

Reading for Weekday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 26th 2026

First reading

Genesis 17:3-9

‘You shall be the father of a multitude of nations.’

In those days: Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ‘Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.’

And God said to Abraham, ‘As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 105(104):4-5. 6-7. 8-9. R8a

The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Turn to the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face.

Remember the wonders he has done, his marvels and his words of judgement.

O children of Abraham, his servant, O descendants of the Jacob he chose,
he, the Lord, is our God; his judgements are in all the earth.

He remembers his covenant for ever: the promise he ordained for a thousand generations,
the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 95(94):8a, 7c

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

Harden not your hearts today,
but listen to the voice of the Lord.

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

Gospel

John 8:51-59

‘Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.’

At that time: Jesus said to the Jews, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.’ The Jews said to him, ‘Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, “If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.” Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, “He is our God.” But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.’ So the Jews said to him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the Temple.

Short reflection on the reading for today

The promises of Abraham reached forward into the future, even into centuries beyond our present age. In them God anticipates a day when all the nations of the world will find themselves united as though they were blood-relatives, all of them offspring of their one father Abraham. The different races of planet earth cannot establish this bond through common genealogy or blood descent. It can happen only by sharing the same faith and hopes and that means faith in land promised equally to all persons, faith in a way of salvation where no single group travels alone, faith in a common sharing of earth's riches, faith in the one divine dignity of all persons.

The promises to Abraham, when compared to the later exodus out of Egypt under Moses, have a much more universal sweep. They are reflected in the kingdom of David, when Israel opened lively diplomatic relations on an international scale and absorbed many customs and values of their neighbours ... with God's blessing. The promises to Abraham advise us to think big, to respond openly, to seek and dream the divine ideal of one world, one people.

The words of Jesus reach back not only to the age of the great patriarch (1850 B.C.) but even behind that first day in Israel's history to the eternal day before creation. "Before Abraham came to be, I AM." Jesus identifies himself with Yahweh. This name for God, very special and sacred to Israel, means in the Hebrew language "He who is always there."

In St. John's great message, Jesus is more than the fulfilment of Abraham's faith and hope; Jesus was one with God who planned for the day of Abraham before the universe was created, directed world history so that Abraham would be the single hope of all people, led Israel's history forward till this eternal Word became incarnate as Jesus, son of Mary. As the great I AM, Jesus is the Lord of our history. His hopes and plans will remain at least partially unfulfilled until all men and women are one. We are reminded of St. Paul's famous statement: "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with him. There is no longer among you Jew or Greek, slave or free person, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, if you belong to Christ, you are the descendants of Abraham, which means you inherit all that was promised." (Gal 3:27-29)