

in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,  
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus  
and that every tongue should acclaim  
Jesus Christ as Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

■ The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Jn 10:27

**Alleluia, alleluia! / My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord; / I know them, and they follow me. / Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Mt 21:28-32

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.**

*He went out moved by regret. The tax collectors and prostitutes will precede you into the kingdom of God.*

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go", but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir", but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

1 OCTOBER 2023

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

While we are familiar with the notion of personal responsibility, it may come as a surprise to learn that it took some time to fully develop in the Old Testament. While the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were not the first to invent the concept, they are major contributors to its development. In Ezekiel 18, the prophet is trying to convince the people of Israel that while it might seem harsh that each person is held responsible for their sins, there is also the possibility to change one's life. God will respect this change of heart and reward it.

As Jesus teaches in the Temple, he challenges the Jewish authorities to understand that what Ezekiel had spoken of continued to be true. Tax collectors and prostitutes took the opportunity that John the Baptist's preaching provided – to take responsibility for their lives and change. The parable of the two sons is a pointed commentary not only on the openness of sinners to John the Baptist but also on the opposition of the Jewish authorities. In the next few weeks, the lines of demarcation between Jesus and the authorities will continue to intensify.

The Christians of Philippi are encouraged by Paul to take responsibility for the building up of their community, a community which is to be marked by unity, and a profound valuing of the other person. He reminds them of a hymn they know well, a breathtaking hymn that talks of the sublime example of Jesus' humility and love which is the model for all Christian life.

**Christopher Monaghan CP**

## FIRST READING

Ezek 18:25-28

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel**

*The sinner who decides to turn against sinfulness deserves to live.*

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: 'You object, "What the Lord does is unjust." Listen, you House of Israel: is what I do unjust? Is it not what you do that is unjust? When the upright man renounces his integrity to commit sin and dies because of this, he dies because of the evil that he himself has committed. When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and honest, he deserves to live. He has chosen to renounce all his previous sins; he shall certainly live; he shall not die.'

■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 24:4-9. R. v. 6

**R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.**

1. Lord, make me know your ways. / Lord, teach me your paths. / Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: / for you are God my saviour. **R.**
2. Remember your mercy, Lord, / and the love you have shown from of old. / Do not remember the sins of my youth. / In your love remember me, / because of your goodness, O Lord. **R.**
3. The Lord is good and upright / He shows the path to those who stray, / he guides the humble in the right path / he teaches his way to the poor. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Phil 2:1-11

**A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians**

*In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus.*

If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one



thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:

His state was divine,  
yet he did not cling  
to his equality with God  
but emptied himself  
to assume the condition of a slave,  
and became as men are;  
and being as all men are,  
he was humbler yet,  
even to accepting death,  
death on a cross.  
But God raised him high  
and gave him the name  
which is above all other names  
so that all beings