First Reading: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

God promises a childless and doubting Abram that he will have a child, that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars, and that the land of Canaan will be their inheritance. Abram's trust in God is sealed with a covenant-making ceremony, a sign of God's promise.

[1]After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid,
Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." [2]But Abram said, "O Lord GOD,
what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of
Damascus?" [3]And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my
house is to be my heir." [4]But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your
heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." [5]He brought him outside and said,
"Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to
him, "So shall your descendants be." [6]And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to
him as righteousness.

[7]Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give
you this land to possess." [8]But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess
it?" [9]He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a
ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." [10]He brought him all these and cut
them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in
two. [11]And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

[12]As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying
darkness descended upon him.

[17]When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch
passed between these pieces. [18]On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying,
"To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river
Euphrates."

Psalm: Psalm 27

In the day of trouble, God will give me shelter. (Ps. 27:5)

[1]The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then | shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I | be afraid?
[2]**When evildoers close in against me to de- | vour my flesh,**
they, my foes and my enemies, will stum- | ble and fall.
[3]Though an army encamp against me, my heart | will not fear.
Though war rise up against me, my trust will | not be shaken.
[4]**One thing I ask of the LORD; one | thing I seek;**
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life; to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God | in the temple. R
[5]For in the day of trouble God will | give me shelter,
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high up- | on a rock.
[6]**Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies | who surround me.**
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing; I will sing and make music | to the LORD.
[7]Hear my voice, O LORD, | when I call;
have mercy on me and | answer me.
[8]**My heart speaks your message— | "Seek my face."**
Your face, O LORD, | I will seek. R
[9]Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your ser- | vant in anger.
Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of | my salvation.
[10]**Though my father and my moth- | er forsake me,**
the LORD will | take me in.
[11]Teach me your | way, O LORD;

lead me on a level path, because of | my oppressors.
12**Subject me not to the will | of my foes,**
for they rise up against me, false witnesses | breathing violence.
13This I believe—that I will see the goodness | of the LORD
in the land | of the living!
14**Wait for the LORD| and be strong.**
Take heart and wait | for the LORD! R

Second Reading: Philippians 3:17--4:1

Although Paul's devotion to Christ has caused him to be persecuted, he does not regret the course he has taken. Writing from prison, he expresses confidence in a glorious future and encourages other Christians to follow in his footsteps.

17Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. 18For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. 19Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. 20But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. 4:1Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35

Neither Herod's plotting nor Jerusalem's resistance to maternal love will deter Jesus from his sacrificial mission.

31At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus,] "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." 32He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. 33Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' 34Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 35See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"