

Readings + 14th Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 21 B + August 25, 2024

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

¹ Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. ^{2a} And Joshua said to all the people,

¹⁴ “Now, therefore, revere the LORD and serve the LORD in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the deities that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the deities your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the deities of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

¹⁶ Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other deities, ¹⁷ for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. The LORD protected us along all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed, ¹⁸ and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for the LORD is our God.”

Psalmody Psalm 34:15-22

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and God’s ears are open to their cry.

The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to erase the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the LORD hears them and delivers them from all their troubles.

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those whose spirits are crushed.

Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the LORD delivers them from every one.

God will keep safe all their bones; not one of them shall be broken.

Evil will bring death to the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

O LORD, you redeem the life of your servants, and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

Second Reading Ephesians 6:10-20

Paul writes: ¹⁰ Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of the Lord’s power; ¹¹ put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, ¹² for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having prevailed against everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness ¹⁵ and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, so that when I speak a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Holy Gospel John 6:56-69

We continue with John's description of the aftermath to the feeding of 5,000, not replicated in any of the other Gospels.

Jesus said, ⁵⁶ “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which the ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. ⁶⁰ When many of Jesus' disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then

what if you were to see the Son-of-Humanity ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But among you there are some who do not trust.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who were the ones who did not trust and who was the one who would betray him. ⁶⁵ And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to trust and know that you are the Holy One of God.”