

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE FESTIVAL OF THE ASCENSION OF ST. MARY
(SEPTEMBER 3RD 2006)

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, September 3rd is the Third Sunday after the Festival of the Ascension of St. Mary (Shoonoyo). The Holy Gospel reading for this Sunday is about Jesus telling His disciples about His suffering, death, and confrontation by the tax collectors on the issue of tax evasion. When Jesus was questioned about paying the temple tax, Jesus replied to his disciples: We must pay so as not cause bad example. In fact, We must go beyond our duty in order that We may show others what they ought to do. Jesus would not allow Himself anything which might possibly be a bad example to someone else. According to the Gospel, we can see Jesus' power to solve the problem: money from the mouth of the fish that was caught from the sea to pay tax. In Jesus time, all Jewish males 20 and over have to pay two days' wages as tax (half-shekel) to support the temple. This tax was collected about a month before Passover.

On three different occasions, the Gospels record that Jesus predicted He would endure great suffering through betrayal, rejection, and the punishment of a cruel death. The Jews resorted to stoning and the Romans to crucifixion – the most painful and humiliating death they could devise for criminals they wanted to eliminate.

Jesus called himself the “Son of Man” because this was a common Jewish title for the Messiah. Even though God promised that His Anointed One would deliver His people from their oppression and establish a kingdom of peace and justice, they rejected the Messiah and killed Him. Jesus paid the price for our redemption with His blood. The ransom Jesus paid sets us free from the tyranny of sin and the fear of death. Jesus victory did not end with death but triumphed over the tomb. Jesus defeated the powers of death through His resurrection.

Lord Jesus, Your death brought us life and freedom – May we always walk in that freedom and be guided by Your love and truth”.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, September 3rd, 2006.

(Third Sunday After Shoonoyo)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Exodus	-	24: 12-18
I Samuel	-	3: 16-21
Ezekiel	-	18: 21-24

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	St. James	-	5: 1-6
Epistles of St. Paul:	II Corinthians	-	10: 1-7
Holy Gospel:	St. Matthew	-	17: 22-27

With prayers,
Thomas Alex