

Reading for Weekday in the Third Week of Lent

March 11th 2026

First reading

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

‘Keep the statutes and do them.’

Moses spoke to the people: ‘And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

‘See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

‘Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 147: 12-13. 15-16. 19-20. R12a

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord!

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O Sion, praise your God!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates;

he has blessed your children within you.

He sends out his word to the earth,

and swiftly runs his command.

He showers down snow like wool;

he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

He reveals his word to Jacob;

to Israel, his decrees and judgements.

He has not dealt thus with other nations;

he has not taught them his judgements.

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. John 6:63c, 68c

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life;

you have the words of eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Gospel

Matthew 5:17-19

‘Whoever does them and teaches them will be called great.’

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

The Lord is to be dearer to us than anything else we value in life, including life itself. It seems that Jesus himself turned to Deuteronomy in forming his own response to life. It was among his favourite texts for its sense of compassion to neighbour and devotion to God each passing day. Whether in the temptation scene (Matt 4:1-11) or in answering the questions about the first and greatest law (Mk 12:28-34), Jesus used this book. Deuteronomy resonated the core attitude of Jesus; it spoke to him more than any other book in the Bible. It helps us appreciate Jesus’ reflection: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them . . . not the smallest part of a letter of the law shall be done away with until it all comes true.”

We want to grow into the mind of Christ, so that the least wish of God becomes our guide to living. God in Jesus is that close to us. He speaks today, this moment. He appeals to the love of all our heart. Love such as this, stirred within our heart by God’s immediate presence, happily takes away our liberty as we spontaneously seek this clasp of love. Without deciding between a million and one options we have chosen the very best, and all the world will testify: “This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.”