

Fourth Sunday in Lent

30 March 2025

Sentence

God has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and given us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5.18

Collect

God of compassion,
you are slow to anger, and full of mercy,
welcoming sinners who return to you with penitent hearts:
receive in your loving embrace all who come home to you,
and seat them at your bountiful table,
that, with all your children,
they may feast with delight on all that satisfies
the hungry heart.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

1st Reading

Joshua 5.2-12

² At that time the Lord said to Joshua, 'Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites a second time.' ³ So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴ This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the warriors, had died during the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ Although all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people born on the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶ For the Israelites travelled for forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the warriors who came out of Egypt, perished, not having listened to the voice of the Lord. To them the Lord swore that he

would not let them see the land that he had sworn to their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷ So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸ When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹ The 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. ¹⁰ While the Israelites were encamped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The 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.

Psalm

Psalm 32

- ¹ Blessed are those whose sin is forgiven:
whose iniquity is put away.
- ² Blessed are those to whom the Lord imputes no blame:
and in whose spirit there is no guile.
- ³ For whilst I held my tongue:
my bones wasted away with my daily complaining.
- ⁴ Your hand was heavy upon me day and night:
and my moisture was dried up like a drought in summer.
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you:
and my iniquity I did not hide;
- ⁶ I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord':
and so you forgave the wickedness of my sin.
- ⁷ For this cause shall everyone that is faithful
make their prayer to you in the day of trouble:
and in the time of the great water-flood,
it shall not come near them.
- ⁸ You are a place to hide me in,
you will preserve me from trouble:

- you will surround me with deliverance on every side.
- ⁹ 'I will instruct you, and direct you in the way that you should go:
I will fasten my eye upon you, and give you counsel.
- ¹⁰ 'Be not like horse or mule, that have no understanding:
whose forward course must be curbed with bit and bridle.'
- ¹¹ Great tribulations remain for the ungodly:
but whoever puts their trust in the Lord,
mercy embraces them on every side.
- ¹² Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and be glad:
and shout for joy, all you that are true of heart.

2nd Reading

2 Corinthians 5.16-21

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

Gospel

Luke 15.11-32

¹¹ Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The 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. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a

severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But 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! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' " ²⁰ So 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. ²¹ Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." ²² But 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. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ 'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But 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. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" ³¹ Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But 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." '