

# **Readings for Sunday, January 28, 2024**

## **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

### **First Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

*Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.*

<sup>15</sup>The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. <sup>16</sup>This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." <sup>17</sup>Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. <sup>18</sup>I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. <sup>19</sup>Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. <sup>20</sup>But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

## **Psalm 68:1-10, 32-25**

<sup>1</sup>Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered;  
let those who hate him flee before him.

<sup>2</sup>As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;  
as wax melts before the fire,  
let the wicked perish before God.

<sup>3</sup>But let the righteous be joyful;  
let them exult before God;  
let them be jubilant with joy.

<sup>4</sup>Sing to God, sing praises to his name;  
lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds —  
his name is the LORD —  
be exultant before him.

<sup>5</sup>Father of orphans and protector of widows  
is God in his holy habitation.

<sup>6</sup>God gives the desolate a home to live in;  
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,  
but the rebellious live in a parched land.

<sup>7</sup>O God, when you went out before your people,  
when you marched through the wilderness, Selah  
<sup>8</sup>the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain  
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,  
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

<sup>9</sup>Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad;  
you restored your heritage when it languished;

<sup>10</sup>your flock found a dwelling in it;  
in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

<sup>32</sup>Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;  
sing praises to the LORD, Selah

<sup>33</sup>O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens;  
listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.

<sup>34</sup>Ascribe power to God,  
whose majesty is over Israel;  
and whose power is in the skies.

<sup>35</sup>Awesome is God in his sanctuary,  
the God of Israel;  
he gives power and strength to his people.  
Blessed be God!

## Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

*Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.*

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; <sup>3</sup>but anyone who loves God is known by God.

<sup>4</sup>Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup>Indeed, even though there may be so-called deities in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many deities and many lords—<sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

<sup>7</sup>It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. <sup>8</sup>“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup>So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. <sup>12</sup>But when you thus sin against brothers and sisters in your community, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

## **Gospel: Mark 1:21-28**

*Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.*

<sup>21</sup>Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup>They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup>and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked the spirit, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of the man. <sup>27</sup>They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." <sup>28</sup>At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.