

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

June 23rd 2026

First reading

2 Kings 19:9-11,14-21,31-36

The Lord protects Jerusalem from Sennacherib and the Assyrians

Sennacherib, King of the Assyrians, sent messengers to Hezekiah saying, "Tell this to Hezekiah king of Judah, "Do not let your God on whom you are relying deceive you, when he says: Jerusalem shall not fall into the power of the king of Assyria. You have learnt by now what the kings of Assyria have done to every country, putting them all under the ban. Are you likely to be spared?"

Hezekiah took the letter from the hands of the messenger and read it; he then went up to the Temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. Hezekiah said this prayer in the presence of the Lord, 'O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, enthroned on the cherubs, you alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth, you have made heaven and earth.

'Give ear, Lord, and listen. Open your eyes, Lord, and see.

Hear the words of Sennacherib who has sent to insult the living God.

'It is true, O Lord, that the kings of Assyria have exterminated all the nations, they have thrown their gods on the fire, for these were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone, and hence they have destroyed them. But now, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, I pray you, and let all the kingdoms of the earth know that you alone are God, Lord.'

Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah. "The Lord, the God of Israel,' he said, 'says this, "I have heard the prayer you have addressed to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria." Here is the oracle that the Lord has pronounced against him:

"She despises you, she scorns you, the virgin, daughter of Zion; she tosses her head behind you, the daughter of Jerusalem.

A remnant shall go out from Jerusalem, and survivors from Mount Zion.

The jealous love of the Lord of Hosts shall accomplish this."

'This, then, is what the Lord says about the king of Assyria:

"He will not enter this city, he will let fly no arrow against it, confront it with no shield, throw up no earthwork against it.

By the road that he came on he will return; he shall not enter this city. It is the Lord who speaks.

I will protect this city and save it for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

That same night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. Sennacherib struck camp and left; he returned home and stayed in Nineveh.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 47(48):2-4,10-11

God upholds his city for ever.

The Lord is great and worthy to be praised
in the city of our God.

His holy mountain rises in beauty,
the joy of all the earth.

Mount Zion, true pole of the earth,
the Great King's city!

God, in the midst of its citadels,
has shown himself its stronghold.

O God, we ponder your love
within your temple.

Your praise, O God, like your name
reaches the ends of the earth.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt11:25

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.
Alleluia!

Or:

Jn8:12

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
anyone who follows me will have the light of life.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 7:6,12-14

Treat others as you would like them to treat you

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces.

'So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets.

'Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

Jesus speaks of two ways between which each person must choose. The image of the two ways was widespread in the Old Testament and also in pagan philosophers. Jesus compares the narrow gate and the hard road which the few take with the wide and spacious road which the many take. He himself embodies the narrow gate and the hard road. To take the narrow gate and the hard road is to follow him, to live by his teaching, especially as that teaching is expressed in the Sermon on the Mount from which we have been reading in recent days. Jesus implies that many people will turn away from his teaching, will take other, easier, paths. The Sermon on the Mount puts before us a very high ideal and the temptation is to keep it at arm's length on the basis that it is not really for the average Christian. Yet, Jesus addresses his teaching to everyone; we each have the same calling which we try to live out in the circumstances of our own lives. The narrow gate and the hard road is one we are all asked to take. In taking it Jesus assures us that we will find life, both now and beyond death.