

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

In those days: The people became impatient on the way.
And the people spoke against God and against Moses,
‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?
For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.’
Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people,
and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.
And the people came to Moses and said,
‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you.
Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.’
So Moses prayed for the people.
And the Lord said to Moses,
‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole,
and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’
So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole.
And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS:

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

Give ear, my people, to my teaching;
incline your ear to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable
and utter hidden lessons of the past.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

When he slew them, then they sought him,
repented and earnestly sought God.
They would remember that God was their rock,
God the Most High their redeemer.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

Yet they deceived him with their mouths;
they lied to him with their tongues.
For their hearts were not steadfast towards him;
they were not faithful to his covenant.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

Yet he who is full of compassion
forgave them their sin and spared them.
So often he held back his anger,
and did not stir up all his rage.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form,
he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of
death, even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your Cross you have redeemed the world.
Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING
TO LUKE

At that time: Jesus said to Nicodemus,
‘No one has ascended into heaven
except he who descended from heaven,
the Son of Man.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever
believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not
perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn
the world, but in order that the world might be saved
through him.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

THE REFLECTION

The Emperor Constantine began his decisive career in York. He marched South and the across Europe, winning the emperor's throne.

He focussed on the Eastern mediterranean next and pacified the province of Palestine. This meant his Mum could visit the sites of Jesus where they happened. Her archaeologists discovered a cave with crosses in it. One seemed to have a miraculous power and she decided this was the true cross of Jesus. This was the origin of today's solemn memory.

Romans used crucifixion as a terrible way of killing and bringing fear. There should be nothing good about remembering it. St Paul wrote that it was foolish to preach about it. Christians every where do remember it, there has to be a cross above or beside an altar for mass and many of us have one as a reminder. But be careful of Grunewald's painting it really is too realistic.

The cross for us is the definite sign of forgiveness. God so loved the world that he gave his son so that we might be saved and have eternal life. This ultimate terrible death on earth and the emotional heartbreak of Jesus' final words "my God , my God, why have you forsaken me" show the death was real in human form. Jesus came to save us, to pay the cost, like paying the bill that our sin had built up. St Augustine the theologian wrote that we would be a people without hope in a damned world of violence slavery, inequality and selfish greed.

Jesus came to save us, he opened the gates of paradise for us and showed us the way, by believing in him and in God's mercy we can live in his kingdom of justice peace and joy.

The mass is thanks giving In Greek Eucharist. Thanking God that he saved us from our way of sin which produced only unhappiness. This reminds us of our hope, Pope Francis wanted this Holy year to tell us we are pilgrims of Hope, sure of our destination to reach his kingdom.