

Readings for August 17

Prayer of the Day

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

First Reading: Jeremiah 23:23-29

*God’s word is like fire, like a hammer that breaks rocks*

<sup>23</sup> Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off? <sup>24</sup> Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord. <sup>25</sup> I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, “I have dreamed! I have dreamed!” <sup>26</sup> How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? <sup>27</sup> They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. <sup>28</sup> Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the Lord. <sup>29</sup> Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

Psalm: Psalm 82

*Arise, O God, and rule the earth. (Ps. 82:8)*

- <sup>1</sup> God stands to charge  
the divine council assembled,  
giving judgment in the midst  
of the gods:
- <sup>2</sup> **“How long will you judge unjustly,  
and show favor to the wicked?**
- <sup>3</sup> Save the weak and the orphan;  
defend the humble and needy;
- <sup>4</sup> **rescue the weak and the poor;  
deliver them from the power  
of the wicked.**
- <sup>5</sup> They do not know,  
neither do they understand;  
they wander about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are  
shaken.
- <sup>6</sup> **Now I say to you, ‘You are gods,  
and all of you children of the Most  
High;  
nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,  
and fall like any prince.’ ”**
- <sup>8</sup> **Arise, O God, and rule the earth,  
for you shall take all nations  
for your own.**

Second Reading: Hebrews 11:29—12:2

<sup>29</sup> By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace. <sup>32</sup> And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented <sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground. <sup>39</sup> Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect. <sup>12:1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gospel: Luke 12:49-56

*Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God’s call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>49</sup> “I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! <sup>50</sup> I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup> Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! <sup>52</sup> From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup> they will be divided:  
father against son  
and son against father,  
mother against daughter  
and daughter against mother,  
mother-in-law against her  
daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against  
mother-in-law.”

<sup>54</sup> He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens. <sup>55</sup> And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. <sup>56</sup> You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

Semicontinuous Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

*The prophet sings about a beautiful vineyard, carefully planted and cultivated, that nevertheless yields wild grapes. The owner therefore determines to destroy the vineyard, which represents the sinful people of Israel and Judah.*

<sup>1</sup> I will sing for my beloved  
my love song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it and cleared it of stones  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded rotten grapes.

<sup>3</sup> And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and people of Judah,  
judge between me  
and my vineyard.  
<sup>4</sup> What more was there to do for my  
vineyard that I have not done in it?  
When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield rotten grapes?

<sup>5</sup> And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.  
<sup>6</sup> I will make it a wasteland;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briers  
and thorns;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.

<sup>7</sup> For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah  
are his cherished garden;  
he expected justice  
but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness  
but heard a cry!

Semicontinuous Psalm: Ps 80:1-2, 8-19

*Look down from heaven, O God; behold and tend this vine. (80:14, 15)*

<sup>1</sup> Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
leading Joseph like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned  
upon the cherubim.

<sup>2</sup> **In the presence of Ephraim,  
Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength  
and come to help us.**

<sup>8</sup> You have brought a vine out of Egypt;  
you cast out the nations  
and planted it.

<sup>9</sup> **You cleared the ground for it;  
it took root and filled the land.**

<sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered  
by its shadow  
and the towering cedar trees  
by its boughs.

<sup>11</sup> **You stretched out its tendrils  
to the sea  
and its branches  
to the river.**

<sup>12</sup> Why have you broken down its wall,  
so that all who pass by  
pluck off its grapes?

<sup>13</sup> **The wild boar of the forest  
has ravaged it,  
and the beasts of the field  
have grazed upon it.**

<sup>14</sup> Turn now, O God of hosts,  
look down from heaven;

<sup>15</sup> **behold and tend this vine;  
preserve what your right hand  
has planted.**

<sup>16</sup> They burn it with fire  
like rubbish;  
at the rebuke of your countenance  
let them perish.

<sup>17</sup> **Let your hand be upon the one  
at your right hand,  
the one you have made so strong  
for yourself.**

<sup>18</sup> And so will we never turn away  
from you;  
give us life,  
that we may call upon your name.

<sup>19</sup> **Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us,  
and we shall be saved.**