

First Reading Selections *(choose one from the Old Testament)*

READING 1.OT

A reading from the book of Genesis

1:26-28, 33

Male and female he created them.

God said, 'Let us make men in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl on the earth.'

God created man in the image of himself,
in the image of God he created him,
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying to them,
'be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it.

Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven,
and all the living animals on the earth.'

God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 2.OT

A reading from the book of Genesis

2:18-24

They become one body.

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone.

I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil

the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven.

These he brought to the man to see what he would call them;

each one was to bear the name the man would give it.

The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts.

But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him.

So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep.

And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh.

The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman,

and brought her to the man. The man said:

'This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!

This is to be called woman,

for this was taken from man.'

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife,
and they become one body.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 3.OT

A reading from the book of Genesis

24:48-51, 58-67

Isaac loved Rebekah, and so he was consoled for the loss of his mother.

Abraham's servant said to Laban,

'I blessed the Lord, God of my master Abraham,
who had graciously led me to choose the daughter of my master's brother for his son.
Now tell me whether you are prepared to show kindness and goodness to my master;
if not, say so, and I shall know what to do.'

Laban and Bethuel replied,

'This is from the Lord; it is not in our power to say yes or no to you.

Rebekah is there before you. Take her and go;
and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has decreed.'

They called Rebekah and asked her, 'Do you want to leave with this man?'

'I do,' she replied. Accordingly, they let their sister Rebekah go,
with her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men.

They blessed Rebekah in these words:

'Sister of ours, increase
to thousands and tens of thousands!

May your descendants gain possession of the gates of their enemies!'

Rebekah and her servants stood up, mounted the camels, and followed the man.

The servant took Rebekah and departed.

Isaac, who lived in the Negeb,
had meanwhile come into the wilderness of the well of Lahai Roi.

Now Isaac went walking in the fields as evening fell and looking up saw camels approaching.

And Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac.

She jumped down from her camel, and asked the servant,

'Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?'

The servant replied, 'That is my master.'

Then she took her veil and covered herself up.

The servant told Isaac the whole story;

and Isaac led Rebekah into his tent and made her his wife; and he loved her.

And so, Isaac was consoled for the loss of his mother.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 4.OT

A reading from the book of Tobit

7:6-14

The Lord of heaven favour you, my child, and grant you his grace and peace.

Raguel kissed Tobias and wept.

Then finding words, he said, 'Blessings on you, child!

You are the son of a noble father. How sad it is
that someone so virtuous and full of good deeds should have gone blind!'

He fell on the neck of his kinsman Tobias and wept.

And his wife Edna wept for him,

and so did his daughter Sarah.

Raguel killed a sheep from the flock,
and they gave Tobias and Raphael a warm-hearted welcome.
They washed and bathed and sat down to table.
Then Tobias said to Raphael, ‘Brother Azarias,
will you ask Raguel to give me my sister Sarah?’
Raguel overheard the words, and said to the young man,
‘Eat and drink, and make the most of your evening;
no one else has the right to take my daughter Sarah – no one but you, my brother.
In any case I, for my own part, am not at liberty to give her to anyone else,
since you are her next of kin.
However, my boy, I must be frank with you:
I have tried to find a husband for her seven times among our kinsmen,
and all of them have died the first evening, on going to her room.
But for the present, my boy, eat and drink;
the Lord will grant you his grace and peace.’
Tobias spoke out, ‘I will not hear of eating and drinking
till you have come to a decision about me.’
Raguel answered, ‘Very well. Since, as prescribed by the Book of Moses,
she is given to you, heaven itself decrees she shall be yours.
I shall therefore entrust your sister to you.
From now you are her brother and she is your sister.
She is given to you from today for ever.
The Lord of heaven favour you tonight, my child, and grant you his grace and peace.’
Raguel called for his daughter Sarah, took her by the hand
and gave her to Tobias with these words,
‘I entrust her to you; the law and the ruling recorded in the Book of Moses
assign her to you as your wife.
Take her; take her home to your father’s house with a good conscience.
The God of heaven grant you a good journey in peace.’
Then he turned to her mother and asked her to fetch him writing paper.
He drew up the marriage contract, how he gave his daughter as bride to Tobias
according to the ordinance in the Law of Moses.
After this they began to eat and drink.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 5. OT

A reading from the book of Tobit

8:4-8

Bring us to old age together.

On the evening of their marriage, Tobias said to Sarah,
‘You and I must pray and petition our Lord to win his grace and protection.’
They began praying for protection, and this was how he began:
‘You are blessed, O God of our fathers;
blessed, too, is your name for ever and ever.
Let the heavens bless you

and all things you have made for evermore.
It was you who created Adam,
you who created Eve his wife
to be his help and support;
and from these two the human race was born.
It was you who said,
“It is not right that the man should be alone;
let us make him a helpmate like himself.”
And so I do not take my sister
for any lustful motive;
I do it in singleness of heart.
Be kind enough to have pity on her and on me
and bring us to old age together.’
And together they said, ‘Amen, Amen’.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 6. OT

A reading from the book of Proverbs

31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

The woman who is wise is the one to praise.

A perfect wife, who can find her?
She is far beyond the price of pearls.
Her husband’s heart has confidence in her,
from her he will derive no little profit.
Advantage and not hurt she brings him
all the days of her life.
She is always busy with wool and with flax,
she does her work with eager hands.
She sets her hands to the distaff,
her fingers grasp the spindle.
She holds out her hand to the poor,
she opens her arms to the needy.
Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty;
the woman who is wise is the one to praise.
Give her a share in what her hands have worked for,
and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 7. OT

A reading from the Song of Songs

2:8-10, 14, 16; 8:6-7

Love is strong as Death.

I hear my Beloved.
See how he comes leaping on the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

My Beloved is like a gazelle, like a young stag.
See where he stands behind our wall.
He looks in at the window, he peers through the lattice.
My Beloved lifts up his voice, he says to me,
'Come then, my love, my lovely one, come,
My dove, hiding in the clefts of the rock.
In the coverts of the cliff, show me your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet and your face is beautiful.'
My Beloved is mine and I am his.
Set me like a seal on your heart, like a seal on your arm.
For love is strong as Death, passion as relentless as Sheol.
The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of the Lord himself.
Love no floods can quench, no torrents drown.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 8.OT

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

26:1-4, 13-16

Like the sun rising is the beauty of good wife in a well-kept house.

Happy the husband of a really good wife;
the number of his days will be doubled.
A perfect wife is the joy of her husband,
he will live out the years of his life in peace.
A good wife is the best of portions,
reserved for those who fear the Lord;
rich or poor, they will be glad of heart; cheerful of face, whatever the season.
The grace of a wife will charm her husband,
her accomplishments will make him stronger.
A silent wife is a gift from the Lord,
no price can be put on a well-trained character.
A modest wife is a boon twice over, a chaste character cannot be weighed on scales.
Like the sun rising over the mountains of the Lord
is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 9. OT

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

31:31-34

I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

See, the days are coming—it is the Lord who speaks—
when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel
and the House of Judah,
but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors
on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

No, this is the covenant I shall make
with the House of Israel when those days arrive—it is the Lord who speaks.
Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts.
Then I will be their God and they shall be my people.
There will be no further need for neighbour
to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother,
'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest—
it is the Lord who speaks.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING 10.OT

(It is appropriate to use this reading as the First Reading in the Easter Season.)

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse

19:1, 5-9

Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.

I, John, seemed to hear the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven, singing,
'Alleluia! Victory and glory and power to our God!'
Then a voice came from the throne; it said,
'Praise our God, you servants of his and all who, great or small, revere him.'
And I heard what seemed to be the voices of a huge crowd,
like the sound of the ocean or the great roar of thunder, answering,
'Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun;
let us be glad and joyful and give glory to God,
because this is the time for the marriage of the Lamb.
His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in dazzling white linen,
because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints.'
The angel said, 'Write this,
'Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.'"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God