

Readings for Thursday, July 2, 2026

Moses the Black— *Monastic and Martyr, c. 400*

Psalm 86:1-13

Nonne Deo?

- 1 Bow down your ear, O LORD, and answer me, *
for I am poor and in misery.
- 2 Keep watch over my life, for I am faithful; *
save your servant who puts his trust in you.
- 3 Be merciful to me, O LORD, for you are my God; *
I call upon you all the day long.
- 4 Gladden the soul of your servant, *
for to you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
- 5 For you, O LORD, are good and forgiving, *
and great is your love toward all who call upon you.
- 6 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, *
and attend to the voice of my supplications.
- 7 In the time of my trouble I will call upon you, *
for you will answer me.
- 8 Among the gods there is none like you, O LORD, *
nor anything like your works.
- 9 All the nations you have made will come and
worship you, O LORD, *
and glorify your Name.
- 10 For you are great;
you do wondrous things; *
and you alone are God.
- 11 Teach me your way, O LORD,
and I will walk in your truth; *
knit my heart to you that I may fear your Name.
- 12 I will thank you, O LORD my God, with all my heart, *
and glorify your Name for evermore.
- 13 For great is your love toward me; *
you have delivered me from the nethermost Pit.

2 Chronicles 28:8–15

The people of Israel took captive two hundred thousand of their kin, women, sons, and daughters; they also took much booty from them and brought the booty to Samaria. But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded; he went out to meet the army that came to Samaria, and said to them, ‘Because the Lord, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand, but you have killed them in a rage that has reached up to heaven. Now you intend to subjugate the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, as your slaves. But what have you except sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me, and send back the captives whom you have taken from your kindred, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you.’ Moreover, certain chiefs of the Ephraimites, Azariah son of Johanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai, stood up against those who were coming from the war, and said to them, ‘You shall not bring the captives in here, for you propose to bring on us guilt against the Lord in addition to our present sins and guilt. For our guilt is already great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.’ So the warriors left the captives and the booty before the officials and all the assembly. Then those who were mentioned by name got up and took the captives, and with the booty they clothed all that were naked among them; they clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them; and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kindred at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, ‘Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’ But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’

Collect:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son guides our footsteps in the way of peace: Deliver us from the paths of hatred and violence, that we, following the example of your servant Moses, may serve you with singleness of heart and attain to the tranquility of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Moses the Black

Monastic and Martyr, c. 400

Moses of Ethiopia, commonly called Moses the Black in early Christian literature, was a fourth-century monk who lived in one of several isolated desert monasteries near Scete in Lower Egypt. He was described as being tall, strong, “black of body,” and in his early life, the hotblooded leader of a marauding robber band. While fleeing from the authorities, he took shelter with a group of monks. He was so impressed with their faithfulness and kindness that he chose to be baptized and to remain with them.

He led an ascetic life, lived in a simple cell, and ate only ten ounces of dry bread each day. Once, when the monks gathered to judge a member who had sinned, Moses arrived carrying a leaky basket filled with sand on his back. He explained that what he was holding behind him represented his own many sins, now hidden from his own view. “And now I have come to judge my brother for a small fault,” he remarked. The other monks then each personally forgave their erring brother and returned to their cells.

It is to Moses that one of the most famous pieces of advice from desert monasticism is attributed: “Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.”

When Moses was an old man, he was warned that an armed band of raiders was approaching and that the monks needed to flee. “Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword” (Matthew 26:52), the former robber-murderer calmly replied. “I have been waiting for this day to come for a long time.” He and six other brothers waited patiently, and were all slain.