

## FIRST READING

*A reading from the prophecy of Joel (2.1-2, 12-17)*

Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness!  
Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes;  
their like has never been from of old,  
nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord,  
return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
rend your hearts and not your clothing.  
Return to the Lord, your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
and relents from punishing.  
Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,  
and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain-offering and a drink-offering  
for the Lord, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;  
gather the people.  
Sanctify the congregation;  
assemble the aged;  
gather the children,  
even infants at the breast.  
Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
and the bride her canopy.

Between the vestibule and the altar  
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.  
Let them say, 'Spare your people,  
O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery,  
a byword among the nations.  
Why should it be said among the peoples, "Where is their God?"'

*This is the word of the Lord*

**Thanks be to God**

## PSALM (51.1-18)

**Refrain: The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.**

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness;  
according to the abundance of your compassion blot out my offences.  
Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I acknowledge my faults and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,  
So that you are justified in your sentence  
and righteous in your judgement.

**Refrain**

I have been wicked even from my birth, a sinner when my mother conceived me.  
Behold, you desire truth deep within me and shall make me understand wisdom in the depths of my heart.  
Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean;  
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the bones you have broken may rejoice.

**Refrain**

Turn your face from my sins and blot out all my misdeeds.  
Make me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your holy spirit from me.  
Give me again the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your gracious spirit;  
Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked  
and sinners shall return to you.

**Refrain**

Deliver me from my guilt, O God,  
the God of my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.  
For you desire no sacrifice, else I would give it;  
you take no delight in burnt offerings.  
The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God,  
you will not despise. **Refrain**

## **A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (5.20-6.10)**

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.  
As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*This is the word of the Lord*

**Thanks be to God**