

Sunday Readings

9th September 2018

Collect

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

35:4-7

Say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.
Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;

for water gushes in the desert,
streams in the wasteland,
the scorched earth becomes a lake,
the parched land springs of water.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145:7-10 R/. v.1

R/. My soul, give praise to the Lord.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **R/.**

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down,
the Lord, who protects the stranger
and upholds the widow and orphan. **R/.**

It is the Lord who loves the just
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St James

2:1-5

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that? Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

1 Sam 3:9; Jn 6:68

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL

Mark 7:31-37

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

the word of god

saint of the week

“Say to all faint hearts; courage! Do not be afraid. Look, your God is coming, he is coming to save you.”

These words of the Prophet Isaiah were spoken first to a broken people. The passing generations had seen Israel’s faith undermined by an inexorable decline into moral indifference and national impotence. Repeatedly the prophets had called the people to repentance, but their voices, for the main part, had gone unheeded. The catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem, and consequent exile, had seemed to be the end of a once proud people.

The poetry of Isaiah summoned the people to a hope that they had long thought dead. With the promised coming of the Lord eyes that could not see beyond the prevailing darkness would be opened to the light of dawning salvation. Ears that had long ceased to hear words of consolation would be unsealed.

A people crippled by guilt and the burden of past infidelity would once again walk with confidence. Tongues that had been silenced and overwhelmed would once again sing for joy. “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy.”

Isaiah went on to describe the opulence of a desert brought to life with gushing water, streams that would feed the wasteland, scorched earth that would become a lake. He was describing the soul of a people.

Every generation, every individual, will inevitably experience those times when God’s presence seems far removed. Then we shall know what it is to have eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear, tongues that cannot find the words for prayer.

Then we become the dry, weary land that longs for water, that must await the revealing of God’s presence. When we can neither see nor hear, our poverty, humbly embraced, becomes our prayer. “It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, the Lord who sets prisoners free. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down.”

Jesus came as the fulfilment of Isaiah’s promise that a sinful people would be set free, that the eyes and ears of faith would be opened, that God’s grace would revive the wasteland. Faith today faces many discouragements and will often feel itself to be in a wasteland of indifference. Like the Jerusalem addressed by Isaiah, we must look to a hope that lies beyond us. “Courage, do not be afraid!”

The Church begins its prayer each day with the invocation: “Lord, open my lips, and my heart shall sing your praise.” May we always remember that, without the Spirit that prays in us, we are like the man born deaf and dumb. Without the Spirit we have eyes but cannot see and have lips but cannot speak.

Today we look at the life of a little-known saint whose feast day is tomorrow.

Monday 10 September 2018
Saint Egwin, Bishop

The foundation of the abbey dedicated to Our Lady at Evesham is attributed to an early eighth-century Bishop of Worcester called Egwin. Very little is known about him, since the earliest account of his life, written in Latin c. 1020, is almost entirely composed of fables. However it does contain some local material which may reflect older traditions; among these is the account of the appearance of Our Lady to a swineherd at a place on the Avon where Egwin built the Church in her honour. This would be the earliest record of the appearance the Blessed Virgin Mary in England. Since 1952 Evesham has become the place of an annual pilgrimage to Our Lady; the Catholic Church there is dedicated to St Mary and St Egwin. In the Middle Ages St Egwin was commemorated on 30 December: September 10 is the day of the translation of his relics in 1039.



prayer of the week

A Prayer of St John Chrysostom
Feast Day: 13 September

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfil now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting.

Amen.