I speak
are the words of the Father within me.

And now, those who believe in me
will do all that I have done, and more,
because I am returning to the Father.

And I myself will do
whatever you ask in my name;

and in this way also,

I will bring glory to the Father.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 14 MAY*Sixth Sunday of Easter***FIRST READING – Acts 7.52-60**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Concluding his statement

to the high priest
and the council,

Stephen now accused them directly.

‘Your ancestors persecuted
every prophet
they were sent.They killed those who spoke
of the coming
of the Righteous One.And now you have become
his betrayers
and his murderers.You had the privilege
of receiving God’s law,
but you never obeyed it!’The high priest
and the council
were furious
at Stephen’s words.Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit,
gazed into heaven, and said,
‘I see the glory of God,
and I see Jesus, standing
at the right hand of God!’But they covered their ears,
and with a loud shout,
they rushed at Stephen,
and dragged him out of the city.Then laying their coats
at the feet
of a young man
named Saul,
they began
to stone Stephen.Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus,
receive my spirit.’And falling to his knees, as he died,
Stephen cried out, ‘Lord,
do not hold this sin against them.’

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 3.15b-18a

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Always be ready

to speak about
the confidence
that you have in your faith.Do so with gentleness, and respect,
and with a clear conscience,
so that those who speak against you
will be put to shame
by your good conduct
in Christ.It is better to suffer
for doing good
than to sufferfor doing wrong;
as Christ also suffered,
the righteous for the unrighteous,
once, for the sins of all,
to bring us back to God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 14.15-21Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If you love me,
and live by all that I have taught you,I will ask the Father,
and he will send you
the Holy Spirit,
to be with you -the Spirit of truth,
unknown to the world,
but known to you,
to be alongside you,
amongst you,
and within you.Soon, the world
will not see me.

But you will see me.

I will not
leave you desolate.I will come to you,
and you will live
because I live.And you will know
that I am in the Father.And you will know
that you are in me,
and that I am in you.If you love me,
and live by all that I have taught you,I will love you,
and my Father will love you,
and you will know
that I am with you.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

THURSDAY 18 MAY

Ascension Day

FIRST READING – Acts 1.3-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

After his suffering and death,
Jesus presented himself alive
to the apostles,
with many convincing proofs,
appearing to them
during forty days,
and speaking
of the kingdom of God.
Jesus said to them, 'Do not
leave Jerusalem,
but wait here
for the promise of the Father.

John baptised with water,
but you will be baptised
with the Holy Spirit
not many days from now.'

The apostles asked Jesus, 'Lord,
is this the time
when you will restore
the kingdom of Israel?'

Jesus replied, 'You cannot know
every time or season
in the purposes
of the Father.

But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit
comes upon you.

And you will be my witnesses
in Jerusalem,
in all Judea,
in Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.'

Then, as they were watching,
he was taken up,
and a cloud
hid him
from their sight.

And as they looked intently into the sky,
two figures in white robes appeared,
saying, 'Men of Galilee,
why do you stand here
looking into the sky?

This Jesus
has been
taken up from you
into heaven,
and will return
in the same way
you saw him go.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Ephesians 1.17-23

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

The power of God

has raised Christ from the dead,
to God's right hand on high,
far above all earthly powers -
above every other name
in this world or the next;
and has made Christ
the head of the church,
and has made the church
the body of Christ.

So now may your hearts be filled
with the same power of God, which is
the gift of God
to all who believe.

May your hearts be filled
with confidence
for the future to which
God has called you,
and with all the glorious riches
that God gives to you,
and to all the saints.

And may the God of glory,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
give you a spirit
of wisdom and insight,
that you may continue to grow
in the knowledge of God.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Luke 24.44-53

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

Jesus opened the minds of the disciples
to understand the scriptures, saying:
'Everything that is written about me,
in the law of Moses, in the prophets,
and in the psalms, must be fulfilled:
that the Messiah is to suffer,
and to rise from the dead on the third day;
and that repentance, and forgiveness,
will then be proclaimed, in his name,
to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses to these things.

And now I am sending you
what my Father promised;
so stay here in the city
until you have been clothed with power from on high.'
Then he led them out of Jerusalem
to Bethany,
and there, lifting up his hands,
he blessed them.

And while he was blessing them,
he withdrew from them,
and was taken up into heaven.

And they worshipped him.
They returned to Jerusalem
filled with joy.

And they were continually in the temple,
praising God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 21 MAY

Seventh Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 1.3-9,12-14

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

After his suffering and death,
Jesus presented himself alive
to the apostles,
with many convincing proofs,
appearing to them
during forty days,
and speaking
of the kingdom of God.
Jesus said to them, 'Do not
leave Jerusalem,
but wait here
for the promise of the Father.

John baptised with water,
but you will be baptised
with the Holy Spirit
not many days from now.'

The apostles asked Jesus, 'Lord,
is this the time
when you will restore
the kingdom of Israel?'

Jesus replied, 'You cannot know
every time or season
in the purposes
of the Father.

But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit
comes upon you.

And you will be my witnesses
in Jerusalem,
in all Judea,
in Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.'

Then, as they were watching,
he was taken up,
and a cloud
hid him
from their sight.

The eleven returned
from the Mount of Olives
to the upper room in Jerusalem
where they were staying.

And with the women,
and Mary, the mother of Jesus,
and his brothers,
they devoted themselves
to prayer.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Peter 5.6-11

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Be humble

in the presence
of the mighty power of God,
and God will raise you up
at the right time.

Let God, who cares for you,
bear all your anxieties.

Be alert, and watchful, for your enemy, the devil,
goes about like a prowling lion
seeking someone to devour.

Resist him, steadfast in your faith,
knowing that your brothers and sisters
throughout the world
suffer in the same way.

And after your suffering,
the God of all power and grace, who called you
to eternal glory in Christ,
will restore you, and strengthen you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 17.1-11

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

Jesus looked up to heaven, and said,
'Father, the hour has come
to glorify your Son,
that your Son
may glorify you.

You granted your Son authority
over all people on earth,
to give eternal life
to those you have given to him;
that they might know you, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ, the one you have sent.

Father, I have glorified you on earth
by completing the work
that you gave me to do.

Now glorify me, in your own presence once again,
with the glory that I knew
before the world began.

I have made your name known
to those you gave me from the world.

They know that I came from you.
They know that everything I have
comes from you.

I have passed on to them
the words that you gave to me,
and they have trusted and received them.

I pray for them now;
not the whole world,
but those you have given to me,
for I am glorified in them.

They remain in the world,
as I depart from the world, to return to you.

Holy Father, protect them,
for the honour of your name.

May they be one,
as we are one.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 28 MAY

Pentecost

FIRST READING – Acts 2.1-21

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

On the day of Pentecost,
the disciples were meeting together,
when suddenly, all around them,
there was a sound
like the rush of a violent wind,
filling the entire house
where they were meeting.
Flames, or tongues of fire, appeared amongst them,
and rested on each of them.

And they were filled with the Holy Spirit,
and began to speak in many languages.

At this sound,
a crowd began to gather,
made up of devout Jews,
who were staying in Jerusalem -
from Asia and Arabia,
Egypt and North Africa,
Judea, Turkey, Syria,
Greece and the Balkans,
Crete, and Rome,
both Hebrews and converts.

They said, 'Surely,
these who are speaking
are all from Galilee.
And yet we hear them
declaring the greatness of God,
each in our own language.
What can this mean?'

But others mocked and said,
'They have had too much wine.'
Peter, standing with the eleven,
raised his voice,
and addressed the crowd, saying:
'People of Judea,
and all who are here in Jerusalem:
these are not drunk, as you suppose,
for it is only nine o'clock in the morning.

No; this is what was spoken
through the prophet Joel,
when God declared: "In those days,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

The young will see visions,
your elders will dream dreams,
and your sons and your daughters
will receive and proclaim my word.

There will be wonders and signs
in the heavens, and on the earth:
blood, and fire, and clouds of smoke,
the sun turned to darkness
and the moon blood red,

before the coming
of the great and glorious
day of the Lord.

And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord
will be saved."

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 12.4-13

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

There are many different gifts,
but they are all given
by the same Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of ministry,
but they are all given
by the same Lord.

And there are different ways of working,
but it is the same God
at work in them all.

The work of the Spirit
in each individual
is given for the good of all.

It is by the same Spirit
that one receives the gift of wisdom,
another, the gift of knowledge,
and another, the gift of faith.

By the same Spirit,
another receives
the gift of healing, or working miracles,
while others receive
the gifts of prophecy, or discernment,
or languages, or interpretation.

All are the work
of the one Holy Spirit,
distributing these gifts
to each individual
as the Holy Spirit determines.

And just as the body is one body, with many parts,
so we, though many, are one body, in Christ.

For in the one Spirit,
we were all baptised into one body,
whether Greek or Hebrew, slave or free;
and we all drink
of the same
Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – John 7.37-39

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

On the final day
of the festival of the harvest, in Jerusalem,
Jesus was again
teaching in the temple.

Jesus said, 'Let all who are thirsty
come to me
and drink.

And, as the scripture says,
all who believe in me
will have streams of living water
flowing from within.'

By this, Jesus meant the Spirit,
which all who believed in him
would receive
after he had been glorified.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 4 JUNE

Trinity

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 40.27-31*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Do not say,
O Jacob and Israel,
that the Lord
does not know
of your troubles,
or that God
is neglecting
the injustice
that you suffer.
For the Lord,
the everlasting God,
the creator of all the earth,
has insight
beyond our understanding.
The Lord does not faint
or grow weary,
but gives strength
to the weak
and the powerless.
Even the young
may grow weak,
and stumble, and fall.
But those who trust in the Lord
will find their strength renewed.
They shall mount up with wings,
like eagles.
They shall run
and not be weary.
They shall walk
and not grow faint.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *2 Corinthians 13.11-13*

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

Finally, my brothers and sisters,
be joyful, as you grow in faith.
Encourage one another;
be of one mind,
and live in peace.
And the God of love and peace
will be with you.
Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the saints here
send their greetings.
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 28.16-20*

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

The eleven disciples went
to the mountain in Galilee,
as Jesus had directed them.
When the disciples
saw Jesus there,
one by one,
they bowed down
and worshipped him.
Jesus said, 'All authority
in heaven and on earth
has been given to me.
Go therefore,
and make disciples of all nations,
baptising them
in the name of the Father
and the Son
and the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them
all that I have commanded you.
And know
that I am with you always,
even to the end of the age.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 11 JUNE

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Hosea 6.3b-6*

A reading from the book of the prophet Hosea.

The presence of the Lord
is as certain
as the rising of the sun.
And the Lord will come to us
like the spring rains
that water the earth.
Yet the Lord says,
'What shall I do with you,
O people of Israel?
For your compassion disappears,
like the dew,
and like
the morning mist.
I send you my words,
to cut you to the heart.
I send you my judgements,
blazing like the sun.
I see your sacrifices,
and I see your burnt-offerings,
but what I look for is compassion,
and the knowledge of God.'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 2.13-16*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Hearing God's law
will not
make you righteous,
unless
you also do
what the law demands.
When those who have not
received God's law,
do naturally
what the law demands,
they show
that they have the law
within themselves,
already written
on their hearts.
Their thoughts and their consciences
challenge them,
and indeed will defend them
on the day when God judges
the hidden thoughts of all.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 9.9-13*

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

As Jesus was walking along,
he passed by the booth where
the Roman taxes are collected.
Jesus saw a man
called Matthew
working there.
Jesus said to Matthew,
'Follow me.'
And Matthew got up
and followed Jesus.
Jesus and his disciples
later sat at dinner
with many
collectors of the Roman taxes,
and other
notorious sinners.
When the Pharisees saw this,
they said
to the disciples,
'Why does your teacher
eat with such people?'
When Jesus heard this, he said,
'It is the sick,
not the healthy,
who need a doctor;
I have come
to call sinners,
not the righteous.
Go and learn
what the scripture means,
where it says,
"I look
not for sacrifice,
but for compassion."
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 18 JUNE

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Exodus 19.1-6*

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Exactly two months
after leaving Egypt,
the Israelites arrived
in the wilderness
at Mount Sinai.

And they camped there,
at the foot of the mountain.

Moses went up the mountain
to meet with God.

And there, the Lord gave Moses
this message
for the people of Jacob,
and the children of Israel.

'You have seen what I did
to the Egyptians,
how I carried you
on eagles' wings,
to bring you to myself.

So now, I say,
if you will hear my voice,
and keep my covenant,
you will be my treasured possession
out of all the nations.

The whole world is mine -
but you will be for me
a priestly kingdom, a holy nation.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 3.21-24*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

The Hebrew law,
and the Hebrew prophets,
speak of the righteousness
that comes from God.

But this righteousness
has now been
made known
even to those
outside the Hebrew law.

The righteousness that comes from God
is now given,
through faith in Jesus Christ,
to all who believe.

There is no longer any distinction,
for all have sinned,
and fallen short of the glory of God.

And all are now set free from sin,
and reconciled with God,
freely,
by God's grace,
through Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 9.35 - 10.8*

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

Jesus went through all the towns and villages,
curing every disease and sickness,
teaching in the synagogues,
and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.

Whenever Jesus saw the crowds,
he had compassion on them,
because they were weary, and lost,
like sheep
without a shepherd.

Jesus said to his disciples,
'The harvest is plentiful,
but the workers are few.
Ask the Lord
to send more workers
for the harvest.'

Then, summoning the twelve,
Jesus gave them authority
to drive out unclean spirits,
and to cure every disease
and every sickness.

The twelve he appointed as apostles
were:

Simon Peter,
and his brother Andrew;
James and John
(the sons of Zebedee);
Philip,
and Bartholomew;
Thomas,
and Matthew (the tax-collector);
James (the son of Alpheus)
and Thaddeus;
Simon (the Zealot);
and Judas Iscariot
(the one who betrayed him).

These twelve, Jesus sent out,
with the following instructions:

'Go nowhere amongst the Gentiles,
and enter no town of the Samaritans,
but go to the lost sheep
amongst the people of Israel.

As you go,
proclaim the good news
that the kingdom of heaven has come.

Heal the sick,
raise the dead,
cleanse those with leprosy,
and drive out demons.

Freely you have received.
Now freely give.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 25 JUNE

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – Jeremiah 20.9-11a

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

I cannot hold back
from proclaiming the Lord,
or from speaking
in the name
of the Lord.

The word of the Lord
is like a fire in my bones,
and I am powerless
to hold it in.

I am surrounded
by those who denounce me.

They watch
for the opportunity
to take their revenge.

But the Lord is with me
like a mighty warrior,
and those who work against me
will not prevail.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Romans 6.3-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

If you die,
you are no longer
under the power of sin.

And if, like Christ,
you are then
raised up from the dead,
by the glory of the Father,
you are no longer
under the power of death.

In his death,
Christ died to sin,
once, for all.

And the life
he now lives,
he lives to God.

Now in baptism,
we are united with Christ,
in both his death
and his resurrection.

So consider yourselves also
to be dead to sin,
and alive to God,
in Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 10.16,28-31

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

Jesus said to the twelve,
'I am sending you out
like sheep
amongst wolves.

Be as wise
as serpents.
And be as innocent
as doves.

Do not be afraid
of those who can kill the body
but cannot kill the soul.

Rather, let all fear
the one who can destroy
both the body
and the soul.

Two sparrows
are sold for a penny,
yet not even a sparrow
falls to the ground
without your Father knowing it.

So do not be afraid.
You are worth more
than many sparrows.

Even the hairs of your head
are all counted.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 2 JULY

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 28.1-9,14a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

The prophet Hananiah announced,
in the house of the Lord,
that within two years,
the heavy burden
imposed by the king of Babylon
would be removed;
and the exiles,
and the treasures of the temple,
would return
from Babylon
to Jerusalem.

The prophet Jeremiah replied, 'May the Lord indeed
fulfil the words that you have spoken,
and indeed bring back to this place
the treasures of the temple,
and all the exiles.

But listen now
to these words that I speak
to you,
and to all the people.

From ancient times,
the prophets have spoken
of war, famine, and disease,
against many nations,
and great kingdoms.

But when a prophet
brings words of peace,
only when
the word of that prophet
comes true

will it be known
that the Lord
has truly sent a prophet.

And this is what the Lord Almighty,
the God of Israel, says:

All these nations
will continue to be in chains,
serving the King of Babylon, who will rule them
with a rod of iron.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 6.13-16,23*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Now that God has brought you
from death to life,
you are no longer
under the law,
but under grace.

And sin
can no longer
rule over you.

This does not mean
that you are free to sin,
for you become like a servant
to the one you obey.

If you obey sin, you will die.
But if you serve God,
you will live, and live in righteousness.
So do not present yourself to sin,
to be used for wickedness,
but present yourself to God,
to be used for righteousness,
For the wage paid by sin
is death,
but the free gift of God
is eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 10.34-42*

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

Jesus said to the twelve: "Do not think
that I have come
to bring peace
to the earth;
for I bring
not peace,
but a sword.

I have come to set a son against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
and a woman
against the mother
of her husband.

Your enemies
will be members
of your own household.

For whoever loves father or mother
or son or daughter
more than me
is not worthy
to be my disciple.

And whoever does not
take up their cross
and follow me
is not worthy
to be my disciple.

Those who cling to their life
will lose it.

But those who lose their life
for my sake
will find it.

Whoever welcomes you into their home
welcomes me;
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.

Whoever welcomes a prophet
as a prophet
will receive a prophet's reward.

Whoever welcomes any righteous person
will receive the reward of the righteous.

And whoever gives a cup of water
to even the least
of my disciples -
truly I tell you, all these
will receive their reward.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 9 JULY

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – Zechariah 9.9-10

A reading from the book of the prophet Zechariah.

Rejoice, O Zion,
and shout aloud, O Jerusalem,
for your king is here,
your righteous saviour,
humble, and riding
on a donkey.

He will banish
the chariots of battle
from Israel,
and the weapons of war
will be broken.

He will command peace
across the land,
from sea to sea,
and peace
for all nations,
to the ends
of the earth.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Romans 8.1-4

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

There is now
no condemnation
for those who are
in Christ Jesus.

For the spirit of life,
in Christ Jesus,
has set us free
from the power
of sin and death.

In the weakness
of our human flesh,
the law
could never
set us free.

But God has now done
what the law
could not do.

By sending his own Son,
in human flesh,
like a perfect
sacrifice for sin,
he has destroyed
the power
of sin and death.

And we finally enter
into the righteousness
that the law intended,

living not
by our weak
human flesh,
but by
the spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 11.18-19, 25-29

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

Jesus said,
'John the Baptist came,
neither eating nor drinking,
and they said
he had a demon.

The Son of Man comes,
eating and drinking,
and they call him
a glutton, a drunkard,
and a friend of sinners.

But wisdom
is known
by her deeds.'

And Jesus said,
'I thank you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
that you have revealed
to your children
what you have hidden
from the scholar
and the scribe.

You have trusted me
with all things,
as Father to Son,
that others might come to know you
as I know you.

So come to me,
all you
that are weary,
with heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Walk with me,
and learn from me.

For I am gentle,
and humble in heart,
and you will find rest
for your soul.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 16 JULY

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.10-11*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.
The rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not
return there
until they have watered the earth,
making it fruitful, with grain,
for bread to eat,
and as seed
for the next harvest.
In the same way, says the Lord,
the word that I speak
will not
return to me empty.
It will accomplish
all that I intend,
and succeed
in the purpose
for which I sent it.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.5-13*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.
Those who live according to the flesh
set their minds on the things of the flesh.
But those who live according to the spirit
set their minds on the things of the spirit.
To set the mind on the flesh
is death.
But to set the mind on the spirit
is life, and peace.
The mind that is set on the flesh
is hostile to God,
and unable
to follow God's law.
But your life now
is not in the flesh,
but in the spirit,
with the spirit of God dwelling within you.
For everyone who belongs to Christ
has the spirit of Christ within.
And though your body is dead, in sin,
your spirit is alive
in the righteousness of Christ.
And the spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead
will surely give life
to your mortal body also.
So, my brothers and sisters,
we owe nothing to the flesh.
It has no power over us
to make us live
according to the way of the flesh
which leads to death.
Instead, we put to death
the ways of the flesh,
and live by the spirit.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 13.1-8, 18-23*

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

Jesus sat by the lake,
and a great crowd
gathered around him.
So while the crowd
remained on the beach,
Jesus got into a boat, and spoke from there,
teaching them many things, in parables.

Jesus said:

'A farmer went out
to scatter seed
in the field.

Some seed fell
on the path,
and the birds came, and ate it up.

Some seed fell
in shallow soil, on rocky ground;
it sprang up quickly,
but when the sun came out,
it dried up, and withered away,
because it had no root.

Some seed fell amongst thorns,
and the thorns grew up, and choked it.

But some seed fell on good soil,
and produced a harvest
of thirty or sixty or a hundred times
what was planted.

In the same way,
when someone hears
the word of the kingdom,
and does not take it to heart,
the evil one comes, and snatches it away -
like the birds,
with the seed
that fell on the path.

The seed that fell
in shallow soil, on rocky ground,
is like someone who hears the word,
and immediately receives it with joy,
but has no root, and falls away
when trouble or persecution comes.

The seed that fell
amongst the thorns
is like someone who hears the word,
but it is choked out
by the cares of this world, and its wealth,
and there is no harvest.

But the seed that falls
on good soil
is like someone who hears the word,
and takes it to heart,
and produces a harvest
of thirty or sixty or a hundred times
what was planted.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 23 JULY

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 44.6-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord of all heaven,
the King and Saviour of Israel, says:

'I am the first,
and I am the last,
and there is
no other god.

No other
has established a people, long ago,
or revealed what is to come.

So do not
be troubled or afraid,
for I declared it long ago,
and you are my witnesses:
there is no other god,
no other rock.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.14-17*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Now that you are led
by the spirit of God,
you are adopted
as children of God.

God receives you
not as slaves, to fall back into fear,
but as adopted children,
able to address God
as 'Abba' and 'Father'.

Being adopted
as children of God,
we inherit all things,
alongside Christ himself,
including
both his suffering
and his glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 13.24-30*

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

Jesus told them another parable.

'A farmer planted
good seed
in a field.

Then during the night,
an enemy came,
and planted weeds
amongst the wheat.

When the wheat came up,
the weeds also appeared.

The workers said, "You planted
good seed.
So why does the field
have weeds?"

And the farmer said, "An enemy has done this!"

The workers asked whether
they should gather up
the weeds.

But the farmer said, "No,
for in pulling up the weeds,
you would also
uproot the wheat.

So let them grow together
until the harvest, when
I will tell the workers
first to gather the weeds
into bundles, to be burned,
and then to gather
the wheat
into my barn."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 30 JULY

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – 1 Kings 3.5-13

A reading from the first book of Kings.

The Lord appeared to Solomon
in a dream, by night.

The Lord said to Solomon,

‘Make your request
for something
that I might give to you.’

And Solomon said to the Lord,

‘You showed great and steadfast love
to my father David, who served you
faithfully, in righteousness and justice.

And you have continued
in that great and steadfast love
by giving him a son
to sit on his throne today.

And now, I am that king,
your humble servant,
in place of my father David,
even though I am only a child.

The people of this nation,
your chosen people, O Lord,
are so great in number
that they cannot be counted.

And so my request
is for an understanding heart,
to judge between good and evil,
for without this, none could govern
this your great people.’

It pleased the Lord
that this was Solomon’s request,
and the Lord said to Solomon,

‘Because you have not
asked for yourself
long life, or riches,
or the death of your enemies,

but have asked
for an understanding heart,
to govern with justice,

I will grant
what you have asked.

I will give you
a wise
and understanding heart,

like no other
that has gone before,
or will ever
be again.

And I will also
give you
what you have not asked:
riches and honour, all your life,
such that no other king
can compare.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Romans 8.18-27

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Our present sufferings
are not worth comparing
to the glory that is to come.

The whole creation
is waiting,
with eager longing,
to be freed from the slavery
of death and decay,

and to enter
the glorious freedom
of the children of God.

The whole creation is groaning,
as if in labour pains.

And even we,
with the spirit of life within us,
groan inwardly,
as we await the completion
of our adoption
into the full freedom
of the children of God.

We do not yet
see it completed,
but we wait for it
with patience, confidence, and trust.

And the spirit helps us
in our present weakness;
for we do not know
how to pray as we ought,
but the spirit prays within us,
in sighs too deep for words.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 13.31-33, 44-46

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

Jesus said,

‘The kingdom of heaven
is like a mustard seed
that someone plants in a field.
It is the smallest of all seeds,
but when it grows, it becomes a tree,
and the birds of the air
come and nest in its branches.

Or the kingdom of heaven
is like the spoonful of yeast,
that a woman takes, and mixes
into an entire sack of flour, so that
every part of the dough will rise.

Or the kingdom of heaven
is like treasure, hidden in a field,
which someone finds, and hides;
then in his joy, he goes, and sells all that he has,
and buys the field.

Or the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant,
in search of fine pearls.
Finding one pearl of great value,
to secure it,
he goes and sells all that he has.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 6 AUGUST

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.1-3*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Come, all who are thirsty;
come to the water and drink.
Come, all who are in poverty;
come for grain, and milk, and wine,
without money,
and without cost.
For you work,
and you spend,
but you find
neither food
nor fulfilment.
So listen now
to the word of the Lord,
and you will eat,
and be filled,
and your soul
will delight
in abundance.
Come to me,
and hear my word,
that you may live,
says the Lord.
And the Lord
will make with you
an everlasting covenant.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.28-30*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

God's purpose, from the beginning,
was that many
would become
like his Son,
so that Christ
would be the firstborn
of many
brothers and sisters.
And now, by God's grace,
we have indeed been called,
and reconciled with God;
we have even entered into
the glory of God.
And so we see
that in accordance
with God's plan and purpose,
all things work together for good
for those who love God.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 14.13-21*

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

On hearing
that John the Baptist
had been killed
by King Herod,
Jesus withdrew by boat
to a wilderness place,
alone.
But news of it spread,
and the crowds
followed him on foot
from the towns,
so that when Jesus went ashore,
a great crowd
had already gathered.
Jesus had compassion on them,
and healed the sick amongst them.
As evening came,
the disciples said to Jesus
that he should send the crowds away
from this desolate place,
into the villages,
to buy food.
But Jesus said to the disciples,
'The people can stay,
if you give them something to eat.'
The disciples replied, 'We have nothing here
but five loaves,
and two fish.'
Jesus said, 'Bring them to me.'
Then Jesus ordered the crowds
to sit down on the grass.
He took the five loaves,
and the two fish.
And looking up to heaven,
he blessed them,
and broke them into pieces.
And he gave the pieces
to the disciples.
And the disciples
gave the pieces to the crowds.
And everyone ate,
and was filled.
And the disciples collected up
what was left over
of the broken pieces,
filling twelve baskets.
Those who ate
were about five thousand men,
in addition
to the women and the children.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 6 AUGUST

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *1 Kings 19.9a, 11-13a*

A reading from the first book of Kings.

Elijah arrived

at the mountain of God.

He entered a cave,

and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord

came to Elijah, saying,

'Go out, and stand on the mountain,

for the Lord is about to pass by.'

And there came a great wind, so strong

that it was breaking rocks from the mountains
into pieces;

but the Lord was not in the wind.

And after the wind,

there was an earthquake;

but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake, a fire;

but the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire,

a still, small voice,

like a breath, or a whisper.

When Elijah heard it,

he wrapped his cloak around his face,

and went out,

and stood at the entrance of the cave;

and then came the voice of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 8.31-39*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

We can trust

that God, who gave his Son for us,

will surely give us

all that we could ever need, and more.

And knowing that God is with us,

we know that nothing

can stand against us.

No charge can be brought

against God's chosen,

for it is God who declares us free.

No one can condemn,

for it is Christ Jesus who intercedes for us

at the right hand of God.

And nothing

can separate us

from the love of Christ -

not hardship, or distress,

or persecution, or famine,

or destitution, or danger, or the sword.

It says in the Psalm,

'For your sake,

we are being killed all day long,

like sheep to be slaughtered.'

Yet in all these things, we overcome

through the one who loves us.

And so 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,

can separate us

from the love of God

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 14.22-33*

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

Jesus sent the disciples on ahead of him,

back across the lake,

by boat.

As darkness fell,

he dismissed the crowds,

and went up the mountain,

by himself, to pray.

The disciples, in the boat,

were now far from land.

And the boat was being

battered by the waves,

for the wind

was against them.

In the darkness before dawn,

Jesus came walking towards them

on the lake.

When the disciples saw him,

they were terrified,

and cried out in fear.

But Jesus said to them, 'I am with you.

Do not be afraid.'

Peter said, 'Lord, if it is you,

tell me to come to you

on the water.'

Jesus said, 'Come.'

Peter stepped out of the boat,

on to the water,

to walk towards Jesus.

But suddenly aware

of the strength of the storm,

Peter became frightened,

and began to sink,

crying out, 'Lord, save me!'

Jesus reached out his hand,

and caught hold of Peter,

saying, 'Why so little faith?'

As Jesus and Peter

climbed into the boat,

the wind dropped.

And the disciples worshipped Jesus,

saying, 'Truly you are

the Son of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 20 AUGUST

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 56.6-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

People of all nations will come
to love and serve the Lord.

They will keep the sabbath,
and trust
in the Lord's covenant.

I will welcome them,
here on my holy mountain,
says the Lord;
and they will be joyful
in my house of prayer.

Their offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar.

And my house will be called
a house of prayer
for all nations.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.1-2*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

I appeal to you,
brothers and sisters,
as your response
to God's great mercy,
present your bodies
as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God.

Do not be conformed
to the ways of this world,
but be transformed,
by the renewing of your minds
to know what is
the perfect will of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 15.21-28*

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

Jesus went north from Galilee
to the coastal districts
of Lebanon.

A Lebanese woman
approached Jesus,
saying, 'Have mercy on me,
Lord, Son of David,

for my daughter
is tormented
by a demon.'

But Jesus
did not answer her.

And his disciples said to him, 'Send her away,
for she keeps
shouting after us.'

So Jesus said to her, 'I was sent
only
to the lost sheep
of Israel.'

But she knelt before him,
saying, 'Lord, help me.'

Jesus said, 'It is not right
to take food away
from the children.'

She said, 'Yes, Lord,
but surely
there will be crumbs
that fall from the table.'

Jesus said, 'You have great faith.
Let it be done
for you
as you request.'

And at that very moment,
her daughter was healed.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 27 AUGUST

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 51.1-4*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

I say

to all who aim for righteousness,
to all who seek the Lord:

Look to the rock

from which you were cut,
the quarry
from which you were dug.

Look to Abraham your father,
and Sarah who carried you.

The Lord blessed them,
and made them a great nation.

And surely now
the Lord will comfort Jerusalem
once again,
and will look with compassion
on her ruins.

The wilderness of Jerusalem
will flourish
like the Garden of Eden.

And there will be joy, and gladness,
thanksgiving, and song.

And the word of the Lord
will go out from this place

to bring justice
and light

to all nations.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.4-8*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

In one body,

there are many members.

And not all the members
have the same function.

In the same way,
we, though many,
are one body, in Christ,
belonging to one another.

And by God's grace,
we have received

a great diversity of gifts,
including prophecy, good works, and acts of service;
teaching, and encouragement;
practical generosity,
leadership,
and gracious compassion.

So make full use
of each gift
that you have received.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 16.13-20*

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

Jesus travelled north again,
beyond Galilee,
to a Roman city in the mountains.

There he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say
that I am?'

The disciples replied, 'Some say John the Baptist;
others say Elijah,
or Jeremiah,
or one of the prophets.'

Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say
that I am?'

Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah,
the Son of the living God.'

Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon,
son of Jonah,
for this was revealed to you
not by flesh and blood,
but by my Father in heaven.

And I say to you: you are Peter, the rock,
and on this rock,

I will build my church,
and the powers of hell
will not prevail
against it.

I will give you
the keys
of the kingdom of heaven,
and whatever you lock or unlock
on earth
will be locked or unlocked
in heaven.

Then Jesus asked the disciples
not to say
to anyone
that he was the Messiah.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 3 SEPTEMBER

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Jeremiah 15.16-21*

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

In my despair, I cried out to the Lord,
'O Lord, you have become to me
like a river
that has run dry.
My pain is unending,
a wound that will not heal.
Under the weight of the burden
that you have placed upon me,
I sit alone, filled with bitterness,
far away
from any
celebration or feast.'

And the Lord responded to my cry, saying,
'If you return to me, I will restore you,
and you will stand in my presence once again.
You will serve as my voice,
and they will turn to you.
When they turn against you,
I will protect you, like a wall of bronze;
and I will be with you, to save you,
and to deliver you.'

And now, O Lord,
to serve you
is once again
my delight;
for your words
are my nourishment,
and the joy of my heart.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.9-18*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Let your love be genuine.
Reject all that is evil,
and cling to all that is good.
With ever-greater devotion,
honour one another,
and serve the Lord.
Rejoice in faith,
be patient in suffering,
and persevere in prayer.
Support each other in need,
and offer care to everyone.
Bless those who persecute you;
bless them, and do not curse them.
Rejoice with those who rejoice,
and weep with those who weep.
Live in harmony with one another,
and find your place amongst the humble,
not amongst the arrogant.
Do not repay anyone evil for evil,
but always do what is right
in the sight of all.
And do all that you can
to live at peace
with everyone.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 16.21-26*

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

From that time on,
Jesus began to explain to his disciples
that he must go to Jerusalem,
and suffer many things
at the hands of the elders,
the chief priests, and the scribes;
that he would be put to death,
and on the third day,
be raised.

Peter took Jesus aside,
and began to rebuke him,
saying, 'Lord,
let it not be so.
This must never happen to you.'

But Jesus turned
and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan.
You are a stumbling-block to me,
for your mind is set
on the human,
not the divine.'

And Jesus turned to the disciples
and said, 'If any one of you
wishes to be my disciple,
you must deny yourself,
take up your cross,
and follow me.

If you try
to save your life,
you will lose it.

But if you
lose your life,
for my sake,
you will find it.

There is no profit
in gaining
the whole world,
but losing your very soul;
for nothing in this world
can match the value
of your soul.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – Ezekiel 33.7-9

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

I have called you to serve
the people of Israel
like the one who serves the city
by keeping watch,
from the city walls,
to warn
of approaching danger.

You must warn the people now
to turn from their wicked ways.

If you do not
warn them,
they will die in their sin,
and their blood
will be on your hands.

But if you warn them,
and still
they do not turn
from their wicked ways,
they will die in their sin,
but your own life
will be saved.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – Romans 12.19-21

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

When you are wronged,
do not seek revenge.

Instead, leave room
for the judgement of God.

For the scripture says, 'Retribution is mine;
I will repay, says the Lord.'

So, as the scripture also says,
if your enemies are hungry, feed them;
if they are thirsty, give them something to drink;
for in doing this
you are heaping burning coals
on their heads.

So do not be overcome by evil,
but overcome evil
with good.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – Matthew 18.15-20

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

Jesus said, 'If another disciple
sins against you,
point out the fault
when the two of you are alone.

And if they listen,
you have won them back.

But if they will not listen,
take one or two others along with you,
so that everything may be confirmed
by the word of two or three witnesses.

If they still
refuse to listen,
tell it to the church.

And if they refuse to listen
even to the church,
treat them as you would treat
an outsider
or an enemy.

I tell you, anything you resolve
in this way
on earth
will be resolved
the same way
in heaven.

And if two of you
agree on earth
about anything you ask,
it will be done for you
by my Father
in heaven.

For whenever
two or three
are gathered together
in my name,
I am with them.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Genesis 50.15-21*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Joseph's brothers feared
that Joseph would still
hold against them
all the wrongs
that they had done to him.
So the brothers approached Joseph,
and said, 'Before your father died,
he gave us this message
to pass on to you: "I beg you, my son;
forgive the crimes of your brothers,
and all the wrongs that they have done to you."'

And so we come to you now,
as humble servants
of the God of your father,
and we beg you to forgive us
for all the wrongs that we have done to you.'

Joseph was moved to tears
when he heard these words.
His brothers fell down before him,
saying again, 'We are your humble servants.'
But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid.
You thought you had a plan for harm,
but God had a plan for good,
to save many lives,
as you see today.'

And Joseph reassured them,
and comforted them,
saying, 'Have no fear.
I will provide for you, and for your children.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 13.8-10*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Owe no one anything,
except to love one another;
for in this
you fulfil the entire law.
You know the commandments:
You shall not commit adultery;
You shall not murder;
You shall not steal;
You shall not covet.

All these,
and any other commandments,
are summed up in this:
'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore
love
is the fulfilling
of the law.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 18.21-35*

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

Peter asked Jesus, 'Lord, how many times
must I forgive
someone who sins against me?
As many as seven?'

Jesus replied, 'Not seven,
but seventy times seven!'

And Jesus told this parable.
'There was a king who wished
to settle accounts
with his servants.

One of the servants owed
ten thousand gold coins.
As the servant could not pay,
the master ordered
that the servant should be sold,
to pay the debt,
along with his wife, his children,
and all their possessions.

The servant fell to his knees,
and begged his master
to have patience with him,
until he could pay in full.

And out of pity for him,
the master forgave
the entire debt,
and let the servant go.

As that servant went out, he met
one of his fellow-servants, who owed him
a few copper coins.

He took him by the throat, and said,
"Pay me what you owe."

The fellow-servant fell to his knees,
and begged the servant
to have patience with him,
until he could pay in full.

But the servant refused.
And he had his fellow-servant
thrown into prison
until the debt could be paid.

When the other servants
heard of this,
they were indignant,
and reported to their master
all that had happened.

The master summoned the servant, and said,
"You wicked servant!

I forgave you all that debt when you pleaded with me.
You should have had
the same mercy for your fellow-servant
that I had for you."

Then he handed that servant over
to be punished
until the debt was paid in full.

And surely this is how my heavenly Father
will treat each of you,
if you do not forgive each other
from the heart!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 55.6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Turn to the Lord,
for the Lord is ready to welcome you.
Call upon the Lord,
for the Lord is near.
Turn away
from your wicked ways.
Turn away
from your plotting
for injustice.
Return to the Lord your God,
for God will have mercy, and freely forgive.
'For my ways
are not your ways,' says the Lord.
'And my thoughts
are not your thoughts.
As the heavens are high above the earth,
so are my ways
higher than your ways,
and my thoughts
higher than yours.'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 1.20b-27*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Even in my imprisonment, I trust
that Christ will be glorified
in whatever happens to me,
whether I live, or whether I die.
And I do not know which I prefer.
For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
I am hard pressed between the two.
To remain in this body means fruitful ministry.
To depart would mean to be with Christ.
But I have become convinced
that I shall remain, for your sake;
so that I can return to you, and
share with you, once again,
in your growth in faith,
and in the great confidence
and joy
that you have
in Christ Jesus.
So continue to live
in accordance
with the gospel of Christ,
so that,
whether I come to see you myself,
or whether I hear about you from afar,
I will know that you are standing firm,
and that you are working as one, in the spirit,
for the faith, and for the gospel.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 20.1-16*

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

Jesus said, 'A landowner went out,
early in the morning,
to hire workers for his vineyard.
He agreed the usual daily wage,
and set them to work.
When he went out again, at about nine o'clock,
he saw others, standing idle, in the market-place.
He said to them, "Join the others,
working in the vineyard,
and I will pay you
whatever is right."
He went out again, at midday,
and again, at about three o'clock,
and did the same.
And at about five o'clock, he went out
and found others, standing around;
and asked them, "Why are you
standing here idle all day?"
And they said, "Because no one has hired us."
He said to them, "Join the others,
working in the vineyard."
When evening came,
the owner of the vineyard
told his manager to call in the workers,
and give them their pay,
beginning with the last.
So those who were hired
at five o'clock
came in first.
And each of them received
the usual daily wage.
When the others came in,
they thought
they would receive more.
But they also received
the usual daily wage.
And they complained against the landowner,
saying, "These worked only the final hour,
but you have made them equal to us,
when we worked the full day,
through the scorching heat."
But the landowner said, "I am doing you no wrong.
You agreed the usual daily wage.
So take what is yours, and go.
I can do as I please
with what belongs to me.
And I choose
to give the last
the same as you.
Or do you somehow see wickedness
in my generosity?"
And so it will be
in the kingdom of heaven:
that the last will be first,
and the first will be last.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 18.21-25*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

When the righteous turn away
from all that is good, and instead
practice wickedness,
their former good deeds will be forgotten,
and they will die in their wickedness, says the Lord.

But if the wicked turn away
from the wrongs they have done,
and instead
practice righteousness, doing all that is good,
their former wickedness
will not be held against them,
and they will surely live, says the Lord.

I hear the people of Israel say
that in this, the Lord is unfair.

But the Lord says this:
I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,
but rather
that they turn from their wickedness
and live.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 2.1-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

You already know
the confidence, support and encouragement,
of the love of Christ,
and of fellowship together in the Spirit.

So make my joy complete
by being united
in one purpose, one heart,
one love, and one mind.

Let there be no
selfish ambition,
but in humility, let each of you treat others
as better than yourself;

looking not to your own interests,
but to the interests of others.

Let Christ Jesus be your example.

He did not regard
his equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant.

Born in human form,
he humbled himself,
in faithful obedience, even to death on the cross.

And now, God has highly exalted him,
and has given him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus,
all shall bow down,
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth,
and declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory
of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 21.23-32*

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

Jesus was teaching
in the temple in Jerusalem.
The chief priests, and the elders of the people,
demanded, 'By what authority
are you doing these things?'

Jesus said to them, 'Let me ask you a question.

Was John's
call to baptism
a message from God,
or was it only
from John's own mind?'

And they argued with one another, saying,

'We cannot say
that John's call to baptism
was a message from God,
because we rejected John.

And we cannot say
that it came only
from John's own mind,
because the people
regard John as a prophet,
and they would
turn against us.'

So they said to Jesus, 'We do not know.'

Jesus said to them, 'And neither will I tell you
by what authority
I do these things.'

And Jesus told them this parable.

'A man told his two sons
to go and work
in the vineyard.

One said he would go,
but never arrived.

The other refused to go,
but then changed his mind, and went.

In the same way, people you condemn
responded
to John's call to repentance,
when you rejected it.

And now
they are entering
the kingdom of God
ahead of you.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 5.1-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Let me sing a love-song
for my vineyard.

On a fertile hill, I dug the ground, cleared the stones,
and planted the choicest vines.

I dug a wine-press, and built a tower,
and I expected the finest grapes.

But when the fruit came, it was bitter.

So now, people of Judah and Jerusalem,
judge between me and my vineyard.

What more could I have done for my vineyard?
And yet it yielded only bitterness.

So now, I will tell you
what I will do
to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge, and break down its wall,
and it will be destroyed, and trampled down.

I will make it a waste-land.

No longer will it be pruned or tended.

It will be overgrown with brambles and thorns.

I will order the clouds to give it no rain.

And my vineyard

is the people of Israel, says the Lord.

And the people of Judah

are the vines that I planted and cherished.

But when I looked for justice, I saw bloodshed.

When I looked for righteousness,
I heard cries of distress.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 3.4b-14*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

If anyone

had reason to be confident,
I had more.

I was a descendant of Israel,
in the tribe of Benjamin,
a Hebrew born of Hebrews.

In regard to the law, I was a Pharisee.

In zeal, I was a persecutor of the church.

In righteousness according to the law,
I was blameless.

And yet I regard
all these things
as worthless now,

for nothing

has any value at all
compared to knowing
Christ Jesus as my Lord.

For the sake of Christ,

I have lost everything.

But I count this loss as nothing,
for what I have gained
is Christ,
and now I am found in him.

I depend no more
on a righteousness of my own,
derived from the law.

I have instead
a righteousness
that comes from God,
through faith in Christ.

And so, leaving behind

all that has gone before,

I press on towards the goal:

that I may know Christ more fully,

and the power of his resurrection;

even sharing in his sufferings,

and becoming like him in his death,

if somehow then

I may share

in his resurrection from the dead.

All this I choose,

just as Christ

has chosen me.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 21.33-41,43*

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

Jesus said,

‘There was a landowner who planted a vineyard,
and put a fence around it.

Within the fence,

he dug a wine-press, and built a tower.

Then he leased the vineyard to tenants,
and went away to another country.

When the harvest-time came,

he sent his servants

to collect his produce.

But the tenants

seized them, beat them, and killed them.

So the landowner sent more servants, and then more,
but the tenants treated them all in the same way.

Finally he sent his son to them,

for they would surely respect his son.

But when the tenants saw him, they said,

‘This is the one who will inherit the vineyard;

let us kill him, and take the vineyard for ourselves.’

So they seized him,

threw him out of the vineyard,

and killed him.

Now when the owner of the vineyard returns,
what will he do to those tenants?’

The chief priests and the elders

said, ‘He will dismiss

those wicked tenants, and let the vineyard

to others, who will give him the fruit

at harvest-time.’

Jesus said, ‘And in the same way,

the kingdom of God

will be taken away from you,

and given to those who produce

the fruits of the kingdom.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 25.6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

On this holy mountain, the Lord God

will prepare for all people
a feast
of rich food
and fine wine.

The Lord will take away
the cloud of darkness
that hangs over peoples and nations.

The Lord God
will wipe away
the tears from all faces,

will end
the humiliation of the people,
and will destroy
the power of death
for ever.

And the people will say, 'This is the day
of the Lord our God.

Let us rejoice,
for we trusted in God,
and the day
of our salvation
has come.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 4.4-9*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord -
always!

I say again, rejoice!
And let your gracious gentleness
be known
to everyone.

The Lord is near,
so do not worry about anything.

But in everything,
with prayer, and thanksgiving,
let your requests
be made known to God.

And the peace of God,
which surpasses
all understanding,
will guard your hearts
and your minds
in Christ Jesus.

Finally,
my brothers and sisters,
set your minds
on all that is true,
honourable,
just, and pure.

Set your minds
on all that is pleasing, and admirable,
and on all that is excellent,
and worthy of praise.

And whatever you have learned
from all that I have said and done,
put this into practice also.

And the God of peace
will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 22.1-14*

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

Jesus spoke again
to the chief priests and the Pharisees
in a parable.

'A king gave a banquet
for the wedding of his son.

But when
he sent his servants
to call those who had been invited,
they would not come.

So he sent other servants, with the message:

"Come now
to the wedding banquet!
The cattle
and the best calves
have been slaughtered,
and everything is ready!"

But they ignored
the king's servants,
and went away,
to their farms,
and to their businesses.

Some even seized
the king's servants,
and beat them, and killed them.

The king was furious,
and sent his troops
to destroy those murderers, and burn their city.

Then the king said to his servants,
"The wedding is ready,
but those who were invited
are not worthy.

So go out
into the streets,
and invite
everyone you find!"

The servants went out into the streets
and gathered everyone they found,
both good and bad,
and the wedding hall
was filled with guests.

When the king himself came in,
he saw that every single guest
had put on the wedding robe -
except one.

The king challenged him,
but he had no reply.

And the king had him
thrown out
into the night.

For even when many are called,
not all are finally chosen.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 44.28 - 45.1,4,13a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord says to Cyrus:

You will be my shepherd,

to carry out my purposes,

to rebuild Jerusalem,

and to restore the temple.

I anointed you

as King of all Persia.

I led you, and strengthened you,

to suppress all the nations around you.

Every king surrenders to you.

Every city gate is open to you.

For the sake of my servant Jacob,

and Israel, my chosen,

I have called you by name,

and I have given you

a title of honour,

even though you do not know me.

I have raised you up in righteousness,

to rebuild my city

and to set my exiles free.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 1.1-9*

A reading from the first letter of Paul

to the Thessalonians.

From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy;

to the church at Thessalonika.

Grace to you, and peace,

from God our Father,

and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We always remember you in our prayers,

giving thanks to God our Father

for your works of faith and love,

and for the joyful and steadfast trust

that you have

in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We knew that God had called you

when we saw the message of the gospel

come to you

not only in words

but also in the power

of the Holy Spirit.

You followed our example,

and the example of our Lord,

when, in spite of persecution,

you received the word with joy.

Now, you yourselves

have become an example

to all the believers

in Macedonia and beyond.

Wherever we go, we have no need

to speak about your faith,

for they already know

about the welcome you gave us,

and how you turned away from idols

to serve the true and living God.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 21.45, 22.15-22*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

When the chief priests

and the Pharisees

heard these parables,

they realised

that Jesus was speaking about them.

So with some of Herod's officers,

they made a plan

to trap Jesus

in what he said.

They sent some of their followers to Jesus,

to say, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere,

and that you teach the way of God,

showing deference to no one.

Tell us, then, what you think.

Is it lawful

to pay taxes

to the emperor,

or not?'

Jesus said, 'You hypocrites.

Show me the coin

that is used for the tax.'

They showed him the coin,

and he said to them,

'Whose head is this?

And whose title?'

They said, 'The emperor's.'

Jesus said, 'So give to the emperor

the things

that are the emperor's,

and to God

the things

that are God's.'

And they had no reply;

and they left him,

and went away.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 29 OCTOBER

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING – *Leviticus 19.2b, 15-18*

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

You shall be holy,

for I am holy,

says the Lord your God.

You shall ensure justice

for your neighbour,

without regard

to status

or wealth.

You shall not speak falsehood

against your neighbour.

You shall not profit

from endangering

the life of your neighbour.

You shall not hold hatred

in your heart

against your neighbour.

You shall challenge

your neighbour's wrong-doing,

for if you fail to do so

you bear the guilt

of that wrong-doing

yourself.

You shall not take revenge,

or bear a grudge,

against any of your people.

You shall love your neighbour

as yourself.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 2.1,7b,12-13*

A reading from the first letter of Paul

to the Thessalonians.

You yourselves know,

my brothers and sisters,

that the time we spent with you

was not in vain.

We were gentle amongst you,

like a mother

with her own children,

urging and encouraging you

to lead lives

that are honouring

to God, who has called you

into the glory

of God's kingdom.

We constantly give thanks to God

that when you

received

the word of God

from us,

you welcomed it

not as a human word,

but as God's word,

which indeed it is.

And we give thanks

that God's word

is now powerfully

at work

amongst you.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 22.35-40*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

One of the Pharisees,

an expert in the law,

asked Jesus this question:

'Teacher,

which commandment

in the law

is the greatest?'

Jesus said,

'The first and greatest commandment is this:

"You shall love the Lord your God

with all your heart,

and with all your soul,

and with all your mind."

And the second is like it:

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

On these two commandments

hang all

the law

and the prophets.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fourth Sunday before Advent

All Saints Sunday

FIRST READING – *Revelation 7.9-13a, 14b-17*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I looked,

and saw a great multitude,
that no one could count,
from every nation,
tribe, people, and language,
standing before the throne,
and before the Lamb,
robed in white,
waving palm branches,
and declaring, with one voice,
'Salvation belongs to our God,
and to the Lamb!'

The angels

around the throne
bowed down
and worshipped God,
singing, 'All blessing and honour,
all glory and power,
all majesty, virtue, wisdom and praise,
belong to our God for ever!'

One of the elders said, 'These, in white robes,
are the ones who have come out
of the great ordeal.

They have purified their robes
in the life-blood of the Lamb.

Now they are before
the throne of God,
serving continually in God's temple.

And God will protect them:

the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;
and they will hunger and thirst no more.

The Lamb, on the throne, will be their shepherd,
and will guide them
to the spring
of the water of life.

And God will wipe away

every tear from their eyes.'

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 4.14-18*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

My brothers and sisters,
we know

that Jesus died, and rose again.

And we can trust

that God will also raise up
those who have died in Christ.

Indeed the Lord has revealed to us
that they will go to meet the Lord
ahead of us
when the Lord returns.

The Lord will come down from heaven,
and at the Lord's command -
with a trumpet blast
and the call of an archangel -
those who have died in Christ
will be raised up first.

Only then

will we who are
left alive
be caught up
in the clouds
with them,

to meet the Lord,

and to be with the Lord for ever.

So encourage one another
with these words.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 23.2-12*

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

Jesus said to the crowds,
and to his disciples,

'The scribes and the Pharisees
teach the law of Moses,
but they do not live
by the law
they teach.

So follow what they teach,
but do not follow
what they do.

They place burdens on others
that they are not willing
to carry themselves.

Everything they do,
they do to be seen by others.

They love to take
the places of honour
at banquets,
and the best seats
in the synagogues.

They love to be greeted in the market-place,
and to have people call them Teacher.

But you are not to be called Teacher,
for the Messiah
is your only teacher,
and you are all learning together.

And you should call no one on earth your father,
for you have one Father -
your Father in heaven.

And amongst you,
the servant
will be the greatest.

For those who place themselves above others
will be brought down.

But those who choose
to be humble
will be lifted up.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Third Sunday before Advent

Remembrance Sunday

FIRST READING – *Micah 3.5-12*

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

False prophets
are leading the people astray.
They promise peace
to anyone who will feed them,
and threaten war
to those who will not.
But they have no vision, or revelation,
or word from God.
And now they will be disgraced
and put to shame, says the Lord.
For the spirit of the Lord
has come upon me with great power,
to pronounce judgement
on the transgressions
of the nation.
Your rulers
hate justice,
and distort the truth.
You build the city
with wickedness,
and Jerusalem
with bloodshed.
Your judges
take bribes.
Your priests and your prophets alike
serve not God
but those who pay them.
And still you say,
'Surely the Lord is with us!
No harm will come upon us!'
It is because of you
that Zion will be ploughed like a field,
and Jerusalem,
even the Temple Mount,
will be in ruins,
and overgrown.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 5.1-9*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

You know
that the day of the Lord
will come
at a date, and time, unknown -
like a thief in the night.
People will be confident
in their peace and security,
when destruction
will be suddenly
upon them,
like the pains of childbirth,
with no escape.

But you are not
children of darkness,
for that day
to surprise you
like a thief in the night.
You are children of the light,
and of the day.
So keep awake,
and alert.
Put on the armour
of faith and love,
and for a helmet,
the confidence you have
in your salvation.
For on that day of destruction,
God will indeed
be leading us,
not to condemnation,
but to salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 25.1-4,8-13*

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

Jesus said,
'The closest friends
of the bride
and the groom
were up all night
preparing for the wedding day.
Half of them
had charged up their lamps with oil
so that their lamps
would stay bright
until dawn.
When the others saw their own lamps
beginning to fail,
they pleaded for oil.
But the ones who were better prepared
said that if they shared their oil,
nobody's lamps
would last until dawn.
So those who had not brought enough oil
went to find some.
And they missed
the arrival of the groom.
By the time they returned,
the celebration was underway.
And when they pleaded to be let in,
the door-keeper said, "I do not know you".
So be awake,
and be ready,
for you do not know
the date,
or the time,
when the kingdom of heaven
will come.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER

*Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Second Sunday before Advent*

FIRST READING – *Zephaniah 1.7a,12-16,18*

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

Be silent now, in the presence of God,

for the great day of the Lord
is at hand,
approaching fast;
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness,
with trumpet blast, and battle cry,
against the fortified cities,
and the highest towers.

The Lord will search
all Jerusalem,
to seek out those who have
started to believe
that the Lord will bring
neither punishment nor reward.

Their wealth will be plundered,
their houses laid waste,
their buildings abandoned,
their vineyards left desolate.

Their silver and their gold
will not save them,
on that day

when the whole earth
will be consumed.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Thessalonians 5.12-15*

A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Thessalonians.

Be at peace
with one another.

Show love and respect
to those who minister amongst you,
as they teach you, and challenge you,
in the name of the Lord.

Challenge
the idle
and the disruptive.

But encourage the faint-hearted,
support the weak,
and be patient
with everyone.

Never repay anyone
evil for evil.

But seek always
to do good -
to one another,
and to everyone.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 25.14-29*

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

Jesus told this parable to his disciples,

'A householder,
planning a long journey,
made arrangements
with his servants
to look after his property.

To one, he gave five coins,
to another, he gave two coins,
and to another, he gave one coin,
giving to each according to their ability.

Then he went away.

The servant who had received five coins
went off at once, and worked with them,
and made five more.

In the same way, the servant who had two coins
went off, and worked with them, and made two more.

But the servant who had received only one coin
went off, and dug a hole in the ground,
and hid his master's money.

Eventually, the master returned,
and called the servants together.

The one who had received five coins
stepped forward, saying, "Master,
you gave me five coins;
see, I have made five more."

The master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful with a little;

I will put you in charge of more.

Come and celebrate with your master."

Then the servant who had received two coins
stepped forward, saying, "Master,
you gave me two coins;
see, I have made two more."

The master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful with a little;

I will put you in charge of more.

Come and celebrate with your master."

Then the servant who had received only one coin
stepped forward, saying, "I know that you are
a demanding master,
gathering the harvest

where you do not

plant the seed.

So I was afraid,

and I hid your coin in the ground.

Here it is. I return what belongs to you."

But the master replied, "You wicked and lazy servant!

If you had only

placed my coin

with the bankers,

I would have received it back with interest!"

And the master said, "Take the coin from him,

and give it to the servant with ten.

For those who have much

will receive even more,

but those who have nothing

will lose

even what they have."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER

Thirty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Last Sunday before Advent

Christ the King

FIRST READING – *Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24*

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

My sheep were scattered
on a day of great darkness.
But like a shepherd,
I will search for my sheep,
and rescue them, says the Lord.
From the nations
I will gather them,
and I will bring them
to their own land.
I will feed them with good pasture
on the mountains of Israel.
And where broad rivers flow,
they will find their rest.
I will seek the lost,
and bring back the strayed.
I will bind up the injured,
and strengthen the weak.
But the strong
I will feed with justice,
when I judge
between the strong
and the hungry;
for it was the strong
that drove the weak away.
So I will rescue my sheep,
and judge between them.
And I, the Lord, will be their God;
and my servant David will be
their shepherd,
and their king.
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Ephesians 1.17-23*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

The power of God
has raised Christ from the dead,
to God's right hand on high,
far above all earthly powers -
above every other name
in this world or the next;
and has made Christ
the head of the church,
and has made the church
the body of Christ.
So now may your hearts be filled
with the same power of God, which is
the gift of God
to all who believe.
May your hearts be filled with confidence
for the future to which
God has called you,
and with all the glorious riches
that God gives to you, and to all the saints.

And may the God of glory,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
give you a spirit
of wisdom and insight,
that you may continue to grow
in the knowledge of God.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *Matthew 25.31-45*

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

Jesus said to his disciples:

'When the Son of Man
comes in glory, with his angels,
all the nations will be gathered
before his royal throne,
and he will separate the people
like a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats;
the sheep to his right, and the goats to his left.

Then he will say to those on his right,
"Come, you that are blessed by my Father;
and enter into the kingdom
that has been prepared for you
from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry, and you gave me food;
I was thirsty, and you gave me water;
I was in rags, and you gave me clothing;
I was a stranger, and you welcomed me;
I was sick, and you took care of me;
I was in prison, and you visited me."

The righteous will answer him, "Lord,
when did we see you hungry
and give you food,
or thirsty and give you water?

When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,
or in rags and give you clothing?

And when did we see you sick, or in prison,
and visit you?"

And he will answer them, "All that you did
for even the least
of these, my brothers and sisters,
you did for me."

Then he will say to those on his left,

"You that are lost,
depart from me, for ever,
to the place of torment,
prepared for the devil,
for I was hungry, and you gave me no food;
I was thirsty, and you gave me no water;
I was in rags, and you give me no clothing;
I was a stranger, and you did not welcome me;
I was sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me."

They will also answer, "Lord, when was it
that we saw you hungry, or thirsty,
or a stranger, or in rags,
or sick, or in prison,
and did not help you?"

And he will say to them, "Whenever you rejected
even the least
of these, my brothers and sisters,
you rejected me."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.