

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Monday – 30 March 2020

Entrance Antiphon

Have mercy on me, O God, for people assail me; they fight me all day long and oppress me.

First Reading

A reading from the prophet Daniel

Susanna was condemned to death by the whole assembly. She cried out as loud as she could, 'Eternal God you know all secrets and everything before it happens; you know that they have given false evidence against me. And now have I to die, innocent as I am of everything their malice has invented against me?'

The Lord heard her cry and, as she was being led away to die, he roused the Holy Spirit residing in a young boy named Daniel who began to shout, 'I am innocent of this woman's death! At which all the people turned to him and asked, 'What do you mean by these words?' Standing in the middle of the crowd he replied, 'Are you so stupid, sons of Israel, as to condemn a daughter of Israel unheard, and without troubling to find out the truth? Go back to the scene of the trial: these men have given false evidence against her.'

All the people hurried back, and the elders said to Daniel, 'Come and sit with us and tell us what you mean, since God has given you the gifts that elders have.' Daniel said, 'Keep the men well apart from each other for I want to question them.' When the men had been separated, Daniel had one of them brought to him. 'You have grown old in wickedness,' he said, 'and now the sins of your earlier days have overtaken you, you with your unjust judgements, your condemnation of the innocent, your acquittal of guilty men, when the Lord has said, "you must not put the innocent and the just to death." Now then, since you saw her so clearly, tell me what tree you saw them lying under?' He replied, 'Under a mastic tree.' Daniel said, 'True enough! Your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of God has already received your sentence from him and will slash you in half.' He dismissed the man, ordered the other to be brought and said to him, 'Spawn of Canaan, not of Judah, beauty has seduced you, lust has led your heart astray! This is how you have been behaving with the daughters of Israel and they were too frightened to resist; but here is a daughter of Judah who could not stomach your wickedness! Now then, tell me what tree you surprised them under?' He replied, 'Under a holm oak.' Daniel said, 'True enough! Your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of God is waiting, with a sword to drive home and split you, and destroy the pair of you.'

Then the whole assembly shouted, blessing God, the saviour of those who trust in him. And they turned on the two elders whom Daniel had convicted of false evidence out of their own mouths. As prescribed in the Law of Moses, they sentenced them to the same punishment as they had intended to inflict on their neighbour. They put them to death; the life of an innocent woman was spared that day.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

(R.) Though I walk in the valley of darkness I fear no evil, for you are with me.

1. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. **(R.)**
2. He guides me along the right path; He is true to his name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort. **(R.)**
3. You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. **(R.)**
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. **(R.)**

Gospel Acclamation

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

I do not wish the sinner to die, says the Lord, but to turn to me and live.

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and don't sin anymore.'

The Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Communion Antiphon

Has no one condemned you, woman? No one, Lord. Neither shall I condemn you. From now on, sin no more.