
FIRST READING: Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16 (*Common English Bible*)

¹⁷ When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk with me and be trustworthy. ² I will make a covenant between us and I will give you many, many descendants." ³ Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, ⁴ "But me, my covenant is with you; you will be the ancestor of many nations. ⁵ And because I have made you the ancestor of many nations, your name will no longer be Abram but Abraham. ⁶ I will make you very fertile. I will produce nations from you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will set up my covenant with you and your descendants after you in every generation as an enduring covenant. I will be your God and your descendants' God after you.

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you will no longer call her Sarai. Her name will now be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and even give you a son from her. I will bless her so that she will become nations, and kings of peoples will come from her."

SECOND READING: Romans 4: 13-25 (*Common English Bible*)

¹³ The promise to Abraham and to his descendants, that he would inherit the world, didn't come through the Law but through the righteousness that comes from faith. ¹⁴ If they inherit because of the Law, then faith has no effect and the promise has been canceled. ¹⁵ The Law brings about wrath. But when there isn't any law, there isn't any violation of the law. ¹⁶ That's why the inheritance comes through faith, so that it will be on the basis of God's grace. In that way, the promise is secure for all of Abraham's descendants, not just for those who are related by Law but also for those who are related by the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all of us. ¹⁷ As it is written: *I have appointed you to be the father of many nations.* So Abraham is our father in the eyes of God in whom he had faith, the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that don't exist into existence. ¹⁸ When it was beyond hope, he had faith in the hope that he would become the father of many nations, in keeping with the promise God spoke to him: *That's how many descendants you will have.* ¹⁹ Without losing faith, Abraham, who was nearly 100 years old, took into account his own body, which was as good as dead, and Sarah's womb, which was dead. ²⁰ He didn't hesitate with a lack of faith in God's promise, but he grew strong in faith and gave glory to God. ²¹ He was fully convinced that God was able to do what he promised. ²² Therefore, it was credited to him as righteousness.

²³ But the scripture that says *it was credited to him* wasn't written only for Abraham's sake. ²⁴ It was written also for our sake, because it is going to be credited to us too. It will be credited to those of us who have faith in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was handed over because of our mistakes, and he was raised to meet the requirements of righteousness for us.

GOSPEL: Mark 8:31–38 (NRSV)

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."