**LECTIONARY FOR THE FIFTH WEEK OF TRINITY SEASON**

Morning Evening

June 27, The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

1st Lesson 1 Samuel 12 I Samuel 26

2nd Lesson Mark 6:1–32 Acts 13: 1–26

June 28, Monday

1st Lesson 2 Samuel19: 24—end 2 Samuel 23:1--17

2nd Lesson 1 Thessalonians 1 Matthew 13: 44--end

June 29, Tuesday

1st Lesson 2 Samuel 24 1 Kings 1: 5--31

2nd Lesson 1 Thessalonians 2: 1–16 Mark 4: 35–5: 20

June 30, Wednesday

1st Lesson 1 Kings 1: 32—end 1 Chronicles 22: 2--end

2nd Lesson 1 Thess. 2: 17–3 end Mark 5:21--end

July 1, Thursday

1st Lesson 1 Chronicles 28: 1–10 1 Chronicles 28: 20–29: 9

2nd Lesson 1 Thess. 4: 1–12 Matthew 9: 27–-10: 23

July 2, Friday

1st Lesson 1 Chronicles 29: 10—end 1 Kings 3

2nd Lesson 1 Thess. 4:13–5: 11 Matthew 10: 24--end

July 3, Saturday

1st Lesson 1 Kings 4: 21—end 1 Kings 5

2nd Lesson 1 Thess. 5: 12--end Mark 6: 7--44

July 4, The Fifth Sunday after Trinity (Independence Day)

1st Lesson 1 Samuel 17: 1–54 ! Samuel 20: 1--17

2nd Lesson Mark 6:53–7: 23 Matthew 6

**TRINITY IV**

A very thoughtful and perceptive friend recently asked me, "Have you in your life personally known an America that was morally superior to our own? He was articulating the anguish which many of us feel as we see a culture in shreds, values abandoned, a nation in ruins, a world gone berserk.

I have to answer my friend that from a Biblical perspective, the Fall of man did not take place in our lifetime nor in the lifetime of our parents and grand-parents, but at the very beginning of history, the edge of time itself. If the world seems to be a terrible place, it is not because things are getting worse but because our moral perceptions have become more acute.

St Paul addresses this issue in the passage from Romans 8 which we read today, when he elaborates on "the sufferings of this present time" which certainly will be reversed in the "glory" to come. This truly monumental chapter begins with the thrilling statement "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The key-word of that text and perhaps for the whole chapter is the word "now," which tells us that in the earth-shattering event of Jesus Christ, there has been a decisive and permanent reversal in the world and the relationship between God and His creation.

But this reversal is not obvious to all and sometimes even Christians see it dimly. The Bible is honest about the intensity of "the sufferings of this present time." And those words, "this present time," do not refer to the current generation or even to our brief lifetime. "This present time" is the entire chunk of history between the two Comings of our Redeemer.

Paul reminds us that for the time being, until Jesus comes again, we live on this planet with the residual effects of Adam's Fall. "For the creation was subjected to futility, ... the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now." When secular talking-heads try to alarm us with daily recitals of how bad the world has become, the Christian's response should be, "Yes, we have known all this for a long time, but we have already read the final chapter and we know the end of the story. In fact we have the solution to your pain."

"The glory which shall be revealed in us" is Christ's coming and the resurrection of our bodies. But within the here and the now, we already enjoy "the first-fruits of the Spirit." Here we have an interesting word. Usually, "first-fruits" meant the initial part of a harvest, which had to be rendered up to God in sacrifice. But here, the word instead refers to God's gift to us. Paul seems to be thinking of a special meaning of the term, in which it referred to a birth-certificate. The presence of the Holy Ghost within the life of the Christian is his birth-certificate as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. This is the great fact already in effect. The "present evil age" can never undo it. LKW