

Sunday Readings

19th July 2026

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Wisdom 12:13,16-19

Neither is there any God besides you, whose care is for all, to whom you should prove that you have not judged unjustly. For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all. For you show your strength when men doubt the completeness of your power, and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it. You are sovereign in strength but you judge with mildness, and with great forbearance you govern us; for you have power to act whenever you choose. Through such works you have taught your people that the one who is righteous must be kind, and you have filled your sons with good hope, because you give repentance for sins.

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 85:5-6,9-10,15-16 R/. v.1

R/. O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of love to all who call.
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my voice. **R/.**

All the nations shall come to adore you
and glorify your name, O Lord:
for you are great and do marvellous deeds,
you who alone are God. **R/.**

But you, God of mercy and compassion,
slow to anger, O Lord,
abounding in love and truth,
turn and take pity on me. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans 8:26-27

Brothers and Sisters: The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

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

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to
little children.

Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:24-43

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 put another parable before the crowd, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?" He said to them, "An enemy has done this." So the servants said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he said, "No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' " "

He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

He told them another parable. 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.'

All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet: 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.'

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.'

The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year A

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Saturday 25 July 2026

St James (? - 44)

The book of Wisdom gives us the picture of a sovereign, who uses power in such a way that the power is not abused. In fact, the scale is tipped on the merciful and loving side. Wisdom tells us that God cares for all people – not just the Jews or the believers in one God, but also the Gentiles and the atheists, the foreigner and the outcast. To all people God shows righteousness and he is willing to look for ways to spare all people. God is patient with those who have doubts, and shows impatience to those who are insolent, who do not respect others who may not yet know God.

God is strength, but shows only mildness and forbearance, another word for tolerance, in the way he governs the world. He is a role model for the way we should behave – as Jesus said, “Be perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect”. We, too, Wisdom says, must be kind, and must fill our children with hope, the hope that is given when repentance for our sins is accepted and granted.

What a beautiful description of God. Our Psalm today reiterates Wisdom as it reminds us over and over that God is good and forgiving, abounding in love and always staying true to us.

The description of God the Spirit in Paul’s letter to the Romans today lets us see those beautiful qualities of God at work. The Spirit is God’s gift of himself to us, to inspire, to help us pray, to intercede for us so that justice can be blended with mercy on our behalf.

While the Gospel sounds a little fire and brimstone-like, if we examine the passage closer we can see that it does fit in with this sovereign concept of God. The first parable basically tells us that God allows everyone to be cared for – just and unjust. The weeds grow up in the field along with the grain. But justice demands a sorting – God is indeed just. Hopefully though, that justice will be tempered with mercy and only at the very end will there be judgement. Until then there is forgiveness, and those who have remained righteous will be highly rewarded.

To be like God, we need to be kind, compassionate, accepting, loving and non-judgmental. These are not all easy qualities to have, but the more we strive to be like God in those areas, the more chance we have that we will not be seen to be the weeds at the very end. Let us try this week to put into practice these virtues, make one specific attempt to show mercy to someone, to show love to someone, to accept someone, to be kind to someone. Besides, it might bring you a little happiness as well, and we can all use lots of that!

He was the brother of St John and, like him, a fisherman. He was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration and one of those who slept through most of the Agony in the Garden. He was the first of the apostles to be martyred, being beheaded by King Herod Agrippa I to please the Jewish opponents of Christianity. He was buried in Jerusalem, and nothing more is known about him until the ninth century.

At this time we learn of a tradition that the relics of St James were brought to Spain some time after his martyrdom, (perhaps early, perhaps as late as 830), and his shrine at Compostela in Galicia grew in importance until it became the greatest pilgrimage centre in western Europe. In every country there are churches of St James and known, well-trodden pilgrim routes. In Paris, the Tour St Jacques marks the start of the route and the Rue St Jacques points straight towards Compostela.

In England, pilgrim routes lead from all parts of the country to the major ports that were used on the pilgrimage. This network of routes is a vital witness to the fact that the Middle Ages were not the static stay-at-home time that we often think them to be: everyone must have known someone, or known someone who knew someone, who had made the pilgrimage. The scallop-shell, the emblem of St James, has become the emblem of pilgrims generally.

In 1987 the pilgrimage routes to Compostela were designated by the Council of Europe as historical cultural routes of international importance. The Confraternity of St James continues to work to restore and upgrade the refuges on a route which is still in active pilgrim use today.



Prayer of the Week

A Prayer of St Anselm

Enlighten our minds, O God, and purify our desires. Correct our wanderings and pardon our defects, so that by your guidance we may be preserved from making shipwreck of our faith, be kept in a good conscience, and at length be landed in the safe haven of eternal peace.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.