

YEAR 1, EASTER 5, SATURDAY: MORNING PRAYER

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The ungodly were assailed to the end by pitiless anger, for God knew in advance even their future actions, that, though they themselves had permitted thy people to depart and hastily sent them forth, they would change their minds and pursue them. For while they were still busy at mourning, and were lamenting at the graves of their dead, they reached another foolish decision, and pursued as fugitives those whom they had begged and compelled to depart. For the fate they deserved drew them on to this end, and made them forget what had happened, in order that they might fill up the punishment which their torments still lacked, and that thy people might experience an incredible journey, but they themselves might meet a strange death. For the whole creation in its nature was fashioned anew, complying with thy commands, that thy children might be kept unharmed. The cloud was seen overshadowing the camp, and dry land emerging where water had stood before, an unhindered way out of the Red Sea, and a grassy plain out of the raging waves, where those protected by thy hand passed

through as one nation, after gazing on marvelous wonders. For they ranged like horses, and leaped like lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who didst deliver them. For they still recalled the events of their sojourn, how instead of producing animals the earth brought forth gnats, and instead of fish the river spewed out vast numbers of frogs. Afterward they saw also a new kind of birds, when desire led them to ask for luxurious food; for, to give them relief, quails came up from the sea. The punishments did not come upon the sinners without prior signs in the violence of thunder, for they justly suffered because of their wicked acts; for they practiced a more bitter hatred of strangers. Others had refused to receive strangers when they came to them, but these made slaves of guests who were their benefactors. And not only so, but punishment of some sort will come upon the former for their hostile reception of the aliens; but the latter, after receiving them with festal celebrations, afflicted with terrible sufferings those who had already shared the same rights. They were stricken also with loss of sight—just as were those at the door of the righteous man—when, surrounded by yawning darkness, each tried to find the way through his own door. For the elements changed places with one another, as on a harp the notes vary the nature of the rhythm, while each note

remains the same. This may be clearly inferred from the sight of what took place. For land animals were transformed into water creatures, and creatures that swim moved over to the land. Fire even in water retained its normal power, and water forgot its fire-quenching nature. Flames, on the contrary, failed to consume the flesh of perishable creatures that walked among them, nor did they melt the crystalline, easily melted kind of heavenly food. For in everything, O Lord, thou hast exalted and glorified thy people; and thou hast not neglected to help them at all times and in all places.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.” For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement

grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name"; and again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and further Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.