

Reading for the Memorial of St David Lewis, Priest and Martyr

26th August 2026

First reading

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18

‘If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.’

We command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labour we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 128(127):1-2. 4-5. R1a

Blessed are all who fear the Lord.

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, and walk in his ways!

By the labour of your hands you shall eat. You will be blessed and prosper.

Indeed thus shall be blessed the husband who fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Sion.

May you see Jerusalem prosper all the days of your life!

Gospel Acclamation

1 John 2:5

Alleluia, alleluia.

Whoever keeps the word of Christ,

in him truly the love of God is perfected.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 23:27-32

‘You are sons of those who murdered the prophets.’

At that time: Jesus said, ‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, “If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

Jesus criticizes the religious leaders for being more preoccupied with appearances, what is on the outside, than with what is within, what Scripture call the heart. Today, even more than in the time of Jesus, appearances, image, has become all important. People who have a certain image receive the most adulation, have the biggest following and, often, get the biggest salaries. We are easily taken in by appearances. Jesus invites us to look a little deeper, which is how God looks. As one of the books of the Jewish Scriptures says, “we look at appearances, God looks at the heart.”

The “heart” is the seat of the emotions, the intellect and the will. What matters to God is the heart, how we feel, how we think, how and what we desire. We are to bring our feeling, our thoughts, our desires into line with how God feels, how God thinks, what God desires for us. Our hearts are to reflect, in some way, God’s heart, which means Jesus’ heart. As Jesus says elsewhere in Matthew’s gospel, “Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart.” It is the Holy Spirit who comes to us from God and the risen Lord who can mould our hearts into images of the Lord’s heart. We pray today that this work of the Spirit will be brought to completion in us.