

Sunday, March 14, 2010
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Holy Communion

Worship Assistants

FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9–12

A reading from _____.

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

⁹The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 32

Refrain: Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD. (Ps. 32:11)

¹Happy are they whose transgressions ¹ are forgiven,
and whose sin is ¹ put away!

²**Happy are they to whom the LORD im- ¹ putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there ¹ is no guile! R**

³While I held my tongue, my bones with- ¹ ered away,
because of my groaning ¹ all day long.

⁴**For your hand was heavy upon me ¹ day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the ¹ heat of summer.**

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- ¹ ceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the guilt ¹ of my sin.

⁶**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in ¹ time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they ¹ shall not reach them. R**

⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve ¹ me from trouble;

you surround me with shouts ¹ of deliverance.
**⁸"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that ¹ you should go;
I will guide you ¹ with my eye.**
⁹Do not be like horse or mule, which have no ¹ understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will ¹ not stay near you."
**¹⁰Great are the tribulations ¹ of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust ¹ in the LORD.**
¹¹Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice ¹ in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are ¹ true of heart. **R**

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

A reading from _____.

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

The holy gospel according to _____.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believed it was his obedience that earned his place in the father's home.

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³So he told them this parable: ^{11b}"There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe — the best one — and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gathered by the Spirit, let us return to the Lord our God and pray for the church, the world, and all who yearn for new life.

Forgiving God, gather all who have wandered from you. Bless your church, reconcile us to you, and lead us to be ambassadors of your love. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Grant to all people a share in the abundance and beauty of your creation, and teach us to preserve

and protect the world you have entrusted to our care. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Sustain those who rule the nations with your presence (*especially*) and guide them in the ways of peace and justice. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Bring healing to those who are sick, hope to those who despair, and comfort to all who suffer (*especially*), that they may know your love. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Deliver us from greed, teach us to be obedient to your will, and lead us to seek out the lost and all who have strayed from you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the gift of life. Comfort those who mourn and welcome to the eternal feast all who have passed through the gate of death. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Almighty God, you have commanded us to pray, and you promise to hear us. Hear the prayers of your people and grant us all that we need, for the sake of the one in whose name we pray, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

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