

READINGS
FOR VOCATIONS TO HOLY ORDERS
OR THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

READINGS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

O-1

Reading

Genesis 12:1-4

Leave your country and your family.

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your family and your father's house, for the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you:
I will curse those who slight you.
All the tribes of the earth
shall bless themselves by you.'

So Abram went as the Lord told him.

The word of the Lord.

Reading

Exodus 3:1-6, 9-12
I shall be with you.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. 'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said 'and see why the bush is not burnt.' Now the Lord saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am' he answered. 'Come no nearer' he said. 'Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father,' he said 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God.

And the Lord said, 'And now the cry of the sons of Israel has come to me, and I have witnessed the way in which the Egyptians oppress them, so come, I send you to Pharaoh to bring the sons of Israel, my people, out of Egypt.'

Moses said to God, 'Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?' 'I shall be with you,' was the answer 'and this is the sign by which you shall know that it is I who have sent you... After you have led the people out of Egypt, you are to offer worship to God on this mountain.'

The word of the Lord.

Reading

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

The boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli; it was rare for the Lord to speak in those days; visions were uncommon. One day, it happened that Eli was lying down in his room. His eyes were beginning to grow dim; he could no longer see. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am'. Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me'. Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.' Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening".'

The word of the Lord.

Reading

1 Kings 19:16, 19-21
Elisha rose and followed Elijah.

A reading from the first book of Kings.

The Lord said to Elijah: 'Go, you are to anoint Elisha son of Shaphat, of Abel Meholah, as prophet to succeed you.'

Leaving Horeb, Elijah came on Elisha son of Shaphat as he was ploughing behind twelve yoke of oxen, he himself being with the twelfth. Elijah passed near to him and threw his cloak over him. Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. 'Let me kiss my father and mother, then I will follow you' he said. Elijah answered, 'Go, go back; for have I done anything to you?' Elisha turned away, took the pair of oxen and slaughtered them. He used the plough for cooking the oxen, then gave to his men, who ate. He then rose, and followed Elijah and became his servant.

The word of the Lord.

Reading

Isaiah 6:1-8

Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord seated on a high throne; his train filled the sanctuary; above him stood seraphs, each one with six wings: two to cover its face, two to cover its feet and two for flying.

And they cried out to one another in this way,

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

His glory fills the whole earth.'

The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out, and the Temple was filled with smoke. I said:

'What a wretched state I am in! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips
and I live among a people of unclean lips,
and my eyes have looked at the King, the Lord of hosts.'

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this he touched my mouth and said:

'See now, this has touched your lips,
your sin is taken away,
your iniquity is purged.'

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

'Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?'

I answered, 'Here I am, send me'.

The word of the Lord.

Reading

Jeremiah 1:4-9
Go now to those whom I send you.

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

The word of the Lord was addressed to me, saying,

‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
before you came to birth I consecrated you;
I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.’

I said, ‘Ah, Lord; look, I do not know how to speak: I am a child!’ But the Lord replied,

‘Do not say, “I am a child”.
Go now to those to whom I send you
and say whatever I command you.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to protect you –
it is the Lord who speaks!’

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me:

‘There! I am putting my words into your mouth.’

The word of the Lord.

Reading

Jeremiah 20:7-9

There seemed to be a fire burning in my heart.

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

You have seduced me, Lord, and I have let myself be seduced;
you have overpowered me: you were the stronger.

I am a daily laughing-stock,
everybody's butt.

Each time I speak the word, I have to howl
and proclaim: 'Violence and ruin!'

The word of the Lord has meant for me
insult, derision, all day long.

I used to say, 'I will not think about him,
I will not speak in his name any more.'

Then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart,
imprisoned in my bones.

The effort to restrain it wearied me,
I could not bear it.

The word of the Lord.

READINGS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

N-1

For priestly vocations

Reading

2 Corinthians 5:14-20

God gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation.

A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

The love of Christ overwhelms us when we reflect that if one man has died for all, then all men should be dead; and the reason he died for all was so that living men should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life for them.

From now onwards, therefore, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the flesh. Even if we did once know Christ in the flesh, that is not how we know him now. And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God.

The word of the Lord.

Reading

Philippians 3:8-14

I have accepted the loss of everything, if only I can have Christ.

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians.

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you my brothers, I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

N-3
For priestly vocations

Reading

Hebrews 5:1-10

Christ is called by God 'priest in the order of Melchizedek'.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Every high priest has been taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; and so he can sympathise with those who are ignorant or uncertain because he too lives in the limitations of weakness. That is why he has to make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honour on himself, but each one is called by God, as Aaron was. Nor did Christ give himself the glory of becoming high priest, but he had it from the one who said to him: You are my son, today I have become your father, and in another text: You are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and for ever. During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALMS

P-1

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 15(16):1-2a+5, 7-8, 11 *R* cf. v.5

R You are my inheritance, O Lord.

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.'
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.

R You are my inheritance, O Lord.

2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

R You are my inheritance, O Lord.

3. You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

R You are my inheritance, O Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 26(27):1, 4, 5, 8b-9ab, 9cd+11 R̄ v.8

R̄ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek.

1. The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
the Lord is the stronghold of my life;
Before whom shall I shrink?

R̄ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek.

2. There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
To live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple.

R̄ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek.

3. For there he keeps me safe in his tent
in the day of evil.
He hides me in the shelter of his tent,
on a rock he sets me safe.

R̄ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek.

4. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
hide not your face.
Dismiss not your servant in anger;
you have been my help.

R̄ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek.

5. Do not abandon or forsake me,
O God my help!
Instruct me, Lord, in your way;
on an even path lead me.

R̄ It is your face, O Lord, that I seek.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 39(40):2+4ab, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 12 R̥ vv.8-9

R̥ Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry.
He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.

R̥ Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

2. You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,
but an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.
Instead, here am I.

R̥ Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

3. In the scroll of the book it stands written
that I should do your will.
My God, I delight in your law
in the depth of my heart.

R̥ Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

4. Your justice I have proclaimed
in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed;
you know it, O Lord.

R̥ Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

5. O Lord, you will not withhold
your compassion from me.
Your merciful love and your truth
will always guard me.

R̥ Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 83(84):3-4, 6+8a, 11 R̄ v.5

R̄ They are happy, who dwell in your house, O Lord.

1. My soul is longing and yearning,
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my soul ring out their joy
to God, the living God.

R̄ They are happy, who dwell in your house, O Lord.

2. The sparrow herself finds a home
and the swallow a nest for her brood;
she lays her young by your altars,
Lord of host, my king and my God.

R̄ They are happy, who dwell in your house, O Lord.

3. They are happy, whose strength is in you,
in whose hearts are the roads to Zion.
They walk with ever growing strength.

R̄ They are happy, who dwell in your house, O Lord.

4. One day within your courts
is better than a thousand elsewhere.
The threshold of the house of God
I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked.

R̄ They are happy, who dwell in your house, O Lord.

ALLELUIA VERSES AND VERSES BEFORE THE GOSPEL

During the season of Lent, the *Alleluia* sung before and after the Verse before the Gospel is replaced by an acclamation such as:

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus!

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

V-1

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. John 15:16

Alleluia! Alleluia!
I chose you from the world
to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last.
Alleluia!

V-2

Gospel Acclamation

Philippians 3:8-9

Alleluia! Alleluia!
I have accepted the loss of everything
and I look on everything as so much rubbish
if only I can have Christ
and be given a place in him.
Alleluia!

V-3

Gospel Acclamation

John 15:5

Alleluia! Alleluia!
I am the vine,
you are the branches.
Whoever remains in me, with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty, says the Lord.
Alleluia!

Gospel Acclamation

Mark 1:17

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Follow me, says the Lord,
and I will make you into fishers of men.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL READINGS

G-1

Gospel

Matthew 9:35-37

The harvest is rich but the labourers are few.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness.

And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel

Mark 10:17-27

Go and sell everything you own, then come, follow me.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days'. Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them, 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever. 'In that case,' they said to one another, 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For men,' he said, 'it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel

Mark 10:28-30

*You will be repaid a hundred times over – not without persecutions –
now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life.*

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

‘What about us?’ Peter asked Jesus. ‘We have left everything and followed you.’ Jesus said, ‘I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not be repaid a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land - not without persecutions - now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

G-4
For vocations to Holy Orders

Gospel

Luke 5:1-11
From now on it is men you catch.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon’s – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, ‘Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.’ ‘Master,’ Simon replied, ‘we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.’ And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, ‘Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.’ For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon’s partners. But Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.’ Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel

Luke 9:57-62

Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

As Jesus and his disciples travelled along they met a man on the road, who said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus answered, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'

Another to whom he said, 'Follow me,' replied, 'Let me go and bury my father first.' But he answered, 'Leave the dead to bury their dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God.'

Another said, 'I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say good-bye to my people at home.' Jesus said to him, 'Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel

Luke 14:25-33

Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. ‘If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

‘And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, “Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish.” Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel

John 1:35-51
Follow me.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,' – which means 'Teacher' – 'where do you live?' 'Come and see,' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' - meaning Rock.

The next day, after Jesus had decided to leave for Galilee, he met Philip and said, 'Follow me.' Philip came from the same town, Bethsaida, as Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, the one about whom the prophets wrote: he is Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth.' 'From Nazareth?' said Nathanael 'Can anything good come from that place?' 'Come and see' replied Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There is an Israelite who deserves the name, incapable of deceit.' 'How do you know me?' said Nathanael. 'Before Philip came to call you,' said Jesus 'I saw you under the fig tree.' 'Nathanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel.' Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.' And then he added 'I tell you most solemnly, you will see heaven laid open and, above the Son of Man, the angels of God ascending and descending.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel

John 15:9-17

You did not choose me, no, I chose you.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you.
Remain in my love.
If you keep my commandments
you will remain in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and remain in his love.
I have told you this
so that my own joy may be in you
and your joy be complete.
This is my commandment:
love one another,
as I have loved you.
A man can have no greater love
than to lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends,
if you do what I command you.
I shall not call you servants any more,
because a servant does not know
his master's business;
I call you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me,
no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you
to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last;
and then the Father will give you
anything you ask him in my name.
What I command you
is to love one another.’

The Gospel of the Lord.