

## Psalm and Readings Friday 27th September 2024

### Psalm 55

Give ear to my prayer, O God;  
do not hide yourself from my supplication.  
Attend to me, and answer me;  
I am troubled in my complaint.  
I am distraught by the noise of the enemy,  
because of the clamour of the wicked.  
For they bring trouble upon me,  
and in anger they cherish enmity against me.

My heart is in anguish within me,  
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.  
Fear and trembling come upon me,  
and horror overwhelms me.  
And I say, 'O that I had wings like a dove!  
I would fly away and be at rest;  
truly, I would flee far away;  
I would lodge in the wilderness;  
I would hurry to find a shelter for myself  
from the raging wind and tempest.'

Confuse, O Lord, confound their speech;  
for I see violence and strife in the city.  
Day and night they go around it  
on its walls,  
and iniquity and trouble are within it;  
ruin is in its midst;  
oppression and fraud  
do not depart from its market-place.

It is not enemies who taunt me—  
I could bear that;  
it is not adversaries who deal insolently with  
me—  
I could hide from them.  
But it is you, my equal,  
my companion, my familiar friend,  
with whom I kept pleasant company;  
we walked in the house of God with the throng.  
Let death come upon them;  
let them go down alive to Sheol;  
for evil is in their homes and in their hearts.

But I call upon God,  
and the Lord will save me.  
Evening and morning and at noon  
I utter my complaint and moan,  
and he will hear my voice.  
He will redeem me unharmed  
from the battle that I wage,  
for many are arrayed against me.

God, who is enthroned from of old,  
will hear, and will humble them—  
because they do not change,  
and do not fear God.

My companion laid hands on a friend  
and violated a covenant with me  
with speech smoother than butter,  
but with a heart set on war;  
with words that were softer than oil,  
but in fact were drawn swords.

Cast your burden on the Lord,  
and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit  
the righteous to be moved.

But you, O God, will cast them down  
into the lowest pit;  
the bloodthirsty and treacherous  
shall not live out half their days.  
But I will trust in you.

### 2 Kings 2:1-18

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at

some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

When the company of prophets who were at Jericho saw him at a distance, they declared, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' They came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. They said to him, 'See now, we have fifty strong men among your servants; please let them go and seek your master; it may be that the spirit of the Lord has caught him up and thrown him down on some mountain or into some valley.' He responded, 'No, do not send them.' But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, 'Send them.' So they sent fifty men who searched for three days but did not find him. When they came back to him (he had remained at Jericho), he said to them, 'Did I not say to you, Do not go?'

#### **Acts 24:24 – 25:12**

Some days later when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ Jesus. And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgement, Felix became frightened and

said, 'Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you.' At the same time he hoped that money would be given to him by Paul, and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him.

After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favour, Felix left Paul in prison.

Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem where the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews gave him a report against Paul. They appealed to him and requested, as a favour to them against Paul, to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, planning an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there shortly. 'So', he said, 'let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him.'

After he had stayed among them for not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. Paul said in his defence, 'I have in no way committed an offence against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor.' But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favour, asked Paul, 'Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?' Paul said, 'I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die, I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor.' Then Festus, after he had conferred with his council, replied, 'You have appealed to the emperor; to the emperor you will go.'

## **The Collect of the Day**

Merciful God,  
whose servant Vincent de Paul,  
by his ministry of preaching and pastoral care,  
brought your love to the sick and the poor:  
give to all your people a heart of compassion  
that by word and action they may serve you  
    in serving others in their need;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.