

THE WORD OF GOD

MARINA THE MONK

The Collect

Give us grace, Lord God, to refrain from judgments about the sins of others; that, like thy servant Marina the Monk, we may hold fast to the path of discipleship in the midst of unjust judgments; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading

A reading from the book of Susanna

Then the two elders stood up before the people and laid their hands on her head. Through her tears she looked up towards Heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord. The elders said, 'While we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, shut the garden doors, and dismissed the maids. Then a young man, who was hiding there, came to her and lay with her. We were in a corner of the garden, and when we saw this wickedness we ran to them. Although we saw them embracing, we could not hold the man, because he was stronger than we are, and he opened the doors and got away. We did, however, seize this woman and asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things we testify.'

Because they were elders of the people and judges, the assembly believed them and condemned her to death. Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, 'O eternal God, you know what is secret and are aware of all things before they come to be; you know that these men have given false evidence against me. And now I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things that they have charged against me!'

The Lord heard her cry. Just as she was being led off to execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel, and he shouted with a loud voice, 'I want no part in shedding this woman's blood!'

Psalm 148

1 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens; *

praise him in the heights.

2 Praise him, all you angels of his; *

praise him, all his host.

3 Praise him, sun and moon; *

praise him, all you shining stars.

4 Praise him, heaven of heavens, *

and you waters above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the Name of the Lord; *

for he commanded, and they were created.

6 He made them stand fast for ever and ever; *

he gave them a law which shall not pass away.

7 Praise the Lord from the earth, *

you sea-monsters and all deeps;

8 Fire and hail, snow and fog, *

tempestuous wind, doing his will;

9 Mountains and all hills, *

fruit trees and all cedars;

10 Wild beasts and all cattle, *

creeping things and winged birds;

- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, *
princes and all rulers of the world;
- 12 Young men and maidens, *
old and young together.
- 13 Let them praise the Name of the Lord, *
**for his Name only is exalted, his splendor is over earth
and heaven.**
- 14 He has raised up strength for his people and praise for all his
loyal servants, *
**the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Hallelujah!**

The Second Reading

A reading from the letter of James

You must understand this, my beloved:* let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves* in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke

A certain ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother." ' He replied, 'I have kept all these since my youth.' When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

Those who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' He replied, 'What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.'

Then Peter said, 'Look, we have left our homes and followed you.' And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.'