

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 146.6c-7, 8-9a, 9b-10 (R.1)

**R. Praise the Lord, O my soul!
or: Alleluia!**

It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free.

The Lord opens the eyes of the blind
and lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous
and watches over the strangers.

The Lord upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

READING II 1 Timothy 6.11-16

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy.

As for you, man of God;
pursue **righteousness, godliness, faith,
love, endurance, gentleness.**
Fight the good fight of the faith,
take **hold** of the eternal life, to which you were called
and for which you **made the good confession**
in the **presence of many witnesses.**
In the **presence of God**, who gives life to all things,
and of **Christ Jesus**,
who in his **testimony** before Pontius Pilate
made the **good confession**,
I **charge** you to keep the **commandment** without spot or blame
until the **manifestation** of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which he will **bring about** at the right time.
He is the **blessed and only Sovereign**,
the King of **kings** and Lord of **lords.**
It is he **alone** who has **immortality**
and **dwells** in unapproachable **light**,
whom **no human being** has ever seen or can see;
to **him** be **honour** and eternal **dominion.** Amen.

An exhortatory reading, filled with encouragement, from St. Paul to his disciple Timothy.

Paul's charge to Timothy is expressed with great earnestness.

The rhythm here slows: "of Christ Jesus."

Pontius = PON-shuhs
Pilate = PI-luht

manifestation = man-ih-fes-TAY-shuhn

unapproachable = uhn-uh-PROH-chuh-b*1
"Unapproachable light": vivid. Imagine describing something no one has seen.

olive oil was used to cleanse the skin. Expensive brands of it were scented.

Especially egregious in the Lord's view is that Israel's leaders are not sickened by or grieving for the fall of "Joseph"—a name for the areas of northern Israel that were settled by Joseph's sons and are now threatened by the Assyrians. Because the leaders always had to be "first," the Lord declares they shall be the "first" to go into exile. Their party is over.

READING II

This reading reminds Timothy, a "man of God," of the noble confession that he made before many witnesses. As a pastor, he is especially bound to model a virtuous life. His mission is to "Fight [agōnizomai] the good fight [agōna] of the faith." The Greek for both the verb and the noun "fight" here conveys the constant struggle to act justly, patiently, gently—in a godly manner—in situations that demand all of one's mental and physical energy. Those who stay in the

fight are laying hold of eternal life, to which all the baptized are called.

GOSPEL

Jesus' parable pairs a stereotypical rich man and Lazarus, a poor man whose name is the Greek version of the Hebrew Eliezar, which means "my God helps." The rich man sports the finest fashions and dines on sumptuous meals "every day." And Lazarus lies, always hungry, at his door while the dogs lick his sore-covered body.