

Fifth Sunday in Lent Sunday, March 18, 2018

The Collect: Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:31-34 read from the King James Bible

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 51:1-13 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; * in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness * and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, * and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you only have I sinned * and done what is evil in your sight.
5 And so you are justified when you speak * and upright in your judgment.
6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, * a sinner from my mother's womb.
7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, * and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; * wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, * that the body you have broken may rejoice.
10 Hide your face from my sins * and blot out all my iniquities.
11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me.
12 Cast me not away from your presence * and take not your holy Spirit from me.
13 Give me the joy of your saving help again * and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Epistle: Hebrews 5:5-10 read from the Lexham English Bible

Thus also Christ did not glorify himself to become high priest, but the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you," just as also in another place he says, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," who in the days of his flesh offered up both prayers and supplications, with loud crying and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard as a result of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered, and being perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey him, being designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 12:20-33 read from The Message Bible

There were some Greeks in town who had come up to worship at the Feast. They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee: "Sir, we want to see Jesus. Can you help us?"

Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip together told Jesus. Jesus answered, "Time's up. The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

“Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you’ll have it forever, real and eternal.

“If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you’ll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment’s notice. The Father will honor and reward anyone who serves me.

“Right now I am storm-tossed. And what am I going to say? ‘Father, get me out of this’? No, this is why I came in the first place. I’ll say, ‘Father, put your glory on display.’”
A voice came out of the sky: “I have glorified it, and I’ll glorify it again.”

The listening crowd said, “Thunder!”

Others said, “An angel spoke to him!”

Jesus said, “The voice didn’t come for me but for you. At this moment the world is in crisis. Now Satan, the ruler of this world, will be thrown out. And I, as I am lifted up from the earth, will attract everyone to me and gather them around me.” He put it this way to show how he was going to be put to death.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On March 24th we remember Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador and Martyr.

Óscar Romero, commonly known as Monseñor Romero, was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador. He later became prelate archbishop of San Salvador.

As an archbishop, he witnessed numerous violations of human rights and began a ministry speaking out on behalf of the poor and victims of the country's civil war. His brand of political activism was denounced by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and the government

of El Salvador. In 1980, he was assassinated by gunshot while consecrating the Eucharist during mass. His death finally provoked international outcry for human rights reform in El Salvador.

In 1997, a cause for beatification and canonization into sainthood was opened for Romero and Pope John Paul II bestowed upon him the title of Servant of God. He is considered the unofficial patron saint of the Americas and El Salvador and is often referred to as "San Romero" in El Salvador. Outside of Catholicism Romero is honored by other religious denominations of Christendom, like the Church of England through its Common Worship. He is one of the ten 20th-century martyrs from across the world who are depicted in statues above the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey, London.

On March 7th 2018 Pope Francis approved recognition of a miracle that paves the way for the canonization of martyr Archbishop Romero.

Let us pray: Almighty God, you called your servant Oscar Romero to be a voice for the voiceless poor, and to give his life as a seed of freedom and a sign of hope: Grant that, inspired by his sacrifice and the example of the martyrs of El Salvador, we may without fear or favor witness to your Word who abides, your Word who is Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be praise and glory now and for ever. **Amen.**