



First Readings for Funeral Masses

A selection of Readings from the Old Testament.



Old Testament 1

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes. 3: 2-8

There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven.

A time for giving birth, a time for dying.

A time for planting, a time for uprooting.

A time for building, a time for tearing down.

A time for sorrow, a time for joy.

A time for mourning, a time for dancing.

A time for embracing, a time to refrain from embracing.

A time for finding, a time for losing.

A time for saving, a time for throwing away.

A time for mending, a time for tearing.

A time for keeping silent, a time for speaking.

A time for conflict, a time for peace.

What does a person gain from the efforts that they make?

I contemplate the task that God gives humankind to labour at.

All that one does is apt for its time; but though God has

permitted us to consider time in its wholeness,

We cannot comprehend the work of God from beginning to end.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 2

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom. 3: 1 – 9

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
their departure was thought to be an affliction
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope was full of immortality,
slight was their affliction, great will their blessing be.
Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,
because God has tested them and found them worthy of himself;
like gold in the furnace he tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

In the time of their visitation they will shine forth
and will run like sparks through stubble.

They will govern nations and rule over peoples
and the Lord will reign over them for ever.

Those who trust in the Lord will understand truth,
and the faithful will abide with him in love,
because grace and mercy are upon his elect.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 3

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom. 4: 7 – 15

The virtuous person, though they die before their time, will find rest.
Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years the true measure of life;
understanding, this is true grey hairs,
untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
They have sought to please God, so God has loved them;
as they were living among sinners, they have been taken up.
They have been carried off so that evil may not warp their understanding
or treachery seduce their soul;
for the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade,
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart.
Coming to perfection in so short a while, they achieved long life;
their soul being pleasing to the Lord,
he has taken them quickly from the wickedness around them.
Yet people look on, uncomprehending;
it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord,
and protection, his holy ones.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 4

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. 25: 6 – 9

On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples
a banquet of rich food.
On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
he will destroy death for ever.
The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek;
he will take away his people's shame everywhere on earth,
for the Lord has said so.
That day, it will be said:
'See, this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation;
the Lord is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice that he has saved us.'

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 5

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. 35: 3 – 6. 10

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart:
'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'
Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame will leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.
And the ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 6

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. 41: 10, 44:22, 49:15 – 16
Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you and uphold you with my right hand of justice.
For I am the Lord your God who grasps your right hand;
it is I who say to you “Fear not, I will help you”.
I have brushed away your offences like a cloud, your sins like a mist;
Return to me, for I have redeemed you.
Can a mother forget her infant
or be without tenderness for the child within her womb?
Even should she forget, I will never forget you.
See, upon the palm of my hand I have written your name.
Yes, in joy you shall depart, in peace you shall be brought back.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 7

A Reading from the Book of Job. 19: 1. 23 – 27
Job said:
'Oh that my words were written down!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
Oh that with an iron pen and with lead
they were engraved in the rock for ever!
For this I know, that my Redeemer lives and that,
at the last, he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 8

A Reading from the book of Sirach 44:1, 8, 11 -15
Let us praise illustrious men and women,
our ancestors in their successive generations.
Some of them left a name behind them, so that their praises are still sung:
others have left no memory.
In their descendants they find a rich inheritance, their posterity.
Their descendants stand by the commandments
and, thanks to them, so do their children's children.
Their offspring will last for ever, their glory will not fade.
Their bodies have been buried in peace,
and their name lives on for all generations.
The peoples will proclaim their wisdom,
the assembly will celebrate their praises.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 9

A reading from the Book of Sirach

6:14-17

Faithful friends are a sure shelter:
whoever finds one has found a treasure.
True friends are beyond price; no amount can balance their worth.
Faithful friends are a life -saving remedy
and those who trust in God will find them.
Those who trust in the Lord direct their friendships aright,
and as they are, so shall their friends be also.

The Word of the Lord.

Old Testament 10

A reading from the Book of Psalms

Psalms 139

O Lord, you search me and you know me,
you know my resting and my rising,
you discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,
all my ways lie open to you.
O where can I go from your spirit,
or where can I flee from your face?
If I climb the heavens, you are there.
If I lie in the grave, you are there.
even there your hand would lead me,
your right hand would hold me fast.
For it was you who created my being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation.
O search me, God, and know my heart.
O test me and know my thoughts.
See that I follow not the wrong path
and lead me in the path of life eternal.

The Word of the Lord