

Cycle A – Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary time – Sept. 27, 2026

UN World Day of Migrants and Refugees

“The son changed his mind and went ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 25)

Leader: Remember your mercies, O Lord.

All: Make me know your ways, teach me in your paths.

Leader: Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation.

All: According to your steadfast love remember me for your goodness.

*Leader: Good and upright is the Lord; therefore God instructs sinners in the way and leads the humble in what is right.
Amen*

First Reading – Ezekiel 18:25-28

Today's readings speak of the issue of God's fairness. Why should a good God permit evil? Why do bad things happen to good people? The passage from Ezekiel gives the traditional view of good and evil, the good person will live the wicked person will die. Each person must act with an awareness of what the consequences will be.

1. What is our reaction to Ezekiel's words?
2. Can we agree with them fully?
3. Do we ever hear people complain that God "is not fair" to them? What is our response?

Second Reading – Philippians 2:1-11

Paul urges the Philippians to put aside discussion of fairness and superiority, and to imitate the self-emptying of Christ. Do not seek to gain equality, but rather to give love. The only antidote to pride is humility, so Paul asks that they regard each other highly then humility will be truly present. He turns to a hymn that sums up the humility of Christ.

1. How would we have responded to Paul's plea?
2. Can we trace the life of Christ, stage by stage, in the verses of the hymn?
3. Which verse struck us most forcefully, and why?

Gospel – Matthew 21:28-32

In a short parable Jesus holds a mirror up to his opponents. The chief priests and elders were emblems of holiness, but they did not always practice what they preached. Like the first son, they say they are going to the vineyard, but they don't go. On the other hand, tax collectors and sinners rebel against God, but they repent. The message of Jesus is that openness and mercy are the way of God. If we use the same virtue in our relationships, there is hope that the lost may be found.

1. Can we identify ourselves with either son? With both?
2. When first told by our Lord, what would the reaction of the listeners have been? Would they have found themselves within the story?
3. Does this story need to be re-told today? Addressed to whom?

LIVING THE WORD

What is God's challenge for me/for us this coming week?

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For discerning service by all those who hold public office and for our community's ministry to the suffering, the marginalized and the poor, we pray to the Lord.

Invite other intentions, then end with "Our Father ..."

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: O God, happily your ways are not fair by human standards.

All: You call both sinner and saint. May all sinners repent and all saints be humble.

*Leader: May we walk by your light,
and be instructed in your ways,
for you are Lord forever and ever.
Amen.*

Leader: Let us share with one another a sign of peace.