

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

13th July 2026

First reading

Isaiah 1:10-17

‘Wash yourselves; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes.’

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! ‘What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.

‘When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations — I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

‘Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 50(49):8-9. 16b-17. 21, 23. R23b

To one whose way is blameless,

I will show the salvation of God.

I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices; your offerings are always before me.

I do not take more bullocks from your farms, nor goats from among your herds.

How can you recite my commandments, and take my covenant on your lips,
you who despise correction, and cast my words behind you?

You do this, and should I keep silence?

Do you think that I am like you? I accuse you, lay the charge before you.

A sacrifice of praise gives me honour, and to one whose way is blameless,

I will show the salvation of God.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 5:10

Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 10:34-11:1

‘I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.’

At that time: Jesus instructed his Apostles: ‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,

and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

‘Whoever receives you, receives me, and whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.’

When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

Short reflection on the reading for today

Today, we come to the final part of Jesus’ apostolic discourse in chapter 10. At a first reading, today’s passage could be puzzling, if not to say highly disturbing to some. Jesus seems to contradict everything that he has said and done so far.

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

But do we not call Jesus the Prince of Peace? Does Jesus not say during the Last Supper discourse in John’s Gospel (14:27) that he has come to give his peace to his disciples, a peace that no one will ever be able to take away from them?

And Jesus goes on to apply to himself a passage from the prophet Micah (7:6):

For I have come to set a man against his father,

and a daughter against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,

and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

It sounds a terrible thing for Jesus our Saviour to be saying. But it expresses, not what he wants to happen, but what he sees as an inevitable outcome of his message of love. It says more about us than about him.

In a world of conflicting ideologies, philosophies, cultures, traditions, ethnic and religious identities, to declare that one is opting for the Way of Jesus is often to invite opposition, persecution and even death. Christianity divided families and, in some places, it still does. But people who see and understand and accept the vision of life that Jesus offers know they have no choice but to follow it, even if close family members object. To go with Christ is to enter a new family, with new bonds—a family which, for its part, does not at all reject those who reject it.

The dearest wish of the new Christian is for family members to be able to see what he or she sees and, until they do, that new Christian will pray for them, bless them and love them.