



**Archdiocese of St. Louis
Office of Sacred Worship
Lectio Divina**

The Common of Martyrs - Reading from the Old Testament

Lectionary: 713: 2 Chr 24:18-22/2 Mc 6:18, 21,24-31/2 Mc 7:1-2, 9-14/2 Mc 7:1, 20-23, 27b-29/Wis 3:1-9/Sir 51:1-8

Read the following passage four times.

- The first reading, simply read the scripture and pause for a minute.
Listen to the passage with the ear of the heart. Don't get distracted by intellectual types of questions about the passage. Just listen to what the passage is saying to you, right now.
- The second reading, look for a key word or phrase that draws your attention.
Notice if any phrase, sentence or word stands out and gently begin to repeat it to yourself, allowing it to touch you deeply. No elaboration. In a group setting, you can share that word/phrase or simply pass.
- The third reading, pause for 2-3 minutes reflecting on "*Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?*"
Notice what thoughts, feelings, and reflections arise within you. Let the words resound in your heart. What might God be asking of you through the scripture? In a group setting, you can share your reflection or simply pass.
- The fourth reading, pause for 2-3 minutes reflecting on "*I believe that God wants me to today/this week.*"
Notice any prayerful response that arises within you, for example a small prayer of gratitude or praise. In a group setting, you can share your reflection or simply pass.

First Reading

2 Chr 24:18-22

They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and began to serve the asherahs and the idols; and because of this crime of theirs, wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem. Although prophets were sent to them to turn them back to the LORD and to warn them, the people would not listen. Then the spirit of God clothed Zechariah, son of Jehoiada the priest. He took his stand above the people and said to them: "Thus says God, Why are you transgressing the LORD's commands, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have abandoned the LORD, he has abandoned you." But they conspired against him, and at the king's command they stoned him in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus King Joash was unmindful of the devotion shown him by Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, and killed the son. As he was dying, he said, "May the LORD see and avenge."



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First Reading

2 Mc 6:18, 21, 24-31

Eleazar, one of the foremost scribes, a man advanced in age and of noble appearance, was being forced to open his mouth to eat pork.

Those in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside, because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring his own provisions that he could legitimately eat, and only to pretend to eat the sacrificial meat prescribed by the king.

He told them:

"At our age it would be unbecoming to make such a pretense; many of the young would think the ninety-year-old Eleazar had gone over to an alien religion. If I dissemble to gain a brief moment of life, they would be led astray by me, while I would bring defilement and dishonor on my old age. Even if, for the time being, I avoid human punishment, I shall never, whether alive or dead, escape the hand of the Almighty. Therefore, by bravely giving up life now, I will prove myself worthy of my old age, and I will leave to the young a noble example of how to die willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws."

He spoke thus, and went immediately to the instrument of torture. Those who shortly before had been kindly disposed, now became hostile toward him because what he had said seemed to them utter madness. When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned, saying: "The Lord in his holy knowledge knows full well that, although I could have escaped death, I am not only enduring terrible pain in my body from this scourging, but also suffering it with joy in my soul because of my devotion to him." This is how he died, leaving in his death a model of nobility and an unforgettable example of virtue not only for the young but for the whole nation.



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First Reading

2 Mc 7:1-2, 9-14

It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law. One of the brothers, speaking for the others, said: "What do you expect to learn by questioning us? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors."

With his last breath he said: "You accursed fiend, you are depriving us of this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to live again forever, because we are dying for his laws." After him the third suffered their cruel sport. He put forth his tongue at once when told to do so, and bravely stretched out his hands, as he spoke these noble words: "It was from Heaven that I received these; for the sake of his laws I disregard them; from him I hope to receive them again." Even the king and his attendants marveled at the young man's spirit, because he regarded his sufferings as nothing. After he had died, they tortured and maltreated the fourth brother in the same way. When he was near death, he said, "It is my choice to die at the hands of mortals with the hope that God will restore me to life; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life."



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First Reading

2 Mc 7:1, 20-23, 27b-29

It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law.

Most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance was the mother who, seeing her seven sons perish in a single day, bore it courageously because of her hope in the Lord. Filled with a noble spirit that stirred her womanly reason with manly emotion, she exhorted each of them in the language of their ancestors with these words: "I do not know how you came to be in my womb; it was not I who gave you breath and life, nor was it I who arranged the elements you are made of. Therefore, since it is the Creator of the universe who shaped the beginning of humankind and brought about the origin of everything, he, in his mercy, will give you back both breath and life, because you now disregard yourselves for the sake of his law."

She leaned over close to him and, in derision of the cruel tyrant, said in their native language: "Son, have pity on me, who carried you in my womb for nine months, nursed you for three years, brought you up, educated and supported you to your present age. I beg you, child, to look at the heavens and the earth and see all that is in them; then you will know that God did not make them out of existing things. In the same way humankind came into existence. Do not be afraid of this executioner, but be worthy of your brothers and accept death, so that in the time of mercy I may receive you again with your brothers."



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First Reading

Wis 3:1-9

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if to others, indeed, they seem punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. In the time of their judgment they shall shine and dart about as sparks through stubble; They shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the LORD shall be their King forever. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with the elect.



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First Reading

Sir 51:1-8

I give you thanks, LORD and King, I praise you, God my savior! I declare your name, refuge of my life, because you have ransomed my life from death; You held back my body from the pit, and delivered my foot from the power of Sheol. You have preserved me from the scourge of the slanderous tongue, and from the lips of those who went over to falsehood. You were with me against those who rise up against me; You have rescued me according to your abundant mercy. From the snare of those who look for my downfall, and from the power of those who seek my life. From many dangers you have saved me, from flames that beset me on every side, From the midst of fire till there was not a whiff of it, from the deep belly of Sheol, From deceiving lips and painters of lies, from the arrows of a treacherous tongue. I was at the point of death, my life was nearing the depths of Sheol; I turned every way, but there was no one to help; I looked for support but there was none. Then I remembered the mercies of the LORD, his acts of kindness through ages past; For he saves those who take refuge in him, and rescues them from every evil.