

## Readings for Thursday, March 13, 2025

### James Theodore Holly – *Bishop, 1911*

#### Psalm 86:11-17

- 11 Teach me your way, O Lord,  
that I may walk in your truth;  
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
- 12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,  
and I will glorify your name for ever.
- 13 For great is your steadfast love towards me;  
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.
- 14 O God, the insolent rise up against me;  
a band of ruffians seeks my life,  
and they do not set you before them.
- 15 But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
- 16 Turn to me and be gracious to me;  
give your strength to your servant;  
save the child of your serving-maid.
- 17 Show me a sign of your favour,  
so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame,  
because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

## **Deuteronomy 6:20-25**

When your children ask you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your children, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The Lord displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household. He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors. Then the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive, as is now the case. If we diligently observe this entire commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, we will be in the right.’

## **John 4:31-38**

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Surely no one has brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, “Four months more, then comes the harvest”? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’

### **Collect:**

Most gracious God, whose servant James Theodore Holly labored to build a church in which all might be free: Grant that we might overcome our prejudice, and honor those whom you call from every family, language, people, and nation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

# **James Theodore Holly**

*Bishop, 1911*

James Theodore Augustus Holly was born a free African American in Washington, D.C., on October 3, 1829. Baptized and confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church, he later became an Episcopalian. Holly was ordained as a deacon at St. Matthew's Church in Detroit on June 17, 1855, and ordained as a priest by the bishop of Connecticut on January 2, 1856. He was then appointed rector of St. Luke's in New Haven. In the same year he founded the Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Church among Colored People, an antecedent of the Union of Black Episcopalians. He became a friend of Frederick Douglass, and the two men worked together on many programs.

In 1861, Holly resigned as rector of St. Luke's to lead a group of African Americans settling in Haiti. Although his wife, his mother, and two of his children died during the first year, along with other settlers, Holly stayed on with two small sons, proclaiming that just "as the last surviving apostle of Jesus was in tribulation . . . on the forlorn isle of Patmos, so, by His Divine Providence, [Christ] had brought this tribulation upon me for a similar end on this isle in the Caribbean Sea." He welcomed the opportunity to speak of God's love to a people who needed to hear it.

Through an agreement between the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church and the Orthodox Apostolic Church of Haiti, Holly was consecrated a missionary bishop to build the church in Haiti on November 8, 1874, making him the first African American to be raised to the office of bishop in the Episcopal Church. In 1878, Bishop Holly attended the Lambeth Conference, the first African American to do so, and he preached at Westminster Abbey on St. James' Day of that year.

In the course of his ministry, he doubled the size of his diocese, and established medical clinics where none had been before.

Bishop Holly served the Diocese of Haiti until his death in Haiti on March 13, 1911. He had charge of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic as well, from 1897 until he died. He is buried on the grounds of St. Vincent's School for Handicapped Children in Port-au-Prince.