**FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 30: 15-20

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy

“Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. If you obey the commands of the Lord your God, which I give you today, if you love him, obey him, and keep all his laws, then you will prosper and become a nation of many people. The Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy. But if you disobey and refuse to listen, and are led away to worship other gods, you will be destroyed—I warn you here and now. You will not live long in that land across the Jordan that you are about to occupy. I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse, and I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life. Love the Lord your God, obey him and be faithful to him, and then you and your descendants will live long in the land that he promised to give your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

**Psalm 1**

**R** **Lord, my delight is in your law**

Happy are those who reject the advice of evil people, who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God. Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the Lord, and they study it day and night. **R**

They are like trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do. But evil people are not like this at all; they are like straw that the wind blows away. **R**

Sinners will be condemned by God and kept apart from God's own people. The righteous are guided and protected by the Lord, but the evil are on the way to their doom. **R**

**SECOND READING** Philemon 1-21

A reading from the letter of Paul to Philemon

From Paul, a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy—To our friend and fellow worker Philemon, and the church that meets in your house, and our sister Apphia, and our fellow soldier Archippus: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Brother Philemon, every time I pray, I mention you and give thanks to my God. For I hear of your love for all of God's people and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. My prayer is that our fellowship with you as believers will bring about a deeper understanding of every blessing which we have in our life in union with Christ. Your love, dear brother, has brought me great joy and much encouragement! You have cheered the hearts of all of God's people. For this reason I could be bold enough, as your brother in Christ, to order you to do what should be done. But because I love you, I make a request instead. I do this even though I am Paul, the ambassador of Christ Jesus, and at present also a prisoner for his sake. So I make a request to you on behalf of Onesimus, who is my own son in Christ; for while in prison I have become his spiritual father. At one time he was of no use to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me. I am sending him back to you now, and with him goes my heart. I would like to keep him here with me, while I am in prison for the gospel's sake, so that he could help me in your place. However, I do not want to force you to help me; rather, I would like for you to do it of your own free will. So I will not do anything unless you agree. It may be that Onesimus was away from you for a short time so that you might have him back for all time. And now he is not just a slave, but much more than a slave: he is a dear brother in Christ. How much he means to me! And how much more he will mean to you, both as a slave and as a brother in the Lord! So, if you think of me as your partner, welcome him back just as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to my account. Here, I will write this with my own hand: I, Paul, will pay you back (I should not have to remind you, of course, that you owe your very self to me.) So, my brother, please do me this favour for the Lord's sake; as a brother in Christ, cheer me up! I am sure, as I write this, that you will do what I ask—in fact I know that you will do even more. At the same time, get a room ready for me, because I hope that God will answer the prayers of all of you and give me back to you.

**GOSPEL** Luke 14: 25-33

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**Glory to you O Lord.**

Once when large crowds of people were going along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, “Those who come to me cannot be my disciples unless they love me more than they love father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and themselves as well. Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciples. If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job. If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you. ‘You began to build but can't finish the job!’ they will say. If a king goes out with ten thousand men to fight another king who comes against him with twenty thousand men, he will sit down first and decide if he is strong enough to face that other king. If he isn't, he will send messengers to meet the other king to ask for terms of peace while he is still a long way off. In the same way,” concluded Jesus, “none of you can be my disciple unless you give up everything you have.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**