A reading from the book of Wisdom (4:7-15)

*Grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord*

The virtuous ones, though they die before their time, will find rest.
length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years the true measure of life;
understanding, this is man’s grey hairs
untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
They have sought to please God, so God has loved them;
as they were living among sinners, they have been taken up.
They have been carried off so that evil may not warp their understanding
or treachery seduce their souls;
for the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade,
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart.
Coming to perfection is so short a while, they achieved long life;
their soul being pleasing to the Lord,
he has taken them quickly from the wickedness around them
Yet people look on, uncomprehending;
it does not enter their heads
that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord,
and protection, his holy ones.

The word of the Lord