

THE WORD OF GOD

BIRGITTA OF SWEDEN

The Collect

O God, who beholds all things and whose judgment is always mercy; by the example of your servant Brigitta of Sweden, give to us in this life the vision of your kingdom where Jesus Christ is all and in all, that we may pattern our earthly lives on things heavenly, where our lives are hidden with Christ in you, who with him and the Holy Spirit live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**



The First Reading

A reading from the 1st book of Samuel 28:3-19

Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Saul had expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land. The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, not by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, 'Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.' His servants said to him, 'There is a medium at Endor.'

So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went there, he and two men with him. They came to the woman by night. And he said, 'Consult a spirit for me, and bring up for me the one whom I name to you.' The woman said to him, 'Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?' But Saul swore to her by the Lord, 'As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon

you for this thing.' Then the woman said, 'Whom shall I bring up for you?' He answered, 'Bring up Samuel for me.' When the woman saw

Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman said to Saul, 'Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!' The king said to her, 'Have no fear; what do you see?' The woman said to Saul, 'I see a divine being* coming up out of the ground.' He said to her, 'What is his appearance?' She said, 'An old man is coming up; he is wrapped in a robe.' So Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?' Saul answered, 'I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; so I have summoned you to tell me what I should do.' Samuel said, 'Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? The Lord has done to you just as he spoke by me; for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbour David. Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you today. Moreover, the Lord will give Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.'

Psalms 12

1 Help me, Lord, for there is no godly one left; *

the faithful have vanished from among us.

2 Everyone speaks falsely with his neighbor; *

with a smooth tongue they speak from a double heart.

3 Oh, that the Lord would cut off all smooth tongues, *
and close the lips that utter proud boasts!

4 Those who say, "With our tongue will we prevail; *
our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

5 "Because the needy are oppressed, and the poor cry out in misery, "
**I will rise up," says the Lord, "and give them the help they
long for."**

6 The words of the Lord are pure words, *
**like silver refined from ore and purified seven times in the
fire.**

7 O Lord, watch over us *
and save us from this generation for ever.

8 The wicked prowl on every side, *
and that which is worthless is highly prized by everyone.

The Second Reading

A reading from Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians

14:6-12

Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you in some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? It is the same way with lifeless instruments that produce sound, such as the flute or the harp. If they do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is being played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So with yourselves; if in a tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different kinds of sounds in the world, and nothing is without sound. If then I do not know the meaning of a sound, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So with yourselves; since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church.

Gospel A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 11:2-15

When John heard in prison what the Messiah* was doing, he sent word by his* disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers* are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone* dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet?* Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,* and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. Let anyone with ears* listen!