

Readings: Saint ANTHONY of PADUA, Priest and Doctor

First Reading Introduction

Elijah gathers the people of Israel together to make them opt for Yahweh as their God, rather than Baal. The author relates this in a dramatic, epic style.

First Reading: 1 Kings 18:20-39

Ahab sent to all the children of Israel
and had the prophets assemble on Mount Carmel.

Elijah appealed to all the people and said,
"How long will you straddle the issue?
If the Lord is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him."
The people, however, did not answer him.
So Elijah said to the people,
"I am the only surviving prophet of the Lord,
and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.
Give us two young bulls.
Let them choose one, cut it into pieces, and place it on the wood,
but start no fire.
I shall prepare the other and place it on the wood,
but shall start no fire.
You shall call on your gods, and I will call on the Lord.
The God who answers with fire is God."
All the people answered, "Agreed!"

Elijah then said to the prophets of Baal,
"Choose one young bull and prepare it first,
for there are more of you.
Call upon your gods, but do not start the fire."
Taking the young bull that was turned over to them, they prepared it
and called on Baal from morning to noon, saying,
"Answer us, Baal!"
But there was no sound, and no one answering.
And they hopped around the altar they had prepared.
When it was noon, Elijah taunted them:
"Call louder, for he is a god and may be meditating,
or may have retired, or may be on a journey.
Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."
They called out louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears,
as was their custom, until blood gushed over them.
Noon passed and they remained in a prophetic state
until the time for offering sacrifice.
But there was not a sound;
no one answered, and no one was listening.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me."
When the people had done so, he repaired the altar of the Lord
that had been destroyed.
He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob,
to whom the Lord had said, "Your name shall be Israel."
He built an altar in honor of the Lord with the stones,
and made a trench around the altar
large enough for two measures of grain.
When he had arranged the wood,
he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood.
"Fill four jars with water," he said,
"and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood."
"Do it again," he said, and they did it again.
"Do it a third time," he said,
and they did it a third time.
The water flowed around the altar,
and the trench was filled with the water.

At the time for offering sacrifice,
the prophet Elijah came forward and said,
"Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,
let it be known this day that you are God in Israel
and that I am your servant
and have done all these things by your command.
Answer me, Lord!
Answer me, that this people may know that you, Lord, are God
and that you have brought them back to their senses."
The Lord's fire came down
and consumed the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust,
and it lapped up the water in the trench.
Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said,

"The Lord is God! The Lord is God!"

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1b-2ab, 4, 5ab and 8, 11

R/ Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the Lord, "My Lord are you."

R/ Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

They multiply their sorrows
who court other gods.
Blood libations to them I will not pour out,
nor will I take their names upon my lips.

R/ Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

O Lord, my allotted portion and cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.
I set the Lord ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

R/ Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

You will show me the path to life,
fullness of joys in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

R/ Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Gospel Introduction

Jesus says something similar in words that at first sight seem to say the opposite: he has come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it, that is, to give it deeper dimensions. What matters for us especially is that we must be aware that we live under the new law of love and that we are guided by the liberating Holy Spirit from servitude to the law.

Gospel Reading: [Matthew 5:13-16](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.
I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.
Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,
not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter
will pass from the law,
until all things have taken place.
Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments
and teaches others to do so
will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven.
But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments

will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."
