

Sunday Readings

21st June 2026

Collect

Grant, O Lord,
that we may always revere and love your holy
name,
for you never deprive of your guidance
those you set firm on the foundation of your love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah 20:10-13

Jeremiah said: I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! 'Denounce him! Let us denounce him!' say all my close friends, watching for my fall. 'Perhaps he will be deceived; then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.' But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonour will never be forgotten. O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.

Sing to the LORD; praise the LORD! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 68:8-10,14,17,33-35

R/. In your great love, answer me, O Lord.

It is for you that I suffer taunts,
that shame covers my face,
that I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons.
I burn with zeal for your house
and taunts against you fall on me. ***R/.***

This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me. ***R/.***

The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their
chains.

Let the heavens and the earth give him praise,
the sea and all its living creatures. ***R/.***

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans

5:12-15

Brothers and Sisters: Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation

John 15:26b, 27a

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Spirit of truth will bear witness about me, says the
Lord,
and you also will bear witness.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 10:26-33

The Lord be with you.
And with your Spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: Jesus instructed his Apostles: 'Have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father knowing. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

Renewed and nourished
by the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of your Son,
we ask of your mercy, O Lord,
that what we celebrate with constant devotion
may be our sure pledge of redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year A

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

The Scripture readings for this Sunday call us to give courageous witness to Christ. They summon us to be people who are not afraid to be identified as followers of Jesus and members of the Church. The section of Matthew's gospel from which we read is sometimes called the "missionary discourse." Jesus instructs his followers about the requirements and challenges of continuing his mission in the world. The first words of this gospel reading offer a hint about what will follow: "Fear no one." Jesus is realistic about the opposition that his followers will encounter. At the same time, he wants his disciples to be free of fear and full of trust in God's faithful care for them. In the midst of the distinct challenge that Jesus places before us, he offers words that are consoling and strengthening. "Even all the hairs on your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Those of us who do not feel naturally courageous can take comfort from the life of Jeremiah, about whom we hear in this Sunday's first reading. Jeremiah received his call to the prophetic vocation at a time of political crisis, when Israel was caught in the middle of intrigue and power-grabbing among the stronger nations that surrounded it. At such a time, no one wanted to hear a word of challenge, a summons to repentance. Such a word sounded like treason. But that was precisely the kind of message that Jeremiah had to speak. He felt compelled to challenge the injustice and idolatry of the leaders and the people. He was severely ridiculed and persecuted for being so forthright in his message. Even his friends and family rejected him. This rejection was very difficult for Jeremiah. He was a naturally sensitive person who did not seem to be cut out for the job of prophet. He did not have the "thick skin" that is usually needed to speak and act courageously. There were times in which he became so discouraged that he wanted to give up and run away. In the end, however, he could not do that.

Jeremiah is set before us as one for whom internal fortitude came only through the grace of God. On his own, he was no pillar of strength. It was the presence and power of God that enabled him to fulfil his calling in life. The call to live the gospel, to be faithful to Christ, requires a level of courage that none of us has on our own. We depend on the grace of God for the fortitude we need to acknowledge Christ before others. The risen Christ tells us, as he told his disciples, not to be afraid. In the Eucharist we are privileged to receive Christ, who is himself our strength. As we approach the table of the Lord this Sunday, may we ask for the courage we need to give witness to our faith in Christ by what we say and how we live. May we be given the fortitude to be a light that shines for others to see.

Monday 22nd June 2026

St Thomas More (1477 - 1535)

He was born in London, the son of a judge, and himself became an eminent lawyer. He married twice, and had four children. He was a humanist and a reformer, and his book, *Utopia*, depicting a society regulated by the natural virtues, is still read today.

Thomas More was a close friend of King Henry VIII. As a judge, he was famous for his incorruptibility and impartiality, and he was made Lord Chancellor – the highest legal position in England – in 1529.

When Henry VIII demanded a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Thomas More opposed him. He resigned the chancellorship in 1532 and retired from public life; but he could not retire from his reputation, and so it was demanded that he take an oath to support the Act of Succession, which effectively repudiated papal religious authority. He refused, and was imprisoned in the Tower of London. After the execution of John Fisher, he was tried on the charge of high treason for denying the King's supreme headship of the Church, found guilty, and sentenced to death. He went to his execution, on 6 July 1535, with a clear conscience and a light heart; he told the spectators that he was still "the king's good servant – but God's first," and carefully adjusted his beard before he was beheaded.

He wrote a number of devotional works, some of the best of them while in prison awaiting trial. He fought his fight without acrimony, telling his judges that he wished that "we may yet hereafter in Heaven merrily all meet together to everlasting salvation."

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer for Courage

Lord God,
you have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.