

## THE LESSONS APPOINTED FOR USE ON MONDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

- [Susanna \[1–9,15–29,34–40\],41-62](#)
- [John 8:1–11](#)
- *or* [John 8:12–20](#)
- [Psalm 23](#)

*Preface of Lent*

### THE COLLECT

Be gracious to your people, we entreat you, O Lord, that they, repenting day by day of the things that displease you, may be more and more filled with love of you and of your commandments; and, being supported by your grace in this life, may come to the full enjoyment of eternal life in your everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### OLD TESTAMENT: SUSANNA [1–9,15–29,34–40],41-62

*[There was a man living in Babylon whose name was Joakim. He married the daughter of Hilkiyah, named Susanna, a very beautiful woman and one who feared the Lord. Her parents were righteous, and had trained their daughter according to the law of Moses. Joakim*

*was very rich, and had a fine garden adjoining his house; the Jews used to come to him because he was the most honoured of them all.*

*That year two elders from the people were appointed as judges. Concerning them the Lord had said: "Wickedness came forth from Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people." These men were frequently at Joakim's house, and all who had a case to be tried came to them there.*

*When the people left at noon, Susanna would go into her husband's garden to walk. Every day the two elders used to see her, going in and walking about, and they began to lust for her. They suppressed their consciences and turned away their eyes from looking to Heaven or remembering their duty to administer justice.*

*Once, while they were watching for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids, and wished to bathe in the garden, for it was a hot day. No one was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her. She said to her maids, "Bring me olive oil and ointments, and shut the garden doors so that I can bathe." They did as she told them: they shut the doors of the garden and went out by the side doors to bring what they had been commanded; they did not see the elders, because they were hiding.*

*When the maids had gone out, the two elders got up and ran to her. They said, "Look, the garden doors are shut, and no one can see us. We are burning with desire for you; so give your consent, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away."*

*Susanna groaned and said, “I am completely trapped. For if I do this, it will mean death for me; if I do not, I cannot escape your hands. I choose not to do it; I will fall into your hands, rather than sin in the sight of the Lord.”*

*Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and the two elders shouted against her. And one of them ran and opened the garden doors. When the people in the house heard the shouting in the garden, they rushed in at the side door to see what had happened to her. And when the elders told their story, the servants felt very much ashamed, for nothing like this had ever been said about Susanna.*

*The next day, when the people gathered at the house of her husband Joakim, the two elders came, full of their wicked plot to have Susanna put to death. In the presence of the people they said, “Send for Susanna daughter of Hilkiah, the wife of Joakim.”*

*Then the two elders stood up before the people and laid their hands on her head. Through her tears she looked up towards Heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord. The elders said, “While we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, shut the garden doors, and dismissed the maids. Then a young man, who was hiding there, came to her and lay with her. We were in a corner of the garden, and when we saw this wickedness we ran to them. Although we saw them embracing, we could not hold the man, because he was stronger than we are, and he opened the doors and got away. We did, however, seize this woman and asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things we testify.”]*

Because they were elders of the people and judges, the assembly believed them and condemned Susanna to death.

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, “O eternal God, you know what is secret and are aware of all things before they come to be; you know that these men have given false evidence against me. And now I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things that they have charged against me!”

The Lord heard her cry. Just as she was being led off to execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel, and he shouted with a loud voice, “I want no part in shedding this woman’s blood!”

All the people turned to him and asked, “What is this you are saying?” Taking his stand among them he said, “Are you such fools, O Israelites, as to condemn a daughter of Israel without examination and without learning the facts? Return to court, for these men have given false evidence against her.”

So all the people hurried back. And the rest of the elders said to him, “Come, sit among us and inform us, for God has given you the standing of an elder.” Daniel said to them, “Separate them far from each other, and I will examine them.”

When they were separated from each other, he summoned one of them and said to him, “You old relic of wicked days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, pronouncing unjust judgements, condemning the innocent and acquitting the guilty, though the Lord said, ‘You shall not put an innocent and righteous person to death.’ Now then, if you really saw this woman, tell me this: Under what tree did you see them being intimate with each other?” He answered, “Under a mastic tree.” And Daniel said, “Very well! This lie has cost you your head, for the angel

of God has received the sentence from God and will immediately cut you in two.”

Then, putting him to one side, he ordered them to bring the other. And he said to him, “You offspring of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty has beguiled you and lust has perverted your heart. This is how you have been treating the daughters of Israel, and they were intimate with you through fear; but a daughter of Judah would not tolerate your wickedness. Now then, tell me: Under what tree did you catch them being intimate with each other?” He answered, “Under an evergreen oak.” Daniel said to him, “Very well! This lie has cost you also your head, for the angel of God is waiting with his sword to split you in two, so as to destroy you both.”

Then the whole assembly raised a great shout and blessed God, who saves those who hope in him. And they took action against the two elders, because out of their own mouths Daniel had convicted them of bearing false witness; they did to them as they had wickedly planned to do to their neighbour. Acting in accordance with the law of Moses, they put them to death. Thus innocent blood was spared that day.

## **PSALM 23**

### **DOMINUS REGIT ME**

1. The Lord is my shepherd; \*  
I shall not be in want.

2. He makes me lie down in green pastures \*  
and leads me beside still waters.
3. He revives my soul \*  
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
4. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I  
shall fear no evil; \*  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
5. You spread a table before me in the presence of those  
who trouble me; \*  
you have anointed my head with oil,  
and my cup is running over.
6. Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the  
days of my life, \*  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## **THE GOSPEL: JOHN 8:1–11**

Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone

among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

**OR**

### **JOHN 8:12–20**

Jesus spoke to the people, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.” Then they said to him, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of

the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.