

Reading for the Memorial of St John Bosco

31st January 2026

First reading

2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17

‘I have sinned against the Lord.’

In those days: The Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, ‘There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.’

Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, ‘As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.’

Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.” Thus says the Lord, “Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.” ’ David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die.’ Then Nathan went to his house.

And the Lord afflicted the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and he became sick. David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 51(50):12-13. 14-15. 16-17. R12a

Create a pure heart for me, O God.

Create a pure heart for me, O God;

renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence;

take not your holy spirit from me.

Restore in me the joy of your salvation;

sustain in me a willing spirit.

I will teach transgressors your ways,

that sinners may return to you.

Rescue me from bloodshed, O God,

O God of my salvation,

and then my tongue shall ring out your justice.

O Lord, open my lips

and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Gospel Acclamation

John 3:16

Alleluia, alleluia.

For God so loved the world,
that he gave his Only Begotten Son,
that whoever believes in him should have eternal life.
Alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 4:35-41

‘Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let us go across to the other side.’ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?’ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’

Short reflection on the reading for today

In the middle of the storm, they cried out loud, ‘Lord, save us.’ Elsewhere they had begged him, ‘Lord, increase our faith.’ That is quite like the prayer of St Thomas, ‘Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.’ Even if we feel our faith is weak at times, even that little faith is a blessing, because God can do great things with it. They experienced his powerful presence they felt a new surge of faith and trust. Filled with wonder they asked each other, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Ideals are more than statements in a book, even a book as sacred as the Bible; they must go beyond philosophical theorems, and lead to genuine service of God. In God’s name Nathan tells David, “You despised me in taking the wife of Uriah to be your wife.” In acting with justice and charity, we follow genuine ideals, but when we are unjust to others, we turn our back on God. This is clear in Jesus’ words: “As often as you did it for one of my little ones, you did it for me” (Matthew 25:40).

He is with us always, even when we are scared by the raging wind and waves breaking against our “boat.” Jesus says, “Why are you so afraid? Why so little faith?” The encouragement he brought to his disciples on the storm in Galilee, he still gives to us who trust in him.