THE WORD OF GOD

The Collect

Preserve your people, O God, from discouragement in the face of adversity, as you did your servant James Huntington, knowing that when you have begun a good work you will bring it to completion. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading A reading from the Book of Nehemiah 5:1-12

Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish kin. For there were those who said, 'With our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive.' There were also those who said, 'We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine.' And there were those who said, 'We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others.'

I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, 'You are all taking interest from your own people.' And I called a great assembly to deal with them, and said to them, 'As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish kindred who had been sold to other nations; but now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!' They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said, 'The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending

them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.' Then they said, 'We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say.' And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised.

Psalm 34

1 I will bless the Lord at all times; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

2 I will glory in the Lord; *
let the humble hear and rejoice.

3 Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; *
let us exalt his Name together.

4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.

5 Look upon him and be radiant, *
and let not your faces be ashamed.

6 I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.

8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; *
happy are they who trust in him!

9 Fear the Lord, you that are his saints, *
for those who fear him lack nothing.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger, *
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good.

11 Come, children, and listen to me; *
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12 Who among you loves life *
and desires long life to enjoy prosperity?

13 Keep your tongue from evil-speaking *
and your lips from lying words.

14 Turn from evil and do good; *
seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, *
and his ears are open to their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, *
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them *
and delivers them from all their troubles.

18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted *
and will save those whose spirits are crushed.

19 Many are the troubles of the righteous, *
but the Lord will deliver him out of them all.

20 He will keep safe all his bones; *
not one of them shall be broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked, *
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

22 The Lord ransoms the life of his servants, *
and none will be punished who trust in him.

The Second Reading
A reading from Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:14-18

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which* the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For* neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters.* Amen.

Gospel A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 6:34-38

They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.