**FIRST READING** Hosea 5:15-6:6

A reading from the book of the prophet Hosea

I will abandon my people until they have suffered enough for their sins and come looking for me. Perhaps in their suffering they will try to find me. The people say, “Let's return to the Lord! He has hurt us, but he will be sure to heal us; he has wounded us, but he will bandage our wounds, won't he? In two or three days he will revive us, and we will live in his presence. Let us try to know the Lord. He will come to us as surely as the day dawns, as surely as the spring rains fall upon the earth.” But the Lord says, “Israel and Judah, what am I going to do with you? Your love for me disappears as quickly as morning mist; it is like dew, that vanishes early in the day. That is why I have sent my prophets to you with my message of judgment and destruction. What I want from you is plain and clear: I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.

**Psalm 50: 7-15**

**R** **The Lord will show his salvation to the upright.**

Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel. I am God, your God. I do not reprimand you because of your sacrifices and the burnt offerings you always bring me. R

And yet I do not need bulls from your farms or goats from your flocks; all the animals in the forest are mine and the cattle on thousands of hills. All the wild birds are mine and all living things in the fields. R

“If I were hungry, I would not ask you for food, for the world and everything in it is mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Let the giving of thanks be your sacrifice to God, and give the Almighty all that you promised. Call to me when trouble comes; I will save you, and you will praise me.” R

**SECOND READING Romans 4: 13 - 25**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

When God promised Abraham and his descendants that the world would belong to him, he did so, not because Abraham obeyed the Law, but because he believed and was accepted as righteous by God. For if what God promises is to be given to those who obey the Law, then faith means nothing, and God's promise is worthless. The Law brings down God's anger; but where there is no law, there is no disobeying of the law. And so the promise was based on faith, in order that the promise should be guaranteed as God's free gift to all of Abraham's descendants—not just to those who obey the Law, but also to those who believe as Abraham did. For Abraham is the spiritual father of us all; as the scripture says, “I have made you father of many nations.” So the promise is good in the sight of God, in whom Abraham believed—the God who brings the dead to life and whose command brings into being what did not exist. Abraham believed and hoped, even when there was no reason for hoping, and so became “the father of many nations.” Just as the scripture says, “Your descendants will be as many as the stars.” He was then almost one hundred years old; but his faith did not weaken when he thought of his body, which was already practically dead, or of the fact that Sarah could not have children. His faith did not leave him, and he did not doubt God's promise; his faith filled him with power, and he gave praise to God. He was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what he had promised. That is why Abraham, through faith, “was accepted as righteous by God.” The words “he was accepted as righteous” were not written for him alone. They were written also for us who are to be accepted as righteous, who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from death. Because of our sins he was given over to die, and he was raised to life in order to put us right with God.

**GOSPEL Matthew 9: 9-13, 18-26**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus left that place, and as he walked along, he saw a tax collector, named Matthew, sitting in his office. He said to him, “Follow me.” Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having a meal in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and other outcasts came and joined Jesus and his disciples at the table. Some Pharisees saw this and asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such people?” Jesus heard them and answered, “People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. Go and find out what is meant by the scripture that says: ‘It is kindness that I want, not animal sacrifices.’ I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts.” While Jesus was saying this, a Jewish official came to him, knelt down before him, and said, “My daughter has just died; but come and place your hands on her, and she will live.” So Jesus got up and followed him, and his disciples went along with him. A woman who had suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, “If only I touch his cloak, I will get well.” Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, “Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well.” At that very moment the woman became well. Then Jesus went into the official's house. When he saw the musicians for the funeral and the people all stirred up, 24 he said, “Get out, everybody! The little girl is not dead—she is only sleeping!” Then they all started making fun of him. But as soon as the people had been put out, Jesus went into the girl's room and took hold of her hand, and she got up. The news about this spread all over that part of the country

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**