

COLLECT

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
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.

FIRST READING

Either **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

The LORD says this: Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

Or **1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]**

PSALM Psalm 81:1-10

R *O come, let us sing to the Lord.*

Sing merrily to God our strength
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
Take up the song and sound the timbrel
the tuneful lyre with the harp. **R**

Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
as at the full moon, upon our solemn feast day.
For this is a statute for Israel, a law of the God of Jacob.

The charge he laid on the people of Joseph,
when they came out of the land of Egypt. **R**

I heard a voice I did not know, that said:
"I eased their shoulder from the burden;
their hands were set free from bearing the load.

You called upon me in trouble and I delivered you; **R**

"I answered you from the secret place of thunder
and proved you at the waters of Meribah.

Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you:

O Israel, if you would but listen to me! **R**

"There shall be no strange god among you;
you shall not worship a foreign god. I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up from the land of Egypt;
open your mouth wide and I shall fill it." **R**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

GOSPEL Mark 2:23 – 3:6

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

One sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath." Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against Jesus, how to destroy him.

POST COMMUNION

Eternal Father,
we thank you for nourishing us
with these heavenly gifts:
may our communion strengthen us in faith,
build us up in hope,
and make us grow in love;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

