

Sunday Readings

20th September 2026

Collect

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 55:6-9

Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that he may have
compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 144:2-3. 8-9. 17-18. R/. cf. v.18

R/. The Lord is close to all who call him.

I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.
The Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured. **R/.**

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. **R/.**

The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul
to the Philippians 1:20-24. 27

Brothers and Sisters: Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

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

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. Acts 16:14b

Alleluia, alleluia.
Open our hearts, O Lord,
that we may pay attention to the words of your Son.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

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 told his disciples this parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market-place, and to them he said, "You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, "Why do you stand here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You go into the vineyard too."

'And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first." And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" So the last will be first, and the first last.'

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

Prayer after Communion

Graciously raise up, O Lord,
those you renew with this Sacrament,
that we may come to possess your redemption
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.
Through Christ our Lord.

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year A

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Seek the Lord! From the very first reading today from the Prophet Isaiah, we are told to seek God, to seek the Lord, to look for the divine. Most of us are fairly relaxed about seeking God and we get around to this religious work without much stress. That is probably good. The challenge for us is to realize how wonderful God is and how much God loves us.

Today's Gospel from Saint Matthew is trying to tell about God's love. God does not care when we turn to Him. He always wants us to turn to Him right now. Now is the time of salvation. Always the reward is the same: complete love and acceptance and the forgiveness of our sins. Some Christians in earlier times took this as a way to put off conversion and wait until the end of life to be baptized. This is a complete misunderstanding of God's love. God wants to love us now! God wants to share His life with us now!

This Gospel account wants us to understand that whenever we turn to God, God is there to receive us. God always loves us. Always. God is present with His love inviting every moment of our lives. We want to live in a way which responds to God's love.

The Gospel is also a teaching against envy. We can surely understand that if we have been on the path of the Lord, we have given up various aspects of pleasure and delight that the world values. The present values of the world want us to think that we should always seek our own good first, that we should have as much pleasure as possible, that we should strive to have money and power, and so on. These are not the values of the Gospel.

Honestly, of course, we can admire those who seem to have everything in this world. The real value, however, is in our hearts. If our hearts are not set on God and seeking God, then all else is vanity and emptiness. This is the meaning of the second reading today, from the Letter to the Philippians: conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The language of the Gospel and of the New Testament in general can at times sound like an obligation. The heart of the New Testament however is not obligation but invitation. Jesus invites us to know the love of the Father. Jesus invites to live in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Jesus invites to embrace the Cross, but only because we love Him, not because suffering is good of itself. If we are to love completely in this world, we will learn to embrace the Cross of Jesus. We must be free of all envy. Others may have more than we do in this life, but our task is to have hearts that are rich in grace and love. Come, Lord Jesus!

Wednesday 24 September 2026
Our Lady of Walsingham

The shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in Norfolk was one of the great pilgrimage centres of mediaeval times. The lady of the manor of Walsingham, Richeldis de Faverches, had a vision in which the Virgin Mary instructed her to build in her village an exact replica of the house in Nazareth where the Annunciation had taken place. According to tradition this vision occurred in 1061, although the most likely date for the construction of the shrine is a hundred years later.

The original shrine was destroyed at the Reformation, but in the 19th and 20th centuries, pilgrimage to Walsingham was revived not only for Catholics but also for Anglicans.



Interior of the Holy House at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham where there is a lamp dedicated to All Saints, East Finchley

Prayer of the Week

Prayer to Our Lady of Walsingham

O Mary, recall the solemn moment when Jesus, your divine Son, dying on the cross confided us to your maternal care. You are our Mother; we desire ever to remain your devout children. Let us therefore feel the effects of your powerful intercession with Jesus Christ. Make your name again glorious in this place, once renowned throughout our land by your visits, favours and many miracles.

Pray, O Holy Mother of God, for the conversion of England, restoration of the sick, consolation for the afflicted, repentance of sinners, peace to the departed. O Blessed Mary, Mother of God, Our Lady of Walsingham, intercede for us.

Amen.