

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 24.10–end.

A reading from Deuteronomy, Chapter 24.

When you make your neighbour a loan of any kind, you shall not go into the house to take the pledge.

You shall wait outside, while the person to whom you are making the loan brings the pledge out to you.

If the person is poor, you shall not sleep in the garment given you as the pledge.

You shall give the pledge back by sunset, so that your neighbour may sleep in the cloak and bless you; and it will be to your credit before the LORD your God.

You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy labourers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns.

You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt.

Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death.

You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge.

Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings.

When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.

When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.

Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

For the Word of the LORD.

SECOND READING **Acts 28.1–16**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 28.

After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta.

The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us around it.

Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.

When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days.

It so happened that the father of Publius lay sick in bed with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and cured him by praying and putting his hands on him.

After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.

They bestowed many honours on us, and when we were about to sail, they put on board all the provisions we needed.

Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead.

We put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; then we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.

There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome.

The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

For the Word of the LORD.