

## **Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 10**

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the Modern English Version Bible

**The Collect:** Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9**

4 They journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, and the soul of the people was very discouraged because of the way. 5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread or water, and our soul loathes this worthless manna."

6 So the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and many children of Israel died. 7 So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, and He will take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people.

8 The Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and put it on a pole, and it will be, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, will live." 9 Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on a pole, and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent he lived.

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22**

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, \*  
and his mercy endures for ever.

2 Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim \*

that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

3 He gathered them out of the lands; \*

from the east and from the west,

from the north and from the south.

17 Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; \*

they were afflicted because of their sins.

18 They abhorred all manner of food \*

and drew near to death's door.

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, \*

and he delivered them from their distress.

20 He sent forth his word and healed them \*

and saved them from the grave.

21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy \*

and the wonders he does for his children.

22 Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving \*

and tell of his acts with shouts of joy.

### **Epistle: Ephesians 2:1-10**

2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the age of this world and according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among them we all also once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and He raised us up and seated us together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, 9 not of works, so that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them.

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## **Gospel: John 3:14-21**

14 Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but may have eternal life.

16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 He who believes in Him is not condemned. But he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 This is the verdict, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that it may be revealed that his deeds have been done in God.”

## **The Gospel of the Lord**

### **On March 12 we celebrate the life of Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses**

Only two Popes, Leo I and Gregory I, have been given the popular title of “the Great.” Both served in the difficult times of the barbarian invasions of Italy. Gregory also knew the horrors of “plague, pestilence, and famine.” He was born of a patrician family about 540, and became Prefect of Rome in 573. Shortly thereafter he retired to a monastic life in a community which he founded in his ancestral home on the Coelian Hill. Pope Pelagius II made him Ambassador to Constantinople in 579, where he learned much about the larger affairs of the Church. Not long after his return home, Pope Pelagius died of the plague, and in 590, Gregory was elected as his successor.

Gregory’s pontificate was one of strenuous activity. He organized the defense of Rome against the attacks of the Lombards and fed its populace from papal granaries in Sicily. In this, as in other matters, he administered “the patrimony of St. Peter” with energy and efficiency. His ordering of the Church’s liturgy and chant has molded the spirituality of the

Western Church until the present day. Though unoriginal in theology, his writings provided succeeding generations with basic texts, especially the Pastoral Care, a classic on the work of the ministry.

In the midst of all his cares and duties, Gregory prepared and fostered the evangelizing mission to the Anglo-Saxons under Augustine and other monks from his own monastery. The Venerable Bede justly called Gregory “The Apostle of the English.”

Gregory died on March 12, 604, and was buried in St. Peter’s Basilica. His life was a true witness to the title he assumed for his office: “Servant of the servants of God.”

**Let us pray:** Almighty and merciful God, you raised up Gregory of Rome to be a servant of the servants of God, and inspired him to send missionaries to preach the Gospel to the English people: Preserve in your Church the catholic and apostolic faith they taught, that your people, being fruitful in every good work, may receive the crown of glory that never fades away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**