

**Addresses
for
Morning and Evening Prayer**

**according to the
1943 Lectionary
of the
USA 1928 Book of Common Prayer**

**Intended for use
by Layreaders
in the absence of a priest**

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Lent 4

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Exod 16:4-15

*Here beginneth the fourth verse
of the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus.*

4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?

8 And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.

9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that

they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: John 6:27-40

Here beginneth the twenty-seventh verse of the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Let us pray

O gracious Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church;
that thou wouldst be pleased to fill it with all truth,
on all peace,
Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error,
direct it;
where in anything it is amiss, reform it.
Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want,
provide for it;
where it is divided, reunite it;
for the sake of him who died and rose again,
and ever liveth to make intercession for us,
Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

These words should scare us a little.
 What we have preserved is in danger,
 even among us, *"ready to die"*.
"Strengthen the things that remain."
 Lent should call us, as a church,
 not only to hold on, but to advance,
 to find a path to real revival,
 to a revival of Catholic faith,
 and warm-hearted knowledge of God.

In the same place, he looks upon Philadelphia,
 a church that genuinely lives, and says

*"I know thy works:
 behold, I have set before thee an open door,
 and no man can shut it:
 for thou hast a little strength,
 and hast kept my word,
 and hast not denied my name. "*

Only a little strength, but what they have is His,
 and what they face is an open door
 that no one can shut.,
 and to them he says,

*"Behold, I come quickly:
 hold that fast which thou hast,
 that no man take thy crown. "*

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine
 own will, but the will of him that sent me.
 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me,
 that of all which he hath given me I should lose
 nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.
 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that
 every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on
 him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him
 up at the last day.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Homily

What do we want?

If we follow the story of Israel in the desert,
 we find them constantly telling Moses
 just what it was that they wanted:
 food and drink and comfort.

They lamented the cucumbers, the onions,
 the garlic, the pots of stew,
 all the good things they had left behind.

They complained bitterly
 when God's appointed leader did not provide them.
 They knew what they wanted, and so do we.
 And, just like them,
 we have fits of complaining and disappointment
 when we don't get what we want,
 or when we don't get it in the way that we want it.

You see, He gave them food,
 what Scripture elsewhere calls
 the 'bread of angels',

as the Psalm says,
*"Thou gavest them bread from heaven,
 containing within itself all sweetness."*
 The ground was covered with it.
 They called it "manna".
 (which seems to translate as, "What is this stuff?")
 But it was good food, and it carried then through
 for the whole long journey to the promised land.

After the feeding of the five thousand,
 Jesus observed that the people were far more excited
 about the miracle of the loaves and fishes
 than they were about the words He had spoken.
 He said to them,
*"Labour not for the meat which perisheth,
 but for that meat
 which endureth unto everlasting life,
 which the Son of man shall give unto you..."*

What do we want?
 It shows, doesn't it, in where we put our effort.
 Most of us work really hard.
 Americans are known for being hard workers,
 for working more hours on their jobs
 than in any other fully developed nation,
 and we have an impressive degree of prosperity
 to show for it.
 But what is it we want?
 More and better cars?
 Bigger and bigger homes?
 Better vacations?
 Entertainment?
 A larger selection of more sophisticated toys?
 Or perhaps the best college for our kids?

*"For thy help," he says,
 "will I send my servants Esau and Jeremy,
 after whose counsel
 I have sanctified and prepared for thee
 twelve trees laden with divers fruits,
 And as many fountains flowing with milk and honey,
 and seven mighty mountains,
 whereupon there grow roses and lilies,
 whereby I will fill thy children with joy."*

What a remarkable passage!
 The prophets (Isaiah and Jeremiah are meant),
 and the twelve apostles,
 (thus the Scriptures)
 the seven sacraments,
 everything she needs for the work
 she is given,
 and what a list of promises besides!

But, in the Revelation,
 Our Lord speaks to the church in Sardis.
 "Even so, he says, though you look alive,
 you are dead,
*Be watchful,
 and strengthen the things which remain,
 that are ready to die:
 for I have not found thy works perfect before God."*

That sounds like the church of our day.
 We all know about the massive unbelief
 and immorality in "those other" denominations,
 but are we free of formalism and indifference?
 Is it always God we put first?
 Or do we expect to have it all our own way,
 just so long as we say the right words?

He saves each one of us
to make us part of His holy Bride,
the spotless Bride
that the Holy Church will yet become.

So it is fitting that today, in two Scripture lessons,
we hear three messages from God to His Church.

We're not sure who this Esdras actually was,
but his two books have always been recognized
among those Greek books
that belong with the Old Testament,
the ones we call, "The Apocrypha."
(If your Bible is a Protestant edition
without the Apocrypha,
well, you really do need a complete one,
or you miss out
on beautiful and important passages like this one)

The words we heard from Esdras
are good advice for any mother
and should be heeded,
but that really isn't their main purpose.
These words are for the people of God
(Israel then, the Holy Church now),
the nation or the church,
seen as mother to her children.
He has chosen her, and has entrusted her
to love his children,
to embrace them, to teach them,
to direct them in the works of righteousness,
to protect them from sin and the wiles of the devil.

There's nothing wrong with any of that,
in itself.
They're all good things
that come from God's bounty.
We should accept His gifts and give thanks.
But what do we really want?
What do we need?
Where does our major effort go?

Listen again to Him:
*"Labour not for the meat which perisheth,
but for that meat which endureth
unto everlasting life,
which the Son of man shall give unto you..."*
*"For the bread of God
is he which cometh down from heaven,
and giveth life unto the world. ...
I am the bread of life:
he that cometh to me shall never hunger;
and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

It's a matter of perspective and priority.
There are a lot of truly good things we might desire,
but good things become evil
when they separate us from what we really need.
As He said another time,
*"Where your treasure is,
there will be your heart also."*

Lent is a time for setting priorities straight.
What is fasting
other than setting good things aside.
so that the better can truly be seen?

There is only one thing needful,
and that is
that we know and receive the love of God,
radiating that love in our very living.

That is also why, by His own institution,
our worship centers around eating and drinking,
the living Bread that is His Body,
the Cup of Salvation in His Blood.

Let us pray.

Grant, Lord, that, in our fasting, we feast upon thy
presence,
that in our seeking we seek only Thee,
and, as we gather at thine Altar,
feed us, fill us, transform us,
and call us to dwell with thee forevermore. Amen.

Homily

All through Lent
we've been thinking about our sins.
We've been fasting and praying,
preparing our souls for the celebration of Easter,
and, more important,
for the eventual entrance into heaven.
We examine ourselves,
and know ourselves to be sinners,
and admit that we,
each of us alone, are the guilty ones,
and there is no one else to blame,
and so we come,
each of us, to Him for forgiveness.
This is right, proper, and necessary.
If I, personally,
am not in a right relationship with God,
then I have no claim on His promises.

But there is another side to consider,
as today's lessons make clear.
It has been said
that there is no such thing as one Christian.
Christians come as part of a family,
as the body of Christ.
"Jesus and me," is only a part of the story,
and, in some respects, a small part of the story.
Yes, Our Lord is leading individuals
toward perfections.
Yes, He desires
to make each individual into a saint of God.
Yes, He certainly does save us one at a time,
but why?

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Ezek 39:21-29

Here beginneth the thirty-first verse of the twenty-ninth chapter of the Prophet Ezekiel.

21 And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.

22 So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.

23 And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.

24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.

25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

26 After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.

27 When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;

28 Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

Here endeth the First Lesson

Second Lesson: 2 Cor 3:12-18

*Here beginneth the twelfth verse
of the third chapter of
the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.*

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Second Lesson: Rev 3:1-12

*Here beginneth the Third Chapter
of the Revelation of St. John.*

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

25: Nourish thy children, O thou good nurse; stablish their feet.

26: As for the servants whom I have given thee, there shall not one of them perish; for I will require them from among thy number.

27: Be not weary: for when the day of trouble and heaviness cometh, others shall weep and be sorrowful, but thou shalt be merry and have abundance.

28: The heathen shall envy thee, but they shall be able to do nothing against thee, saith the Lord.

29: My hands shall cover thee, so that thy children shall not see hell.

30: Be joyful, O thou mother, with thy children; for I will deliver thee, saith the Lord.

31: Remember thy children that sleep, for I shall bring them out of the sides of the earth, and shew mercy unto them: for I am merciful, saith the Lord Almighty.

32: Embrace thy children until I come and shew mercy unto them: for my wells run over, and my grace shall not fail.

Here endeth the First Lesson

Homily

Today's readings

give us a picture of prophecy and fulfillment.

Ezekiel speaks of a people

whose "iniquity" and "uncleanness"

have caused the Lord to turn from them,

to hide His face from them, and

to set His glory among another people altogether;

but goes on, speaking for God,

"I will bring again their captivity ...

have mercy on them ... and gather them ...

and all shall know that I am God ...

Neither will I hide my face any more from them:

for I have poured out my spirit

upon the house of Israel..."

Once more we see the cycle that forms the core of the Old Testament Scriptures:

The people in trouble call on God.

God hears and answers.

They follow Him until they tire of it.

They stray and disobey.

Trouble comes,

They call on Him ... and so forth.

It's a cycle we can see even in our own lives.

It seems that that is just what fallen man is like:

unruly, disobedient, self-serving,

and unable to reform and stay reformed.

It's a cycle that, if we had only history to go by, would look pretty hopeless.

Even the promises

that keep coming from the prophets,

don't give us any real hope.

It always looks as though it's up to us to be good,
 that only our own strength and our own righteousness
 will make us able to receive the promises --
 and we know that we just don't have either.
 It looks pretty hopeless,
 but behind it all is great hope,
 the hope expressed in St. John 3, verse 16:
"God so loved the world ..."
 not just an emotional feeling of good will,
 but this kind of real and visible love:
"... that he gave his only-begotten Son ..."
 to live and suffer and die and rise again
*"... that whosoever believeth in him,
 should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Behind it all, there is Christ.
 Behind it all is the ultimate end of the cycle.
 God became flesh and blood
 to do what we cannot do for ourselves.
 He stepped into our life and paid our price,
 and takes our hand as he leads us
 on paths our strength cannot manage.

St. Paul reminds us that,
 after Moses had met with God,
 he wore a veil and hid his face,
 so that the people would not see the glory of God.
 And why? Was God hiding from them?
 Did He not ant them to some into His presence?
 Didn't he love them and desire them?
 We know He did.
 So why did Moses hide the glory in his face?
 St. Paul seems to answer it this way:
 not because it wouldn't be a good thing to see Him,
 but that they couldn't see Him.

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: 2 Esdras 2:15-32

*Here beginneth the fifteenth verse of
 the second chapter of the Second Book of Esdras.*

15: Mother, embrace thy children, and bring them
 up with gladness, make their feet as fast as a pillar:
 for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord.

16: And those that be dead will I raise up again
 from their places, and bring them out of the
 graves: for I have known my name in Israel.

17: Fear not, thou mother of the children: for I
 have chosen thee, saith the Lord.

18: For thy help will I send my servants Esau and
 Jeremy, after whose counsel I have sanctified and
 prepared for thee twelve trees laden with divers
 fruits,

19: And as many fountains flowing with milk and
 honey, and seven mighty mountains, whereupon
 there grow roses and lilies, whereby I will fill thy
 children with joy.

20: Do right to the widow, judge for the fatherless,
 give to the poor, defend the orphan, clothe the na-
 ked,

21: Heal the broken and the weak, laugh not a
 lame man to scorn, defend the maimed, and let the
 blind man come into the sight of my clearness.

22: Keep the old and young within thy walls.

23: Wheresoever thou findest the dead, take them
 and bury them, and I will give thee the first place
 in my resurrection.

24: Abide still, O my people, and take thy rest, for
 thy quietness still come.

*the mountains and the hills shall
break forth before [us] into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands."*

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who came into the world to save sinners;
mercifully grant that we may openly see and ac-
knowledge our sins, and, at thy gracious calling,
fly from them unto Thee, that by his Cross and
Resurrection, we may come to the joys of everlast-
ing life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

There was a veil upon their heart.
If they beheld God's glory,
they wouldn't be seeing Him.
They'd be seeing their own reflection,
as the Apostle wrote elsewhere,
seeing darkly in a mirror,
and if you cannot see beyond yourself,
you cannot be saved from yourself,
and by the strength of your own sin,
you condemn yourself eternally,
without hope.
And St. Paul wasn't just talking about the Jews,
way back then,
but about us, here and now.
We try to save ourselves.
We try to be good enough.
It doesn't work. We can't do it.
Their minds were blinded.
The veil still hangs in place,
even when we read the Scriptures,
if we have put it there, and left it there..
But remember, O Christian,
that on the day He died,
the veil of the temple was torn open.
The Way to everlasting life was made clear.
If we turn our eyes upon Jesus,
the Way, the Truth, the Life,
our Hope and our Salvation.

Speaking of our soul he says:
*"... when it shall turn to the Lord,
the vail shall be taken away. ..."*
and, full of hope, we enter in.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who came into the world to save sinners;
mercifully grant that we may openly see and ac-
knowledge our sins, and, at thy gracious calling,
fly from them unto Thee, that by his Cross and
Resurrection, we may come to the joys of everlast-
ing life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 55

*Here beginneth the fifty-fifth chapter
of the Prophet Isaiah.*

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the wa-
ters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and
eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money
and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is
not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth
not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that
which is good, and let your soul delight itself in
fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and
your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting
covenant with you, even the sure mercies of
David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the
people, a leader and commander to the people.

*but it shall accomplish that which I please,
and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

...

*"I will come in unto him,
and will sup with him and he with me."*

said Jesus,

and so it is.

Week after week,

every time our priest can be with us,

we take the bread and the cup,

and in the reality

of the awesome sacrifice of Calvary,

He speaks his own life into those elements,

and we eat and we drink,

and we sup with Him and He with us,

just as He said,

"I am the living bread

which came down from heaven:

if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:

and the bread that I will give is my flesh,

which I will give for the life of the world."

This season of Lent reminds us of our sin,

of our need to cry out for mercy,

and we come to the Lord, at His own calling,

in sorrow, and, yes, in fear and trembling,

but in His presence,

and especially at His Table,

we find Him, and are touched by Him,

and, in Isaiah's words, we

" ... shall go out with joy,

and be led forth with peace:

We seek and we seek.
 There is something in us that has to seek,
 but we don't have it in us to find,
 except ...
 that the Father is drawing us.
 Look right now at the Cross on this altar.
 See it. Think on it. Listen to it.
 ...
 ... <pause>
 ...
 He is drawing us,
 by the life of Christ, by His teaching, by His death.
 The everlasting Word that became flesh,
 He that speaks the words of the Eternal Father,
 says of Himself,
 in the very last book of the Scriptures:
*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock:
 if any man hear my voice, and open the door,
 I will come in unto him,
 and will sup with him and he with me."*

He is drawing us. We are being called.
 The Word made flesh has spoken and is speaking
 the word of our salvation, and, as Isaiah said,
*" ... as the rain cometh down,
 and the snow from heaven,
 and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth,
 and maketh it bring forth and bud,
 that it may give seed to the sower,
 and bread to the eater:
 So shall my word be
 that goeth forth out of my mouth:
 it shall not return unto me void,*

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest
 not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto
 thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the
 Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.
 6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call
 ye upon him while he is near:
 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous
 man his thoughts: and let him return unto the
 LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to
 our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither
 are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so
 are my ways higher than your ways, and my
 thoughts than your thoughts.
 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow
 from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth
 the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it
 may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my
 mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall
 accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper
 in the thing whereto I sent it.
 12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth
 with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break
 forth before you into singing, and all the trees of
 the field shall clap their hands.
 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,
 and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle
 tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an
 everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Here endeth the First Lesson

Second Lesson: John 6:41-51

Here beginneth the forty-first verse of the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Homily

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ... Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near ..."

So said Isaiah in our first lesson, but here is what Our Lord said in the second:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ..."

Does that sound as though we are being asked to do something that we cannot do?

Well, that is a pretty accurate description of Original Sin.

We were created for one purpose, and one purpose only, to seek the Lord and to know Him forever, but we are so soiled by our inherited sinfulness that we simply cannot do what we were made to do. As St. Paul said (in Romans chapter 7), in words we ourselves might well repeat: *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

Think of Diogenes the Greek philosopher, wandering about day after day with his lantern, vainly seeking to find an honest man, and failing.

Remember Pontius Pilate, hopelessly asking Jesus, "What is truth?"

St. Paul wrote to his student St. Timothy, in words strikingly fit for today's world, of those who are *"ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."*