

The Collect of the Day for Bakhita: O God of Love, who delivered your servant Josephine Margaret Bakhita from the bondage of slavery to the true freedom of your service; Grant to the wounded your healing grace in mind, body, and spirit and to your church the zeal to combat exploitation and slavery in all its forms; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm 91 *Read responsively by the half-verse, breaking at the asterisk.*

BCP pp. 719-720

- 1 They who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, * **abide by the shadow of the Almighty.**
- 2 They shall say to the LORD, "You are my refuge and my stronghold, * **my God in whom I put my trust."**
- 3 For God shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter * **and from the deadly pestilence.**
- 4 God's pinions shall cover you, and under God's wings you shall find refuge; * **God's faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.**
- 5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, * **nor of the arrow that flies by day;**
- 6 Of the plague that stalks in the darkness, * **nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day.**
- 7 A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, * **but it shall not come near you.**
- 8 Your eyes have only to behold * **to see the reward of the wicked.**
- 9 Because you have made the LORD your refuge, * **and the Most High your habitation,**
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, * **neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.**
- 11 For God shall give the angels charge over you, * **to keep you in all your ways.**
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands, * **lest you dash your foot against a stone.**
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; * **you shall trample the young lion and the serpent under your feet.**
- 14 Because you are bound to me in love, therefore will I deliver you; * **I will protect you, because you know my Name.**
- 15 You shall call upon me, and I will answer you; * **I am with you in trouble; I will rescue you and bring you to honor.**
- 16 With long life will I satisfy you, * **and show you my salvation.**

First Reading: A Reading from the Book of Collossons (1:24-29)

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: A Reading from the Gospel of Luke (18:1-8)

Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Josephine Margaret Bakhita, Monastic, 1947: Josephine Margaret Bakhita was born in Olgossa in the Darfur region of southern Sudan. At the age of seven, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. The girl was so traumatized by the experience that she was unable to remember her name. Bakhita means "fortunate one"—a name given her by the same

slave raiders that forcefully removed her from her family and village. Even as a child, she said that she experienced God in her heart without ever having been evangelized. She said, "Seeing the sun, the moon and the stars, I said to myself: Who could be the Master of these beautiful things? And I felt a great desire to see him, to know him and to pay him homage." Although technically illegal, the entire Sudan region in the late nineteenth century was a raiding ground for various groups of armed slave traders. Enslaved for twelve years, she endured untold hardship and suffering. She was resold several times, finally in 1883 to the Italian consul in Khartoum, Sudan. After he gave her to his friend Augusto Michieli, she went with him and his family to Italy where she worked as a nanny for their young daughter, Mimmina. Accompanying the girl to Venice's Institute of the Catechumens, Josephine found herself drawn to Christianity. She was baptized as Josephine in 1890. The hardships in her life meant that Josephine did not easily express her joy. But she often expressed the joy she experienced through Christ at the font where she was baptized, kissing it and saying: "Here I became one of the daughters of God!" Josephine entered religious life in 1896 as a Canossian Daughter of Charity. In 1902, she went to the city of Schio (northeast of Verona), where she served her religious community. She soon became well loved by the children attending the sisters' school and by the local citizens. By the end of her life, Josephine was renowned across Italy for her loving, spiritual wisdom. Josephine knew the reality of being a slave, an immigrant, and a spiritual seeker. Even today, countless children, women, and men continue to be victimized, and trafficked into slavery. Josephine serves as an inspiration to those who work to free girls and women from oppression and violence, and to return them to their dignity in the full exercise of their rights. Not only is she a model of resistance, Josephine also reminds us of our obligation to strive against the evil and injustice of human trafficking and uphold the dignity of every human person.