

A Selection of First Readings

A reading from the book of Genesis (1:26-28, 31a)

God said, "Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth."

God created man in the image of himself,
in the image of God he created him,
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be master of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth." God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good.

A reading from the book of Genesis (2:18-24)

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts of the earth. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!

This is to be called woman,
for this was taken from man.'

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife,
and they become one body.

A Reading from the Book of Ruth (1:16-17)

Wherever you go, I will go,
Wherever you live, I shall live.
Your people will be my people
Your God will be my God too.

Wherever you die, I shall die and there shall I be buried beside you.
We shall be together for ever and our love will be the gift of life.

A reading from the book of Tobit (8:4-8)

On the evening of their marriage, Tobias said to Sarah,
'Let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us
mercy and safety.' Tobias began by saying,
'Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors,
and blessed is your name in all generations forever.
Let the heavens and the whole creation
bless you forever.
You made Adam,
and for him you made his wife Eve
as a helper and support.
From the two of them the human race has sprung.
You said,
"It is not good that the man should be alone;
let us make a helper for him like himself."
I now am taking this kinswoman of mine,
not because of lust, but with sincerity.
Grant that she and I may find mercy
and that we may grow old together.'
And they both said, 'Amen, Amen.'

A reading from the Song of Songs (2:8-10,14,16; 8:6-7)

I hear my Beloved.
See how he comes
leaping on the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
My Beloved is like a gazelle,
like a young stag.
See where he stands
behind our wall.
He looks in at the windows,
He peers through the lattice.
My beloved lifts up his voice,

he says to me,
'Come here, my love,
my lovely one, come.
My dove, hiding in the clefts of the rock.
In the covert of the cliff,
Show me your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is beautiful.'
My beloved is mine and I am his.
Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal on your arm.
For love is strong as Death,
Jealousy relentless as Sheol.
The flash of it is a flash of fire,
a flame of the Lord himself.
Love no flood can quench, no torrents drown.

A Reading from the Song of Songs (2:10-14, 16)

My beloved lifts up his voice,
he says to me,
'Come then, my love,
my lovely one, come.
For see, winter is past,
the rains are over and gone.
The flowers appear on earth.
The season of glad songs has come,
the cooing of the turtledove is heard
in our land.
The fig tree is forming its first figs
and the blossoming vines give out their fragrance.
Come then, my love,
my lovely one, come.
My dove, hiding in the clefts of the rock.
In the covert of the cliff,
Show me your face,
let me hear your voice;

for your voice is sweet,
and your face is beautiful.'
My beloved is mine and I am his.

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus (26: 1-4.13-16)

Happy the husband of a really good wife;
The number of his days will be doubled.
A perfect wife is the joy of her husband,
He will live out the years of his life in peace.
A good wife is the best of portions,
Reserved for those who fear the Lord;
Rich or poor, they will be glad of heart,
Cheerful of face, whatever the season.
The grace of a wife will charm her husband,
Her accomplishments will make him stronger.
A silent wife is a gift from the Lord,
No price can be put on a well-trained character.
A modest wife is a boon twice over,
A chaste character cannot be weighed on scales.
Like the sun rising over the mountains of the Lord
Is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.

A Reading from the book of Sirach (6: 7-11a, 12, 14-16.)

If you want a friend take them on trial and do not be in a hurry to trust them,
for one kind of friend is only so when it suits him but will not stand by you in
your day of trouble.
Another kind of friend will fall out with you, and to your amazement make your
quarrel public. And a third type of friend will share your table but will not stand
by you in your day of trouble. When you are doing well, they will be right beside
you, but if disaster befalls you, he will turn his back and keep out of your way.
A faithful friend is a true shelter. Whoever finds one has found a real treasure. A
faithful friend is invaluable; there is no measuring their worth. A faithful friend
is like the deep drink of life and those who follow the Lord will find one.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (61: 10-11)

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness
and praise to spring up before all the nations.

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34)

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’ No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks.

The following reading or another from the same book or Acts is used during Eastertide (From Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday).

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse (19:1,5-9)

I, John, seemed to hear the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven, singing, ‘Alleluia! Victory and glory and power to our God!’
Then a voice came from the throne; it said, ‘Praise our God, you servants of his and all who, great and small, revere him’. And I seemed to hear the voices of a huge crowd, like the sound of the ocean or the great roar of thunder, answering, ‘Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun; let us be glad and joyful and give praise to God, because this is the time for the marriage of the Lamb. His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in

dazzling white linen, because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints.’
The angel said, ‘Write this: Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the lamb.’

A selection of possible Responsorial Psalms

These are often sung, if so, try to choose a hymn/sung psalm where your guests can join in and participate in the singing.

Psalm 32 (Ps 32:12,18,20-22, R: v.5)

Response: The Lord fills the earth with His love.

They are happy, whose God is the Lord,
the people he has chosen as his own.
The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love.

Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
The Lord is our help and our shield.
In him do our hearts find joy.
We trust in his holy name.

May your love be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you.

Psalm 33 (Ps 33:12,18,20-22, v.5)

Response: I will bless the Lord at all times.

Or

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.

I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called; the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who revere him, to rescue them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him.

Psalm 102 (Ps 102:1-2, 8, 13, 17-18 R: v. 8 Alt R: v.17)

The Lord is compassion and love.

Or

The love of the Lord is everlasting upon those who hold him in fear.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him.

The love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear;
his justice reaches out to childrens children
when they keep his covenant in truth.

Psalm 111 (Ps 111:1-9. R: cf v.1)

Happy the one who takes delight in the Lords commands.

Or

Alleluia!

Happy the man who fears the Lord,
who takes delight in his commands.
His sons will be powerful on earth;
the children of the upright are blessed.

Riches and wealth are in his house;
his justice stands firm for ever.
He is a light in the darkness for the upright:
he is generous, merciful and just.

The good man takes pity and lends.
he conducts his affairs with honour.
The just man will never waver:
he will be remembered for ever.

He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.
With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
he will see the downfall of his foes.

Open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His head will be raised in glory.

Psalm 127 (Ps 127:1-5 R: cf. v.1 Alt. R: v.4)

O blessed are those who fear the Lord!

Or

Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord.

O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table.

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion
all the days of your life!

Psalm 144 (Ps 144:8-10, 15, 17-18 R v.9)

Response: How good is the Lord to all.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion.
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.
The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.

The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts.

Psalm 148 (Ps 148:1-4, 9-14. R: v.12)

Praise the name of the Lord.

Or

Alleluia!

Praise the Lord from the heavens,
praise him in the heights.

Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, shining stars.
Praise him, highest heavens,
and the waters about the heavens.

All the mountains and hills,
all fruit trees and cedars,
beasts wild and tame,
reptiles and birds on the wing.

All earths kings and peoples,
earths princes and rulers:
young men and maidens,
old men together with children.

Let them praise the name of the Lord
for he alone is exalted.
The splendour of his name
reaches beyond heaven and earth

A selection of possible Second Readings

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (8:31-35, 37-39)

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at Gods right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or attacked. These are the trails through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created

thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (12:1-2,9-18)

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring effort and with great earnestness of spirit. If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care.

Bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them. Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow. Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not allow yourselves to become self-satisfied. Never repay evil with evil but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. Do all you can to live at peace with everyone.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians(6:13-15, 17-20.)

The body is not meant for fornication; it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too. You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ. But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (12:31-13:8.)

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (5:2,21-33)

Follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up for us as an offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God. Husbands should love their wives, just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy by washing her in cleansing water with a form of words, so that when he took the Church to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church because we are part of his Body. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh. This mystery has great significance, but I am applying it to Christ and the Church. To sum up: you also, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians (3: 12-17.)

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as the quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them. Put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in

your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body.

Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

A reading from the first letter of St Peter (3:1-9)

Wives should be obedient to their husbands. Then, if there are some husbands who have not yet obeyed the word, they may find themselves won over, without a word spoken, by the way their wives behave, when they see how faithful and conscientious they are. Do not dress up for show: doing up your hair, wearing gold bracelets and fine clothes; all this should be inside, in a person's heart, imperishable: the ornament of a sweet and gentle disposition – this is what is precious in the sight of God. That was how the holy women of the past dressed attractively – they hoped in God and were tender and obedient to their husbands; like Sarah, who was obedient to Abraham, and called him her lord. You are now her children, as long as you live good lives and do not fear or worry.

In the same way, husbands must always treat their wives with consideration in their life together, respecting a woman as one who, through she may be the weaker partner, is equally an heir to the life of grace. This will stop anything from coming in the way of your prayers.

Finally: you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing. Never pay back one wrong with another one; instead, pay back with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself.

A reading from the first letter of St John (3: 18-24)

My children,
our love is not to be just words or mere talk,
but something real and active;
only by this can we be certain
that we are children of the truth

and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence,
whatever accusations it may raise against us,
because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything.

My dear people,
if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience,
we need not be afraid in God's presence,
and whatever we ask him,
we shall receive,
because we keep his commandments
and live the kind of life he wants.

His commandments are these:
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ
and that we love one another
as he told us to.

Whoever keeps his commandments
lives in God and God lives in him.
We know that he lives in us
by the Spirit that he has given us.

A reading from the first letter of St John (4: 7-12)

My dear people,
Let us love one another
Since love comes from God
And everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.
Anyone who fails to love can never have known God,
Because God is love.
God's love for us was revealed
When he sent into the world his only Son
So that we could have life through him;
This is the love I mean:
Not our love for God,
But God's love for us when he sent his Son
To be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.
My dear people,
Since God has loved us so much,
We too should love one another.
No one has ever seen God;

But as long as we love one another
God will live in us
And his love will be complete in us.

Gospel Acclamation

One of the following is either sung or read before the proclamation of the Gospel.

(9a) Alleluia, Alleluia! (9c) Alleluia, Alleluia!
God is love; Anyone who lives in love
Let us love one another lives in God
as God has loved us. and God lives in him
Alleluia ! Alleluia!

(9b) Alleluia, Alleluia! (9d) Alleluia, Alleluia!
As long as we love one another Everyone who loves
God will live in us is born of God
and his love will be complete in us and knows him
Alleluia! Alleluia

The Gospel (the whole congregation stands out of respect to listen to the Gospel being proclaimed, as they are the words of Christ himself)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew. (5:1-12)

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up to the hill. There he sat down, and was joined by the disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:
How happy are the poor in spirit;
Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle:
They shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn:
They shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:
They shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful:
They shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart:

They shall seek God.

Happy the peacemakers:

They shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:13-16)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lampstand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (7:21,24-29)

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell – and great was its fall!'

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (19:3-6)

Some Pharisees approached Jesus, and to test him they said “Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?” Jesus answered: “Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man must leave his father and mother, and cling to his wife, and he two become one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.”

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (22:35-40)

A lawyer, to disconcert Jesus, put a question, “Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?” Jesus said, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole law, and the prophets also.”

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark (10:6-9)

Jesus said: “From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. That is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.”

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (2:1-11)

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said, “Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” There were six stone jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”, and they filled them to the brim. “Draw some out now,” he told them, “and take it to the steward.” They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it turned into wine. Having no idea where it

came from – only the stewards who had drawn the water knew – the steward called the bridegroom and said: “People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now.” This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (15:9-12)

Jesus said to his disciples;
‘As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you.
Remain in my love.
If you keep my commandments
You will remain in my love,
Just as I have kept my Father’s commandments
And remain in his love.
I have told you this
So that my own joy may be in you
And your joy be complete
This is my commandment:
Love one another,
As I have loved you’.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (15:12-16).

Jesus said to his disciples,
‘This my commandment:
love one another,
as I have loved you.
No one can have greater love
than to lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends
if you do what I command you.
I shall no longer call you servants,
because a servant does not know
his master’s business;
I call you friends,
because I have made known to you

everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me,
no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you
to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last;
so that the Father will give you
anything you ask him in my name.'

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (17:20-26)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

"Holy Father,

I pray not only for these, but for those also
who through their words will believe in me.

May they all be one.

Father, may they be one in us,
as you are in me and I am in you,
so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.

I have given them the glory you gave to me,
that they may be one as we are one.

With me in them and you in me,
may they be so completely one
that the world will realise that it was you who sent me
and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.

Father, I want those you have given me
to be with me where I am,
so that they may always see the glory
you have given me
because you loved me
before the foundation of the world.

Father, Righteous One,
the world has not known you,
but I have known you,
and these have known that you have sent me.
I have made your name known to them
and will continue to make it known,
so that the love with which you loved me may be in them,
and so that I may be in them."