

Readings + 4th Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 11 B + June 16, 2024

Prayer of the Day

O God, you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading Ezekiel 17:22-24

²² Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.

I will break off a tender shoot
from the topmost of its young twigs;
I myself will transplant it
on a high and lofty mountain.

²³ On the mountain height of Israel

I will transplant it,
and it will produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;
in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴ All the trees of the field shall know
that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

Psalmody Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15

It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, O Most High;

to herald your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night;

on the psaltery, and on the lyre, and to the melody of the harp.

For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD; and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God;

they shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be green and succulent;

that they may show how upright the LORD is, my rock, in whom there is no injustice.

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:6-17

Paul writes: ⁶ So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to the Lord. ¹⁰ For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive due recompense for actions done in the body, whether good or evil.

[¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.] ¹⁴ For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for the one who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!

Holy Gospel Mark 4:26-34

Only Mark has the first parable, of the seed growing secretly (vv. 26-29). Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell the parable of the mustard seed similarly, and only Mark and Matthew put on the tag verses (33-34) explaining Jesus' use of parables.

²⁶ Jesus said, "The reign of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, the sower does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.

²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once the sower

goes in with a sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰ Jesus also said, "With what can we compare the reign of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

³³ With many such parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.