

FIRST READING – FRANCIS OF ASSISI

A reading from the book of Sirach.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Sirach 50:1, 3-4, 6-7

Behold him,
who in his life repaired the house of God,
and in his time fortified the temple.

In his days he dug a water cistern,
a reservoir like the sea in circumference.
He considered how to save his people from ruin,
and fortified the city against siege.

He is like the morning star among the clouds
or like a full moon at the festival season,
or like the sun shining on the temple of the Most High,
or like the rainbow gleaming in splendid clouds.



Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – FRANCIS OF ASSISI

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians.

Galatians 6:14-18

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters,
May I never boast of anything
except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by which the world has been crucified to me,
and I to the world.
For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything;
but a new creation is everything!
As for those who will follow this rule —
peace be upon them, and mercy,
and upon the Israel of God.
From now on,
let no one make trouble for me;
for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,
brothers and sisters.
Amen.



Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew. *Glory to you, O Lord*

Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus said,
“I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
because you have hidden these things
from the wise and the intelligent
and have revealed them to infants;
yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.
All things have been handed over to me by my Father;
and no one knows the Son except the Father,
and no one knows the Father except the Son
and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
Come to me,
all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS ON READING II AND THE GOSPEL

Reading II: Galatians 6:14-18

It was Paul's custom to dictate his letters to an amanuensis, and then to take the pen himself and add a few concluding words. In these words he summarized and drove home the message of the whole letter.

The purpose of Galatians is to dissuade his Gentile readers from lapsing into syncretism. They are probably not Judaizing in the strict sense, for Paul has to remind them that anyone who gets circumcised is obligated to keep the whole law, which would have been self-evident to a genuine Judaizer.

Paul "glories," not in circumcision as his opponents do, but in the cross. What matters for him is that the believers have been re-created into a new existence, and in this new existence it is not the marks of circumcision but the marks of his apostolic sufferings, in which Christ crucified is manifested, that are important.

Finally, the Apostle gives his readers his blessing in a style that suggests (as the conclusion of other letters, especially 1 Corinthians, suggest even more clearly) that his letters were written to lead into the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Gospel: Matthew 11:25-30

This section of the Sermon on the Mount deals with the disciples' attitude toward material possessions. It is absent from Luke's Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6) but is found later in Lk 12:22-31, and therefore comes from Q. Matthew is thought to have preserved the wording of Q better, though Luke probably has it in its original sequence in Q.

Verse 24 serves as the title to the whole section. God demands our ultimate allegiance; there can be no other ultimate allegiance, for then God would not be the ultimate.

Anxiety arises from making something other than God our ultimate concern. The ensuing passage instances concern for food, drink, and clothes—the most elementary of human needs. The argument is from the lesser to the greater: "If the birds, the grass, the flowers ... will he not much more ... you?"

Behind the argument rests faith in God as Creator. This faith is not just a matter of subscribing to the doctrine that the universe was originally created by God some thousands or billions of years ago; rather, it is a matter of present, immediate experience. We receive the world from God at this moment and at every moment of our lives as his gift.

Anxiety is the result of listening to the serpent's temptation of Adam and Eve: "you will be like God." It is attempting to be our own gods, to usurp God's function as Creator.