

Daily Reading for Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023

Reading 1, *Joel 2:12-18*

¹² 'But now -- declares Yahweh- come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning.' ¹³ Tear your hearts and not your clothes, and come back to Yahweh your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and he relents about inflicting disaster. ¹⁴ Who knows if he will not come back, relent and leave a blessing behind him, a cereal offering and a libation to be presented to Yahweh your God? ¹⁵ Blow the ram's-horn in Zion! Order a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, ¹⁶ call the people together, summon the community, assemble the elders, gather the children, even infants at the breast! Call the bridegroom from his bedroom and the bride from her bower! ¹⁷ Let the priests, the ministers of Yahweh, stand weeping between portico and altar, saying, 'Spare your people, Yahweh! Do not expose your heritage to the contempt, to the sarcasm of the nations! Why give the peoples cause to say, "Where is their God?" ' ¹⁸ Then, becoming jealous over his country, Yahweh took pity on his people.

Responsorial Psalm, *Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17*

³ For I am well aware of my offences, my sin is constantly in mind. ⁴ Against you, you alone, I have sinned, I have done what you see to be wrong, that you may show your saving justice when you pass sentence, and your victory may appear when you give judgement,

⁵ remember, I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception. ⁶ But you delight in sincerity of heart, and in secret you teach me wisdom.

¹² Give me back the joy of your salvation, sustain in me a generous spirit. ¹³ I shall teach the wicked your paths, and sinners will return to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, God, God of my salvation, and my tongue will acclaim your saving justice. ¹⁷ Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, a broken, contrite heart you never scorn.

Reading 2, *Second Corinthians 5:20-6:2*

²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were urging you through us, and in the name of Christ we appeal to you to be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made the sinless one a victim for sin, so that in him we might become the uprightness of God. ¹ As his fellow-workers, we urge you not to let your acceptance of his grace come to nothing. ² As he said, 'At the time of my favour I have answered you; on the day of salvation I have helped you'; well, now is the real time of favour, now the day of salvation is here.

Gospel, *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18*

¹ 'Be careful not to parade your uprightness in public to attract attention; otherwise you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. ² So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win human admiration. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. ³ But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; ⁴ your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. ⁵ 'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing

up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. ¹⁶ 'When you are fasting, do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they go about looking unsightly to let people know they are fasting. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put scent on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.