

**First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12**

*The coming messianic king will inaugurate an era of disarmament and prosperity. Because of God's covenant with Israel, the people are designated as "prisoners of hope."*

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup> He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall command peace to the nations;  
his dominion shall be from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup> Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

**Psalm: Psalm 145:8-14**

*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. (Ps. 145:8)*

<sup>8</sup> The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> **Lord, you are good to all,  
and your compassion is over all your works.**

<sup>10</sup> All your works shall praise you, O Lord,  
and your faithful ones shall bless you.

<sup>11</sup> **They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom  
and speak of your power,**

<sup>12</sup> that all people may know of your power  
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures  
throughout all ages.**

**You, Lord, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.**

<sup>14</sup> The Lord upholds all those who fall  
and lifts up those who are bowed down.

## **Second Reading: Romans 7:15-25a**

*Life captive to sin is a catch-22 existence in which we know good but do not do it and do things we know to be wrong. Through Jesus Christ, God has set us free from such a futile existence.*

<sup>15</sup>I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup>But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup>For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup>but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25a</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

## **Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**

*Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.*

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] <sup>16</sup>"To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

<sup>17</sup>'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;  
we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

<sup>18</sup>"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; <sup>19</sup>the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

<sup>20</sup>Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup>"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup>But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>23</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?

No, you will be brought down to Hades.

"For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup>But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you."

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to

infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

July 12 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

*God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.*

<sup>10</sup>For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,

giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup>so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup>For you shall go out in joy  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup>Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle,  
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Psalm: Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

*Your paths overflow with plenty. (Ps. 65:11)*

[ <sup>1</sup>You are to be praised, O God, in Zion;  
to you shall vows be fulfilled.

<sup>2</sup>**To you, the one who answers prayer,  
to you all flesh shall come.**

<sup>3</sup>Our sins are stronger than we are,  
but you blot out our transgressions.

<sup>4</sup>**Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there!  
They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your  
temple.**

<sup>5</sup>Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation,  
O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.

<sup>6</sup>**You make firm the mountains by your power;  
you are girded about with might.**

<sup>7</sup>You still the roaring of the seas,  
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup>**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs;  
you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

] <sup>9</sup>You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water.

You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.

<sup>10</sup>**You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;  
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.**

<sup>11</sup>You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths overflow with plenty.

<sup>12</sup>**May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,  
and the hills be clothed with joy.**

<sup>13</sup>May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain;  
let them shout for joy and sing.

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11

*There is no condemnation for those who live in Christ. God sent Christ to accomplish what the law was unable to do: condemn sin and free us from its death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*In Matthew's gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.*

<sup>1</sup>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>If you have ears, hear!"

<sup>18</sup>"Hear, then, the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

**First Reading: Isaiah 44:6-8**

*There are no other gods besides God: the word of the Lord does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel—and we—are redeemed.*

<sup>6</sup>Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel,  
and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

I am the first, and I am the last;  
besides me there is no god.

<sup>7</sup>Who is like me? Let them proclaim it;  
let them declare and set it forth before me.

Who has announced from of old the things to come?  
Let them tell us what is yet to be.

<sup>8</sup>Do not fear or be afraid;  
have I not told you from of old and declared it?  
You are my witnesses!

Is there any god besides me?  
There is no other rock; I know not one.

**Psalm: Psalm 86:11-17**

*Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth. (Ps. 86:11)*

<sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth;  
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

<sup>12</sup>**I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
and glorify your name forevermore.**

<sup>13</sup>For great is your love toward me;  
you have delivered me from the pit of death.

<sup>14</sup>**The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of violent people seeks  
my life;  
they have not set you before their eyes.**

<sup>15</sup>But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

<sup>16</sup>**Turn to me and have mercy on me;  
give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your handmaid.**

<sup>17</sup>**Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and  
be put to shame;  
because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.**

## **Second Reading: Romans 8:12-25**

*For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.*

<sup>12</sup>So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—<sup>13</sup>for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

<sup>18</sup>I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, <sup>20</sup>for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, <sup>23</sup>and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

## **Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

*Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.*

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field,<sup>25</sup> but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup>And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' <sup>28</sup>He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' <sup>29</sup>But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup>Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

<sup>36</sup>Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." <sup>37</sup>He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; <sup>38</sup>the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, <sup>42</sup>and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!"

**First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12**

*Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.*

<sup>5</sup>At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup>And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup>And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup>And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup>I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

**Psalm: Psalm 119:129-136**

*When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. (Ps. 119:130)*

<sup>129</sup>Your decrees are wonderful;

therefore I obey them with all my heart.

<sup>130</sup>**When your word is opened it gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.**

<sup>131</sup>I open my mouth and pant

because I long for your commandments.

<sup>132</sup>**Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as you always do to those who love your name.**

<sup>133</sup>Order my footsteps in your word;

let no iniquity have dominion over me.

<sup>134</sup>**Rescue me from those who oppress me,  
and I will keep your commandments.**

<sup>135</sup>Let your face shine upon your servant  
and teach me your statutes.

<sup>136</sup>**My eyes shed streams of tears,  
because people do not keep your teaching.**

## **Second Reading: Romans 8:26-39**

*These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.*

<sup>26</sup>The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

*Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.*

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;<sup>32</sup> it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

<sup>33</sup>He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

<sup>44</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup> on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup> when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup> And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”