

Collect

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches
of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading

Hebrews 7.1–3, 15–17

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

This 'King Melchizedek of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham as he was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him'; and to him Abraham apportioned 'one-tenth of everything'. His name, in the first place, means 'king of righteousness'; next he is also king of Salem, that is, 'king of peace'. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest for ever.

It is even more obvious when another priest arises, resembling Melchizedek, one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life. For it is attested of him,

'You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.'

Psalm 110.1–4

- 1 The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' ◆
- 2 May the Lord stretch forth the sceptre of your power; ◆
rule from Zion in the midst of your enemies.
- 3 'Noble are you on this day of your birth; ◆
on the holy mountain, from the womb of the dawn the dew of your new birth is upon you.'
- 4 The Lord has sworn and will not retract: ◆
'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'

Gospel

Mark 3.1–6

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Come forward.' Then he said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?' But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Additional Collect

God of glory, you nourish us with your Word who is the bread of life: fill us with your Holy Spirit that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We remember today

Richard Rolle, 1349

Richard Rolle was born in about the year 1300 in Thornton in Yorkshire, where he first began to live the hermit life at the age of eighteen, having broken off his education at the University of Oxford. After moving his hermitage to several other sites, he finally settled close to the Cistercian nuns at Hampole, where he undertook much of his prolific writing on mysticism and asceticism. He wrote in Latin but also produced many texts directly in English and even in the Northumbrian dialect. His writings were widely influential and he was venerated for at least three hundred years after his death on this day in the year 1349.