

## Reading for the Memorial of St Scholastica

10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

### First reading

**1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30**

**'You have said, "My name shall be there", that you may listen to the plea of your people Israel.'**

In those days: Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands towards heaven, and said, 'O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.

'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day towards this house, the place of which you have said, "My name shall be there", that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers towards this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray towards this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.'

### Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 84(83):3. 4. 5, 10. 11. R2**

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts.*

My soul is longing and yearning  
for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh cry out  
to the living God.

Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself  
in which she sets her young,  
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,  
my king and my God.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house,  
for ever singing your praise.

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield;  
look on the face of your anointed.

One day within your courts  
is better than a thousand elsewhere.  
The threshold of the house of my God  
I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked.

### Gospel Acclamation

**Psalm 119(118):36a, 29b**

Alleluia, alleluia.

Bend my heart to your decrees, O God,  
and grant me mercy by your law.

Alleluia.

**Gospel****Mark 7:1-13****'You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.'**

At that time: When the Pharisees gathered to Jesus, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the market-place, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining-couches. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' And he said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.'

And he said to them, 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, "Honour your father and your mother"; and, "Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die." But you say, "If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban" (that is, given to God) — then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.'

**Short reflections on the reading for today**

What a travesty if one sets aside clear expressions of God in favour of merely human traditions. Many traditional rituals of Jesus' time had lost touch with the central moral virtues taught by Moses and the prophets.

Our Christian church needs to purify its own traditions so that they reflect the values of Jesus. Every generation needs to renew its vision, with the help of the Holy Spirit, so that our practices correspond with the true spirit of the gospel. Almost sixty years ago the second Vatican Council valiantly attempted to do just that; and various synods offer bishops and opportunity to discuss creative ways of renewing church practice. In our personal lives too we sometimes cling to traditional ways of doing things that are not really in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Norms of behaviour are always in need of reform in the light of the gospel. We need to listen afresh to the Lord's Word, and trust in the Spirit to show us the way.