

Wednesday of the 6th Week

At the 6th Hour

Prokimenon, Tone 4 (Psalm 112): Praise the Lord, O ye servants,* praise ye the name of the Lord.

Verse: Blesséd be the name of the Lord from henceforth and for evermore.

The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah (58:1-11)

Yhus saith the Lord: "Cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice as with a trumpet, and declare to My people their sins, and to the house of Jacob their iniquities. They seek Me day by day, and desire to know My ways, as a people that had done righteousness, and had not forsaken the judgement of their God: they now ask of Me righteous judgement, and desire to draw nigh to God, saying, 'Why have we fasted, and Thou regardest not? why have we afflicted our souls, and Thou didst not know it?' Nay, in the days of your fasts ye find your pleasures, and all them that are under your power ye wound. If ye fast for quarrels and strifes, and smite the lowly with your fists, wherefore do ye fast to Me as ye do this day, so that your voice may be heard in crying? I have not chosen this fast, nor such a day for a man to afflict his soul; neither though thou shouldst bend down thy neck as a ring, and spread under thee sackcloth and ashes, neither thus shall ye call a fast acceptable. I have not chosen such a fast," saith the Lord; "but do thou loose every burden of iniquity, do thou untie the knots of hard bargains, set the bruised free, and cancel every unjust account. Break thy bread to the hungry, and lead the unsheltered poor to thy house: if thou seest one naked, clothe him, and thou shalt not disregard the relations of thine own seed. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily spring forth: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall compass thee. Then shalt thou cry, and God shall hearken to thee; while thou art yet speaking He will say, 'Behold, I am here.' If thou remove from thee the band, and the stretching forth of the hands, and murmuring speech; and if thou give bread to the hungry from thy heart, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light spring up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as noon-day: and thy God shall be with thee continually."

Prokimenon, Tone 6 (Psalm 113): Ye are blessed of the Lord,* Who made heaven and the earth.

Verse: The heaven of heaven belongeth to the Lord, but the earth He gave unto the sons of men.

Wednesday of the 6th Week

1st Reading at Vespers

Prokimenon, Tone 4 (Psalm 114): I will be well-pleasing before the Lord * in the land of the living.

Verse: I am filled with love, for the Lord will hear the voice of my supplication.

The Reading is from Genesis (43:26-31, 45:1-16)

Joseph's brothers brought him the gifts which they had in their hands; and they did him reverence with their face to the ground. And he asked them, "How are ye?" and he said to them, "Is your father, the old man of whom ye spake, well? Doth he yet live?" And they said, "Thy servant our father is well; he is yet alive." And he said, "Blesséd be that man by God;" and they bowed, and did him reverence. And Joseph lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, born of the same mother; and he said, "Is this your younger brother, whom ye spake of bringing to me?" and he said, "God have mercy on thee, my son." And Joseph was troubled, for his bowels yearned over his brother, and he sought to weep; and he went into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face and came out, and refrained himself and said, "Set on bread." [...] And Joseph could not refrain himself when all were standing by him, but said, "Dismiss all from me;" and no one stood near Joseph, when he made himself known to his brethren. And he uttered his voice with weeping; and all the Ægyptians heard, and it was reported to the house of Pharaoh. And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled. And Joseph said to his brethren, "Draw nigh to me;" and they drew nigh; and he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom ye sold into Ægypt. Now then be not grieved and let it not seem hard to you that ye sold me hither, for God sent me before you for life. For this second year there is famine on the earth, and there are yet five years remaining, in which there is to be neither ploughing, nor mowing. For God sent me before you, that there might be left to you a remnant upon the earth even to nourish a great remnant of you. Now then ye did not send me hither, but God; and He hath made me as a father of Pharaoh and lord of all his house, and ruler of all the land of Ægypt. Hasten, therefore, and go up to my father, and say to him, 'These things saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of all the land of Ægypt; come down therefore to me, and tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen of Arabia; and thou shalt be near me, thou and thy sons, and thy sons' sons, thy sheep and thine oxen, and whatsoever things are thine. And I will nourish thee there: for the famine is yet for five years; lest thou be consumed, and thy sons, and all thy possessions.' Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh to you. Report, therefore, to my father all my glory in Ægypt, and all things that ye have seen, and make haste and bring down my father hither." And he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept on him; and Benjamin wept on his neck. And he kissed all his brethren, and wept on them; and after these things his brethren spake to him. And the report was carried into the house of Pharaoh, saying, "Joseph's brethren are come;" and Pharaoh was glad, and his household.

Wednesday of the 6th Week

2nd Reading at Vespers

Prokimenon, Tone 4 (Psalm 115): My vows unto the Lord will I pay * in the presence of all His people.

Verse: I believed, wherefore I spake: I was humbled exceedingly.

The Reading is from Proverbs (21:23-22:4)

He that keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from trouble. A bold and self willed and insolent man is called a pest: and he that remembereth injuries is a transgressor. Desires kill the sluggard; for his hands do not choose to do anything. An ungodly man entertaineth evil desires all the day: but the righteous is unsparingly merciful and compassionate. The sacrifices of the ungodly are abomination to the Lord, for they offer them wickedly. A false witness shall perish; but an obedient man will speak cautiously. An ungodly man impudently withstandeth with his face; but the upright man himself understandeth his ways. There is no wisdom, there is no courage, there is no counsel against the ungodly. A horse is prepared for the day of battle; but help is of the Lord. A fair name is better than much wealth, and good favour is above silver and gold. The rich and the poor meet together; but the Lord made them both. An intelligent man seeing a bad man severely punished is himself instructed, but fools pass by and are punished. The fear of the Lord is the offspring of wisdom, and wealth, and glory, and life.