

Reading for 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

27th September 2026

First reading

Ezekiel 18:25-28

‘When a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed, he shall save his life.’

Thus says the Lord: ‘You say, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 25(24):4-5b. 6-7. 8-9. R6a

Remember your compassion, O Lord.

O Lord, make me know your ways. Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth, and teach me; for you are the God of my salvation.

Remember your compassion, O Lord, and your merciful love, for they are from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.

In your merciful love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he shows the way to sinners.

He guides the humble in right judgement; to the humble he teaches his way.

Second reading

Philippians 2:1-11

‘Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.’

Brothers and Sisters: If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy; complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Acclamation

John 10:27

Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord,
and I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 21:28-32

‘He changed his mind and went.

The tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.’

At that time: Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, ‘What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” And he answered, “I will not”, but afterwards he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, “I go, sir”, but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

A theme common to all three readings is that of changing one’s mind. Our capacity to change our minds leaves us open to hazard and to hope; hazard when we choose to “renounce our integrity and to commit sin, hope when we choose to renounce sin to become law-abiding and honest” (Isaiah.)

The Gospel story shows us the nobility of a humble change of mind. The first son “thought the better of it.” He was open to change, to better thoughts. The second son was set and closed. The ability to change one’s mind is essential to all healthy relationships. A mind that is closed, whether from pride, stubbornness or stupidity, tends to destroy all relationships—e.g., when we refuse to admit a mistake, when we are unwilling to apologise and change our ways, when we persist in prejudice against a person or group, when we think we know it all.

The second reading, from Philippians, talks of a more specific and positive change of mind: “in your minds, you must be the same as Christ Jesus’, or as an older translation put it, “let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.” This is the direction in which we must be constantly changing our minds day by day.

Ever since Adam, we are all born as clingers and graspers. The new-born babe has to have a tight grip, and as we get older the grip often gets stronger. Clinging permeates all of life; we cling to people (possessiveness) ; to things (greed) ; to power and position (ambition) ; we cling to opinions (pride.) At the root of our clinging lies fear and insecurity. The apparently strong person who clings aggressively to set ways or ideas is in reality full of fear. Notice your physical reactions to fright; you clench up and grasp at something or someone, as a frightened child clings to its mother.

In the Buddhist tradition, clinging is seen as the root of all suffering. When you are unhappy, it can be enlightening to pursue the question “What am I clinging to?” It might be an idea, a plan, an expectation, power, possessions, reputation, a place, a person, health, even life itself. All wise traditions recommend a light grasp of everything. Anxious clinging leads to misery. As soon as we begin to relax our tight grasp and let go, we begin to be free and happy. (“Letting go” is a useful modern equivalent for “self-emptying.”)

Jesus did not cling. He knew that reality could be trusted, because at the heart of reality is “Abba—dear Father,” and that underneath everything, even death, are the everlasting arms. So he did not cling even to life, “accepting death, death on a cross.” “Into your hands,. I commend my spirit.” May this mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus.