

Sunday Readings

15th February 2026

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Sirach 15:16-21

If you desire, you will keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of choice. He has placed before you fire and water: stretch out your hand for whichever you wish. Life and death are in front of people, and whichever one chooses will be given to him. For great is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power and sees everything; his eyes are on those who fear him, and he knows a person's every deed. He has not commanded anyone to be ungodly, and he has not given anyone permission to sin.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 118: 1-2. 4-5. 17-18. 33-34. R/. v.1.

R/. They are happy who follow God's law!

They are happy whose life is blameless,
who follow God's law!

They are happy who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts. **R/.**

You have laid down your precepts
to be obeyed with care.

May my footsteps be firm
to obey your statutes. **R/.**

Bless your servant and I shall live
and obey your word.

Open my eyes that I may see
the wonders of your law. **R/.**

Teach me the demands of your statutes
and I will keep them to the end.

Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians 2: 6-10

Brothers and Sisters: Among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him' —

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:17-37

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'

You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgement." But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, "You fool!" will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

'Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn." But I say to you: Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply "Yes" or "No"; anything more than this comes from evil.'

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year A

The Word of God

In this Sermon on the Mount, we have various sayings of Christ, actually spoken on different occasions. Matthew, in his systematic manner, has gathered these sayings into one continuous discourse here. This makes it easier for his readers, who were Jewish converts, to grasp the new order of salvation as inaugurated by Christ. They knew the ten commandments, but they knew them as their rabbis had taught them. These rabbis, for the most part Pharisees, put all the stress on the letter of the law and on its external observance. Christ's opening statement, that the attitude of his followers towards the commandments (and other precepts of the law) must be different, and superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, clearly indicates how Christianity must differ from, and supersede, Judaism.

Christ is not abolishing the ten commandments, but he is demanding of his followers a more perfect, a more sincere, fulfilment of them. The whole moral value of any legal observance (the Mosaic law included), comes from the interior disposition of him who observes or keeps the law. No man serves or honours God by any exterior acts, be they ever so arduous or continuous, unless these acts proceed from an intention and a will to honour and please God. This is the charter, the constitution, of the new law, Christianity. The old law is not abolished, but deepened and given a new life.

True and loyal service of God begins in the heart and has its value from this interior disposition. Keeping the ten commandments is our way of proving to God that we are grateful, obedient and loyal to him who gave us all we have and who has promised us future gifts infinitely greater still. And just as our love for God is proved by our true love for our neighbour, so the last seven of the commandments impose on us obligations regarding our neighbour.

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer of Pope Paul VI

Make us worthy, Lord,
to serve our fellow men throughout the world,
who live and die in poverty and hunger.
Give them by our hands
this day their daily bread,
and by our understanding love
give peace and joy.

Amen.

Saint of the Week

Saturday 21 February 2026

St Peter Damian (1007 - 1072)



St. Peter Damian is one of those stern figures who seem specially raised up, like St. John Baptist, to recall men in a lax age from the error of their ways and to bring them back into the narrow path of virtue. He was born at Ravenna and, having lost his parents when very young, he was left in the charge of a brother in whose house he was treated more like a slave than a kinsman. As soon as he was old enough he was sent to tend swine. Another brother, who was archpriest of Ravenna, took

pity on the neglected lad and undertook to have him educated. Having found a father in this brother, Peter appears to have adopted from him the surname of Damian.

After a time Peter resolved to leave the world entirely and embrace a monastic life away from his own country. While his mind was full of these thoughts, two religious of St. Benedict, belonging to Fonte Avellana of the Reform of St. Romuald, happened to call at the house where he lived, and he was able to learn much from them about their Rule and mode of life. This decided him and he joined their hermitage, which was then in the greatest repute. By the unanimous consent of the hermits he was ordered to take upon himself the government of the Community in the event of the superior's death. Peter's extreme reluctance obliged the abbot to make it a matter of obedience. Accordingly after the abbot's decease, Peter assumed the direction of that holy family, which he governed with great wisdom and piety. He also founded five other hermitages in which he placed Priors under his own general direction.

Peter was a man of great vehemence in all he said and did; it has been said of him that "his genius was to exhort and impel to the heroic, to praise striking achievements and to record edifying examples... an extraordinary force burns in all that he wrote". In spite of his severity, he could treat penitents with mildness and indulgence where charity and prudence required it.

His preaching was most eloquent and his writing voluminous, and he was declared a doctor of the Church in 1828.