

Sunday Readings

7th September 2025

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Wisdom

9:13-18

What human being can learn the counsel of God? Or who can discern what the Lord wills? For the reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail, for a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthy tent burdens the mind full of thoughts. We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labour; but who has traced out what is in the heavens? Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus the paths of those on earth were set right, and people were taught what pleases you.

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 89:3-6. 12-14. 17. R/. v.1

R/. O Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to the next.

You turn men back into dust
and say: 'Go back, sons of men.'
To your eyes a thousand years
are like yesterday, come and gone,
no more than a watch in the night. **R/.**

You sweep men away like a dream,
like the grass which springs up in the
morning.

In the morning it springs up and flowers:
by evening it withers and fades. **R/.**

Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants. **R/.**

In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Philemon

1:9-10,12-17

Beloved: I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus — I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back for ever, no longer

as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother — especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

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

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 119(118):135

Alleluia, alleluia.

Let your face shine forth on your servant,
and teach me your decrees.

Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 14:25-33

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

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

At that time: Great crowds accompanied Jesus, and he turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.'

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

Prayer over the Offerings

O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart. Through Christ our Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

The Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Is human reasoning really so bad? The author of Wisdom seemed to think so — he insisted that it is worthless! As we look around at our world of technological marvels and progress, our first impulse might be to take issue with his statement. But Wisdom seemed to have our own age in mind.

For all of our scientific and technological knowledge, humanity remains woefully ignorant of the spiritual realm and the ways of God. Often we discover how to do or make things long before we have the maturity and wisdom to use them wisely and justly. Wisdom and intelligence are not the same thing. What we claim to understand is but a sliver of the big picture. New discoveries constantly call today's scientific sureties into question and the past is littered with many inadequate theories and models of reality. Our intellectual prowess has not brought us peace, justice or even lasting happiness — no wonder Wisdom took human pretensions to task. Far better, Wisdom insisted, to seek the one form of knowledge that will lead to righteous living and human happiness — the wisdom of God. In fact, that should be the primary concern of every person, regardless of rank, station or state of life.

Spiritual tradition tells us that the true giver is the one who does not count the cost. The parables of Jesus, however, imply that we are to sit down and calculate the cost of a major spiritual undertaking. The contradiction is solved when we consider the context of the two parables — they are sandwiched between two very hard sayings on discipleship. The first demands that we take up our cross and pay no heed to the pull of family, friends and even life itself, while the second requires that we give up all our possessions. The purpose was to let prospective disciples know what they were in for — not an easy life or a shortcut to God but one of sacrifice and even suffering. He distinguished between real disciples and those who are along for a free ride. The early Christian communities did not play a numbers game. They were looking for a few brave souls willing to be disciples in every sense — servants of the Word and of humanity.

The first reading exhorts us to seek divine wisdom and the ways of God. Our own hurting world calls for the building of communities of disciples rather than members of an institution. What could be wiser than that?

Tuesday 9 September 2025
St Peter Claver (1581 - 1654)

He was born in Catalonia and studied at the University of Barcelona. He became a Jesuit; and while he was studying philosophy in Mallorca, the door-keeper of the college, Alfonso Rodríguez, saw that his true vocation was to evangelize the New World, and encouraged him to fulfil that vocation. (Rodríguez was later canonized on the same day as Peter Claver himself).

He arrived in Cartagena, in what is now Colombia, in 1610, and after his ordination six years later, he laboured on behalf of African slaves there for 33 years, attending to both their spiritual and material needs. The slave trade was repeatedly condemned by the Popes; but it was too profitable to be stopped and on the whole the local church hierarchy kept quiet about it, much as they did in North America in the 19th century.

He brought fresh food to the slave-ships as they arrived, instructed the slaves and baptized them in the faith, followed their progress and kept track of them even when they were sent to the mines and plantations, defending them as well as he could from oppressive slave-owners. He organized teams of catechists who spoke the many languages spoken by the slaves. He worked in hospitals also, looking after lepers among others, and in prisons.

Naturally he made himself unpopular by his work: as his superior said, 'unfortunately for himself he is a Catalan, pig-headed and difficult'. Opposition came from both within the Church and outside it. At the end of his life he fell ill with a degenerative disease and for four years he was treated neglectfully and brutally by the servant whose task it was to look after him. He did not complain but accepted his sufferings as a penance for his sins.

Prayer of the Week

A Celtic Prayer

You are the peace of all things calm
You are the place to hide from harm
You are the light that shines in dark
You are the heart's eternal spark
You are the door that's open wide
You are the guest who waits inside
You are the stranger at the door
You are the calling of the poor
You are my Lord and with me still
You are my love, keep me from ill
You are the light, the truth, the way
You are my Saviour this very day.
Amen.