

**Readings for the 1st Sunday in Advent, December 3, 2017**

**FIRST READING**

**A Reading from the Book of Lamentations 5:1-5, 8-15**

O Holy One, remember what has happened to us!  
Pay attention and see our disgrace.  
Our heritage has been handed over to strangers,  
    our homes, to those who do not know us.  
We've become orphans, without fathers.  
Our mothers are like widows.  
We pay money to drink our own water!  
Our own wood comes at a price.  
With a yoke on our necks, we are driven.  
We are worn out, but allowed no rest...  
Servants rule over us,  
    with no one to tear us from their hands.  
We risk our lives just to get bread,  
    exposed to the desert heat.  
Our skin heats up like an oven,  
    from the searing blasts of famine.  
Women are raped in Zion,  
    young women in the cities of Judah.  
Princes have been hanged,  
    elders shown no respect.  
Young men carry millstones.  
Boys stagger under loads of wood.  
The elders have abandoned the gate,  
    the young their music.  
The joy of our hearts has ceased.  
Dancing has turned into mourning.

The Word of a poet left in Judah during the Exile.  
***Thanks be to God.***

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### **ALTERNATE FIRST READING**

#### **A Reading from the Revelation to John 12:1-6**

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant, and in labor with the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky: a great, red dragon. With his tail, he swept down a third of the stars of the cosmos, hurling them to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, waiting to devour the child as soon as it was born. But when she gave birth, the child was swept up to God. The woman fled to the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she would receive care for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The Word of a visionary known as John.

***Thanks be to God.***

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**PSALM**

*Psalm 137:7, 1-5 + stanzas as rendered by Nan Merrill*

The psalm response is: *Hide not from Love, O people.*

***R: Hide not from Love, O people.***

Remember, O God...that day at Jerusalem.

They said: "Level it, level it down to its foundations!"...

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat weeping  
when we remembered Zion.

***R: Hide not from Love, O people.***

On the poplars in its midst we hung up our harps,  
for there our captors asked us for the words of a song.

Our tormentors, for their pleasure demanded:  
"Sing for us a song of Zion!"

***R: Hide not from Love, O people.***

But how could we sing  
a song of for You, O God,  
in a foreign land?  
If we forget you, Jerusalem,  
may our right hands forget us.

***R: Hide not from Love, O people.***

Hide not from Love, O people.  
Sink not into the sea of despair nor the mire of hatred...  
Plunge into the Ocean of Love where heart meets Heart,  
where sorrows are comforted and wounds are mended.  
There, melodies of sadness mingle with...songs of joy.  
Past fears dissolve in deep harmonic tones,  
the future -- pure mystery.

***R: Hide not from Love, O people.***

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### **SECOND READING**

#### **A Reading from the Second Letter of Peter 3:8-15a**

Beloved, you must not ignore this one thing: that with God, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. God is not slow in carrying out promises, as some think of slowness. Rather God is patient, wanting no one to be lost, and all to come to repentance. But the day of God will come like a thief, and then the cosmos will pass away with an enormous roar. The elements will catch fire and melt away. The earth, and all that is in it, will dissolve in flames.

Consider, then, what sort of people we ought to be. We must lead lives of holiness and dedication, as we anticipate and hasten the coming of the day of God, when the cosmos will go up in flames and the elements melt in the heat. Relying on God's promise, we wait for a new cosmos and a new earth where justice will be at home. So, beloved, while we are waiting, strive to live and be in peace, that God may find us unblemished and above reproach. And consider God's patience an opportunity to become healed and whole.

The Word of an early church leader.

***Thanks be to God.***

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### GOSPEL

#### **A Reading from the Gospel attributed to Mark**

13:1a, 2, 3b-5a, 7-8, 14-27, 33-37

As Jesus was making his way out of the Temple area, Jesus said to the disciples, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be one stone left upon another. All will be thrown down.

Later, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Jesus privately, “Tell us when this will happen and what sign there will be when all these things are about to come to an end?...

Jesus replied: When you hear of wars and threats of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things happen; but it will not yet be the end. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes and fires...and there will be famines. These are the beginnings of the labor pains.

When you see the desolating sacrilege set up (in the Temple) where it ought not be..., then those in Judea must flee to the hills. The one on the housetop must not go down to enter the house or fetch anything out. The one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Alas for those who are pregnant and those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not happen in winter. For in those days, there will be suffering such as has not been from the beginning when God created until now, and never will be. And if God had not cut short those days, no human being would survive; but God has cut short those days for the sake of those whom God chose.

If anyone says to you at that time, “Look! Here is the Messiah!” or “Look, there’s the one who will save us!”, do not believe it; for false leaders and false prophets will appear and produce signs and wonders to mislead the chosen if possible. Therefore, be watchful. Remember, I have warned you of everything...

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In those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened. The moon will not give its light. The fiery stars will fall from the heavens and all the powers in the cosmos will be shaken. And then they will see the Chosen One coming in the clouds with great power and splendor. The Chosen One will send out winged messengers, and gather the chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the cosmos.

In truth I tell you, before this generation passes away, all these things will have taken place. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

But as for that day or hour, no one knows, neither the cosmic messengers of God, nor the Chosen One. No one knows but God. So, be on your guard. Keep watch. For you do not know when the time will come. It's like someone going on a journey, leaving home, putting others in charge, each with their own work, and ordering the guard to stand watch. Stay awake! For you do not know when the owner will come home, in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or at dawn. You don't want the owner to come unexpectedly and find you asleep. What I say to you, I say to all: Keep watch!"

The Gospel of Our God.

***Praise to you, Jesus the Christ.***