THE FIRST LESSON

A Reading from the book of the prophet Hosea. 5:15-6:6

Thus says the Lord: "I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face. In their distress they will beg my favor: 'Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.' What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have killed them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light. For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

THE RESPONSE

Psalm 50:7-15, *The Saint Helena Psalter*

"Hear, O my people, and I will speak:
O Israel, I will bear witness against you, *
for I am God, your God.

I do not accuse you because of your sacrifices; *
your offerings are always before me.

I will take no bull-calf from your stalls, *
nor he-goats out of your pens;

For all the beasts of the forest are mine, *
the herds in their thousands upon the hills

I know every bird in the sky, *
and the creatures of the fields are in my sight.

If I were hungry, I would not tell you, *
for the whole world is mine and all that is in it.

Do you think I eat the flesh of bulls, *
or drink the blood of goats?

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and make good your vows to the Most High.

Call upon me in the day of trouble; *
I will deliver you, and you shall honor me."

THE SECOND LESSON

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome. 4:13-25

The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**