

Sunday Readings

13th September 2026

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Numbers 21:4b-9

In those days: The people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.' Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 78(77):1-2. 34-35. 36-37. 38. cf. 7b

R/. Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

Give ear, my people, to my teaching;
incline your ear to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable
and utter hidden lessons of the past.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

When he slew them, then they sought him,
repented and earnestly sought God.
They would remember that God was their rock,
God the Most High their redeemer.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

Yet they deceived him with their mouths;
they lied to him with their tongues.
For their hearts were not steadfast towards him;
they were not faithful to his covenant.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

Yet he who is full of compassion
forgave them their sin and spared them.
So often he held back his anger,
and did not stir up all his rage.

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Philippians

2:6-11

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your Cross you have redeemed the world.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 3:13-17

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

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

At that time: Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'

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

Prayer after Communion

Having been nourished by your holy banquet,
we beseech you, Lord Jesus Christ,
to bring those you have redeemed
by the wood of your life-giving Cross
to the glory of the resurrection.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Lectionary Year A

The Word of God

Saints of the Week

Tuesday 16 September 2026

Pope St Cornelius (- 253)



Cornelius was made bishop of the church in Rome in the year 251. He fought against the Novatian schismatics, and established his authority with the aid of Cyprian.

The emperor Gallus sent him into exile, and he died at Civitavecchia in June 253. He is buried in Rome.

St Cyprian (210 - 258)

He was born in Carthage and spent most of his life in the practice of the law. He was converted to Christianity, and was made bishop of Carthage in 249. He steered the church through troubled times, including the persecution of the emperor Decius, when he went into hiding so as to be able to continue looking after the church. In 258 the persecution of the emperor Valerian began. Cyprian was first exiled and then, on the 14th of September, executed, after a trial notable for the calm and courtesy shown by both sides.

Cyprian's many letters and treatises shed much light on a formative period in the Church's history, and are valuable both for their doctrine and for the picture they paint of a group of people in constant peril of their lives but still determined to keep the faith.

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer for Forgiveness

Enlighten our minds, O God, and purify our desires. Correct our wanderings and pardon our defects, so that by thy 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.

St Anselm

In the first reading of today from Exodus, we are reminded of the imminent and blazing wrath of God just as Paul warns us that, *"the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness"* (Rom 1, 18). In this reading we also discover a God who knows and abides by his own promises once he is reminded of them, a God who is faithful to the vows he made, and a God whose love surpasses his anger and whose mercy overtakes his judgment. However, he says to us: *"If my people called by my name will turn away from their sins, I will heal their land..."*. Therefore, all we need do is to call upon the Lord and remind him of his promises as Moses did. A saying goes that to whom much is given, much is expected. This simply means that as we ourselves were accepted and brought back by God through his pardon and mercy, we must do the same for others who sin against us.

In today's gospel, Jesus demonstrates to us how the mercy and love of God continues to pursue and search for us in spite of our sins. This is because he cares for our souls. Unlike in the first reading, where the wrath of God was so great, in the gospel He reaches out to sinners as a caring and loving Father. In spite of our prodigality, the merciful God is ever willing to go out in search of us. And when he finds us, he embraces, kisses, and restores us.

But the question is, for how long must we hide and stray from him? Is it not time we returned to our willing and able Father whose mercy surpasses his judgment? All we need is to sincerely and humbly cry out to him like the prodigal son: *"I will leave this place and go back to my father"*. We must cast shame to the wind, be free from the chains of sin and savour God's mercy through Jesus Christ because, *"the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never comes to an end, they are new every morning, and great is His faithfulness"* (Lam 3, 22-23).

