

## Reading for Weekday after Ash Wednesday

21st February 2026

### First reading

Isaiah 58:9b-14

**'If you pour yourself out for the hungry, then shall your light rise in the darkness.'**

Thus says the Lord:

If you take away the yoke from your midst,  
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,  
if you pour yourself out for the hungry  
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
then shall your light rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be as the noonday.

And the Lord will guide you continually  
and satisfy your desire in scorched places  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters do not fail.

And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to dwell in.

'If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,  
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,  
and call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the Lord honourable;  
if you honour it, not going your own ways,  
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;  
then you shall take delight in the Lord,  
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;  
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

### Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 86(85):1-2. 3-4. 5-6. R1a**

*Teach me, O Lord, your way, so that I may walk in your truth.*

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my soul, for I am faithful;

save the servant who trusts in you, my God.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant, for I lift up my soul to you, O Lord.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,

full of mercy to all who call to you.

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to my voice in supplication.

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Ezekiel 33:11**

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord,  
but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

## **Gospel**

**Luke 5:27-32**

**‘I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’**

At that time: Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ And Jesus answered them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’

## **Short reflection on the reading for today**

As youngsters we were warned against bad company: “Show me your company and I’ll show you what you are!” So the scribes and Pharisees were shocked by the company Jesus kept. *Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?* Clearly, by eating with tax collectors and sinners he risked being contaminated by them. In that conservative view, one should steer clear of such people in order to stay morally pure. Jesus chose another way. Rather than being infected by the sins of others, he knew that by mixing with them, God’s goodness could and would transform them. The Lord is not diminished by our failings — but we are ennobled by his holiness. That is why he stays close to us, even when we might be tempted to stay away from him, because of what we have done or failed to do. The Lord is always ready to share his table with us, to relate to us, so that in our weakness we can draw from his strength and come to share his goodness and love.