

READINGS

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm 22:22-30

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38

OPENING PRAYER

God of the Covenant,
you were well pleased
with the faith of Abraham;
and you were well served
by the obedience of your Son Jesus Christ.

Give to us the faith of Abraham
and the obedience of your Christ,
that as we walk the way of sacrifice
we may come to share your glory;
through the same Jesus Christ,
our deliverance and our hope,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God,
by faith we are fed at your table;
in obedience we share your love with the world:
may your will be done in us now and always,
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

A Reading from the Book of Genesis.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk in my presence, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous."

Abram fell on his face before God; and God said to him, "This is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and rulers shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be your God, to you and to your offspring after you.

"As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall come from her."

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 22:22-30

Praise God, all you who fear God;
stand in awe of God, O offspring of Israel;
you of Jacob's line, give glory.

For God does not despise the poor in their poverty;
God neither abhors them
nor turns away from them;
but hears them when they cry out.

I will praise my God in the great assembly;
I will perform my vows
in the presence of those who worship God.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek God shall offer praise:
"May your heart live for ever!"

All the ends of the earth
shall remember and turn to God;
all the families of the nations
shall bow down in praise.

For true authority belongs to God,
who rules over the nations.
To God alone those who sleep in the earth
bow down in worship;
those who go down to the dust
fall before God in adulation.

My soul shall live for God;
my descendants shall serve God;
they shall be known as God's for ever.
They shall come and make known
to a people yet unborn
the saving deeds that God has done.

SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25

A Reading from the Letter to the Romans.

The promise of inheriting the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it all depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all God's descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all—as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—and he dwelt in the presence of God, in whom he believed, the One who gives life to the dead and calls into existence things that do not exist.

Hoping against hope, Abraham believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what had been promised.

Therefore Abraham's faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. For it will be "reckoned to us" as well, who believe in the One who raised Jesus our Saviour from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING: Mark 8:31-38

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

The Holy Gospel

of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Mark.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

God be with you.

And also with you.

The Good News

of Jesus Christ

according to Mark.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

"For what will it profit them to gain the whole world ... only to forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.