

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

20th July 2026

First reading

Micah 6:1-4, 6-8

‘He has told you, O man, and what does the Lord require of you.’

Hear what the Lord says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

‘O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

‘With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’ He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 50(49):5-6. 8-9. 16b-17. 21, 23. R23b

To one whose way is blameless, I will show the salvation of God.

‘Gather my faithful ones to me, who made covenant with me by sacrifice.’

The heavens proclaim his righteousness, for God himself is the judge.

‘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

Cf. Psalm 95(94):8a, 7c

Alleluia, alleluia.

Harden not your hearts today,
but listen to the voice of the Lord.
Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 12:38-42

‘The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation.’

At that time: Some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Jesus, saying, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.’ But he answered them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great sea creature, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

In the gospel Jesus criticizes the scribes and Pharisees because they want a sign from him over and above all that he has been doing. They want him to do something more spectacular before they will believe in him. There has always been the longing in religiously minded people for the extraordinary sign that leaves no room for doubt. However, that is not how the Lord seems to work. He comes to us in and through the ordinary more than the extraordinary. In response to the request of the scribes and Pharisees Jesus tells them that he is present among them as someone greater than the prophet Jonah, greater than the wise king Solomon, if only they had eyes to see and ears to hear. In looking for a sign from Jesus they show that they don't appreciate what they already have. In looking for the unusual we can miss what is before us. The Lord is among us today as someone greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon, greater than all the prophets and wise men of Israel. He is among us as one who is full of grace and truth in the words of the Prologue to John's gospel. The Lord has not sold us short; we already have all we need to know and love him and to grow in our relationship with him. What is required is that we appreciate what the Lord has already given to us.