

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

O God, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee in all things and above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING:

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they

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would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him-- though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Psalm 148

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| 1 | Hallelujah!
Praise the LORD from the heavens; * praise him in the heights. | 6 | He made them stand fast for ever and ever; * he gave them a law which shall not pass away. |
| 2 | Praise him, all you angels of his; * praise him, all his host. | 7 | Praise the LORD from the earth, * you sea-monsters and all deeps; |
| 3 | Praise him, sun and moon; * praise him, all you shining stars. | 8 | Fire and hail, snow and fog, * tempestuous wind, doing his will; |
| 4 | Praise him, heaven of heavens, * and you waters above the heavens. | 9 | Mountains and all hills, * fruit trees and all cedars; |
| 5 | Let them praise the Name of the LORD; * for he commanded, and they were created. | 10 | Wild beasts and all cattle, * creeping things and winged birds; |

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, * princes and all rulers of the world;

12 Young men and maidens, * old and young together.

13 Let them praise the Name of the LORD, * for his Name only is exalted, his splendor is over earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up strength for his people and praise for all his loyal servants, * the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Hallelujah!

SECOND READING:

1 Peter 3:8-18

Now all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called -- that you might inherit a blessing. For "Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing

what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

GOSPEL:

John 15:1-8

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the

branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

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