

Reading for the Memorial of St Pius X , Pope

21st August 2026

First reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

‘Dry bones, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.’

In those days: The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ And I answered, ‘O Lord God, you know.’ Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.’

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.” Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 107(106):2-3. 4-5. 6-7. 8-9. R cf. 1

O give thanks to the Lord, for his mercy endures for ever.

or: Alleluia.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say this, those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,
and gathered from far-off lands, from east and west, north and south.

They wandered in a barren desert, finding no way to a city they could dwell in.

Hungry they were and thirsty; their soul was fainting within them.

Then they cried to the Lord in their need, and he rescued them from their distress
and he guided them along a straight path, to reach a city they could dwell in.

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the whole human race;
for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 25(24):4b, 5a

Alleluia, alleluia.

My God, teach me your paths

and guide me in your truth.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 22:34-40

‘You shall love the Lord your God and your neighbour as yourself.’

At that time: When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

A Pharisee asks Jesus this vital question, “Which is the greatest commandment of the law?” Jesus has no hesitation in replying that the greatest truth in the Law is the commandment to love. Love is not only the first and greatest but it is also the second greatest commandment. God has the first and greatest claim on our love; only our Creator is to be loved with all our feelings, all our will, all our mind, our whole self. God alone is worthy of this total love, because God’s love has brought us into existence and sustains us in existence. Yet, Jesus is clear that such love of God, if it is really genuine, will overflow into the love of our neighbour, on a day-to-day basis.

If we truly love God we will be caught up into God’s love for all of humanity, including our enemies. In Jesus’ eyes, those who proclaim their loving devotion to God while damaging other human beings in any way are the worst form of hypocrites. Jesus gave himself completely in love to God and, as a result, he gave himself fully in love to others. We need his Spirit in our hearts, the Holy Spirit, if we are to love in this same twofold way.