

Sunday Readings

23rd February 2025

FIRST READING

A reading from the First Book of Samuel

26:2,7-9,11-13,22-23

In those days: Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

David and Abishai went to the army by night. And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay round him. Then Abishai said to David, 'God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice.' But David said to Abishai, 'Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?' So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen upon them.

Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them. David said, 'Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and take it. The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the LORD's anointed.'

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 102:1-4 8. 10. 12-13. R/. v.8

R/. The Lord is compassion and love.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
all my being, bless his holy name.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings. **R/.**

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion. **R/.**

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.

For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him. **R/.**

As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.

As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to
the Corinthians

15:45-49

Brothers and Sisters: 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

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

Gospel Acclamation

John 13:34

Alleluia, alleluia!

*A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord,
that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
Alleluia.*

GOSPEL

Luke 6:27-38

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: Jesus said to his disciples, 'I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you; and from one who takes away your goods, do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

'Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Today we hear Jesus asking us to love our enemies. On the face of it, this may perhaps seem unrealistic - something possible only for an extraordinary person like St. Francis of Assisi. To appreciate Jesus' realism we need to understand the word for "love." Once again, it is essential to know a little Greek. Unlike English, Greek has three words for love: First, eros, which is the love involved in attraction and longing. Then, philia, the love involved in friendship. Finally, agape, which can be defined as "unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodwill." Eros is based on feelings, philia on having something in common, but agape involves a deliberate act of the will.

When Jesus says to love our enemies, he does not use the word "eros" or "philia," but agape. Love is a choice. Regarding love, we can readily deceive ourselves. When the sun is out, when we are feeling good, when we face no grave crisis, it is easy to have kindly feelings toward others, even those who irritate us a bit. But Jesus is talking about a much deeper love. C S Lewis gave this description of what it means for a Christian to love his enemy:

"We must try to feel about the enemy as we feel about ourselves - to wish that he were not so bad, to hope that he may, in this world or another, be cured: in fact, to wish his good. This is what is meant in the Bible by loving him: wishing his good, not feeling fond of him nor saying he is nice when he is not."

Consistently to love one's enemies, to wish the best for those deliberately harm us, to pray for those who make one's life miserable - that requires grace. C S Lewis pointed out that God does not love us because we are good, but that his love enables us to attain goodness. None of us can become perfect by our own efforts, but God's love will eventually perfect us.

Quote of the Week

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."

C S Lewis

Friday 28 February 2025

Saint Oswald (-992)



Oswald received his formation as a Benedictine monk in the Abbey of Flsury-sur-Loire in France and became Bishop of Worcester in 961. With St Dunstan and St Ethelwold he worked hard at reviving monastic life in Anglo-Saxon England after the disruption of the Danish invasions. He was noted for his attractive and

accessible character and for the exemplary way in which he celebrated the liturgy. He had a special love of the poor; in Lent he would wash the feet of twelve poor men every day. In 972 he became Archbishop of York and administered the two dioceses.

He died at Worcester on 28 February 992.

Prayer of the Week

A Student's Prayer of St Thomas Aquinas

Come, Holy Spirit, Divine Creator, true source of light and fountain of wisdom! Pour forth your brilliance upon my dense intellect, dissipate the darkness which covers me, that of sin and of ignorance. Grant me a penetrating mind to understand, a retentive memory, method and ease in learning, the lucidity to comprehend, and abundant grace in expressing myself. Guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to successful completion.

This I ask through Jesus Christ, true God and true man, living and reigning with You and the Father, forever and ever. Amen.

