# THE WORD OF THE LORD : TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS At the Liturgy at Nine Thirty THE REIGN OF CHRIST

The Old Testament reading is the opening section of Jeremiah 23, where Yahweh promises to gather a remnant of his people, raise up for them responsible leaders, and provide eventually a wise and just king in the Davidic line. The response is Benedictus (Luke 1.68-79), Zechariah's prophecy that envisions God's rasing up a Saviour from the house of David. The Epistle offers one of the most extraordinary christological hymns in the New testament, praising Christ as creator and reconciler of the cosmos. For the Gospel, we have Luke's account of Jesus's crucifixion, with its distinctive emphasis on Jesus's forgiving spirit and merciful remembrance of one of the criminals who was crucified with him. Several motifs in this passage relate to the overall theme of the reign of Christ the King.

#### COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Presider:* Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, our Lord and King, grant that the peoples of the earth, now divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his gentle and loving rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: Amen.

### FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23.1-6

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. The days are surely coming, says the LORD,

when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

The word of the Lord *R/. Thanks be to God* 



Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David. *R*/.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us. He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant. *R*/.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life. *R*/.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. *R*/.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *R*/.

#### SECOND READING: Colossians 1.11-20

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace through the blood of his cross.

The word of the Lord *R/. Thanks be to God* 

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Mark 11.9,10

Alleluia. Alleluia. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Luke 23.33-43 *R/. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ* 

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the

Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The Gospel of Christ *R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ* 

#### PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

*Presider:* Eternal God, by your grace you have raised us up and enthroned us with Christ in the heavenly realms. Receive all we offer you this day, and lead us in those good works for which you have created us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. People: Amen

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*Presider:* Almighty God, you have made us a royal priesthood in the kingdom of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Make known his victory through us, we pray, that all the world may see his light. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

People: Amen