

## Readings for Thursday, November 6, 2025

### William Temple – *Archbishop of Canterbury, 1944*

#### Psalm 119:97-104

- 97 Oh, how I love your law! \*  
all the day long it is in my mind.
- 98 Your commandment has made me wiser than my enemies, \*  
and it is always with me.
- 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, \*  
for your decrees are my study.
- 100 I am wiser than the elders, \*  
because I observe your commandments.
- 101 I restrain my feet from every evil way, \*  
that I may keep your word.
- 102 I do not shrink from your judgments, \*  
because you yourself have taught me.
- 103 How sweet are your words to my taste! \*  
they are sweeter than honey to my mouth.
- 104 Through your commandments I gain understanding; \*  
therefore I hate every lying way.

## **Ephesians 3:7-12**

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

## **John 1:1-14**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

### **Collect:**

O God of light and love, you illumined your church through the witness of your servant William Temple: Inspire us, we pray, by his teaching and example, that we may rejoice with courage, confidence, and faith in the Word made flesh, and may be led to establish that city which has justice for its foundation and love for its law; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

# William Temple

*Archbishop of Canterbury, 1944*

William Temple was a renowned teacher and preacher who served as Archbishop of Canterbury during the difficult days of the Second World War. His writings reflect a robust social theology that engaged the challenges of modern industrialized society.

Temple was born on October 15, 1881. His father, Dr. Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter and then of London, became Archbishop of Canterbury when William was fifteen. Growing up at the heart of the Church of England, William's love for it was deep and lifelong. Endowed with a brilliant mind, Temple took a first-class honors degree in classics and philosophy at Oxford, where he was then elected Fellow of Queen's College. At the age of twenty-nine he became headmaster of Repton School, and then, in quick succession, rector of St. James's Church, Piccadilly, Bishop of Manchester, and Archbishop of York.

Although he was never subject to poverty himself, he developed a passion for social justice which shaped his words and his actions. He owed this passion to a profound belief in the Incarnation. He wrote that in Jesus Christ God took flesh and dwelt among us, and, as a consequence, "the personality of every man and woman is sacred." In 1917, Temple resigned from St. James's, Piccadilly, to devote his energies to the "Life and Liberty" movement for reform within the Church of England. Two years later, an Act of Parliament led to the setting up of the Church Assembly, which for the first time gave the laity a voice in church governance.

As bishop, and later as archbishop, Temple committed himself to seeking "the things which pertain to the Kingdom of God." He understood the Incarnation as giving worth and meaning not only to individuals but to all of life. He therefore took the lead in establishing the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship (COPEC), held in 1924. In 1940, he convened the great Malvern Conference to reflect on the social reconstruction that would be needed in Britain once the Second World War was over. At the same time, he was a prolific writer on theological, ecumenical, and social topics, and his two-volume *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, written in the early days of the war, rapidly became a spiritual classic.

In 1942, Temple was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury and reached an even wider audience through his wartime radio addresses and newspaper articles. However, the scope of his responsibilities and the pace he set himself took their toll. On October 26, 1944, he died at Westgate-on-Sea, Kent, after only two and a half years at Canterbury.