

Reading for the Memorial of St Charles Lwanga and his Companions

June 3rd 2026

First reading

2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12

‘Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.’

Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and Apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 123(122):1-2a. 2b-d. R1a

To you have I lifted up my eyes, O Lord.

To you have I lifted up my eyes,

you who dwell in the heavens.

Behold, like the eyes of slaves

on the hand of their lords.

Like the eyes of a servant

on the hand of her mistress,

so our eyes are on the Lord our God,

till he show us his mercy.

Gospel Acclamation

John 11:25a, 26

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.

Everyone who believes in me shall never die.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 12:18-27

‘He is not God of the dead, but of the living.’

At that time: Sadducees came to Jesus, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, ‘Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.’

Jesus said to them, 'Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

When this life ends, our final judgment will be decided on the level of our loving; the extent of our giving; whether we fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, comforted the sick, visited prisoners etc (Mt 25:40). If love for strangers is so rewarded and remembered, surely the love and self-sacrifice in marriage must be rewarded too.

The Sadducees recognized the authority of only the first five books of the Bible, where they found nothing to suggest a life beyond this earthly life. Knowing that Jesus saw things differently, they set him a kind of riddle to trap him. The scenario they proposed imagines the afterlife as the physical extension of our present, bodily life. But Jesus envisions total newness. "When they rise ... they do not marry; no, they are like the angels in heaven."

The afterlife is not in physical continuity with what we experience here and now; it will be of a different quality entirely, beyond our present power to understand. St Paul foresees the afterlife in terms of *transformation*. "We shall all be changed" (1Cor 15:52). In his testament to Timothy, Paul expresses his trust in that future: "I know the one in whom I have put my trust." Later he speaks of "the crown.., which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day" (4:7). Our love for God and for each other will be perfected in heaven, where we shall be all that God means us to be.