

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Dominica decima octava post Pentecosten

Missale Romanum 1962 · Proper of Time · 27 September 2026

three readings of the proper, compared

Element	Text and reference	What it says
Introit	<i>Da pacem</i> ; Ecclus 36:18, adapted; Ps 121:1	Peace for those who wait on the Lord, that his prophets be found faithful. The verse: “We shall go into the house of the Lord.”
Collect	<i>Dirigat corda nostra</i>	That the working of God’s mercy may direct our hearts, <i>quia tibi sine te placere non possumus</i> .
Epistle	1 Cor 1:4–8	Thanks for the grace given the Corinthians in Christ, rich in utterance and knowledge, as they wait for the Lord who will confirm them.
Gradual	<i>Laetatus sum</i> ; Ps 121:1, 7	The Introit’s verse sung again, and peace in the city’s strength, abundance in its towers.
Alleluia	<i>Timebunt gentes</i> ; Ps 101:16	“The Gentiles shall fear thy name, O Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.”
Gospel	Mt 9:1–8	In his own city Jesus forgives a paralytic whom others brought, and bids him rise, to show that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive; the crowds glorify God.
Offertory	<i>Sanctificavit</i> ; Ex 24:4–5, compiled	Moses hallows an altar and offers sacrifice in the sight of the children of Israel.
Secret	<i>Deus, qui nos</i>	Through this sacrifice’s venerable exchanges God makes us sharers in his Godhead; may we attain by our lives the truth we know.
Communion	<i>Tollite hostias</i> ; Ps 95:8–9	“Bring up sacrifices, and come into his courts: Adore ye the Lord in his holy court.”
Postcommunion	<i>Gratias tibi referimus</i>	Thanks for the sacred gift that has quickened us, and a plea that God’s mercy make us worthy of our share in it.

Second class, green, with Gloria and Credo; one oration of each kind, no optional element and no commemoration, so the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian gives way. The Preface of the Most Holy Trinity is appointed by rubric and is not proper to the day.

Sense	Synthesis
Literal	A people waiting on the Lord asks for peace and sings its way up to his house. Paul thanks God for the gifts of a church he must next warn against schisms. In his own city Jesus forgives a paralytic whom others carried, and bids him rise and go home, that the scribes may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive. Moses offers sacrifice in the sight of Israel; the nations are bidden into the Lord’s courts.
Allegorical	The house is the Church built of living stones (Augustine, Hilary, Cassiodorus), whose two walls, from Israel and the nations, meet in the Corner Stone (Augustine). The one who forgives is God (Chrysostom, Augustine), and his power is exercised in the Church by way of ministry, not authority (Aquinas). The covenant altar figures the blood shed for the remission of sins (Chrysostom on Hebrews); in the paralytic the nations are brought for healing (Hilary).
Moral	Peace is charity, and charity “slayeth what we have been, that we may be what we were not” (Augustine). What the Corinthians most admired in themselves was given, and where grace is, boasting has no ground (Chrysostom). The one present a creature can bring is a contrite heart (Augustine). The man who was carried is told to carry his bed (Aquinas).
Anagogical	The courts are entered in this Mass, and the city is still ahead: the eternal Jerusalem (Augustine), whence no one would ever wish to go out (Cassiodorus). The forgiven man’s way home is the way back to paradise (Hilary, Ambrose), or into the house of eternity (Aquinas). The confirming to the end, in the day of the Lord’s coming, and the being made worthy of the gift are God’s to give (1 Cor 1:8; the Postcommunion).

Scriptural Date and Location

Proper	Citation	Location	Date
Offertory	Ex 24:4–5, compiled	Sinai: an altar at the foot of the mount, with twelve titles for the twelve tribes (24:4)	Event: Rising in the morning.
<i>Narrated event: the ratifying of the covenant at Sinai, after the people have answered with one voice (24:3); the altar is built “rising in the morning” (24:4), a relative date within the narrative.</i> The chronology record dates the narrated event only, and only relatively; it holds no composition date for Exodus at these verses. The antiphon is the liturgy’s compilation: beside the altar, holocausts and victims of 24:4–5 it sets the verb of Moses’ consecration of the altar (Lev 8:11; Num 7:1), the evening sacrifice of the daily offering (Ex 29:41; Ps 140:2), and the closing <i>in conspectu filiorum Israel</i> of 24:17.			
Communion	Ps 95:8–9 (Heb. 96)	The house of God and its courts; by the title, the house built after the captivity, at Jerusalem	Superscription setting: B.C. 537. Composition: Before c. 165 B.C. Prophetic referent – disputed: B.C. 3; c. B.C. 7.
Titled in the Vulgate <i>Canticum ipsi David, quando domus aedificabatur post captivitatem</i> (v. 1). The record reads that setting against the raising of the Temple under Zorobabel after the return (<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i>, “Temple of Jerusalem”) and holds no Davidic era for the psalm; for its composition it gives only the Psalter’s critical boundary. The third answer is not a date of the psalm: the record reads Ps 95 as looking prophetically to Christ’s coming, and its two years are two <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> articles’ dates for the Nativity.			
Alleluia	Ps 101:16 (Heb. 102)	Sion, to be rebuilt and seen in glory (vv. 14, 17)	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
Titled “The prayer of the poor man, when he was anxious” (v. 1); no author named, and no traditional date held. The lament turns at verse 14 to Sion, and verse 17, unsung, gives the nations’ reason: “the Lord hath built up Sion”. The date is the Psalter’s critical boundary only.			
Gradual	Ps 121:1, 7 (Heb. 122); verse 1 is also the Introit’s verse	Jerusalem: the house of the Lord, and the city’s walls and towers (vv. 1–7)	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
Titled <i>Canticum graduum</i>, one of the Songs of Ascents (from Ps 119 to Ps 133 in the Missal’s numbering), sung by pilgrims going up to the house of the Lord; no author named, and no traditional date held. St John Chrysostom and Theodoret set it at the return from the Babylonian exile, of a city whose walls and towers lay in ruins. The date is the Psalter’s critical boundary only.			
Introit	Ecclus 36:18, adapted; its verse, Ps 121:1, stands with the Gradual	“Jesus the son of Sirach, of Jerusalem” (50:29), praying for Jerusalem and Sion (36:14–16)	Composition – No single date applies across every cited locus.
Traditional attribution: Jesus the son of Sirach, named in the Greek prologue; his grandson rendered the book into Greek in Egypt (<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i>, “Ecclesiasticus”). The record dates the composition passage by passage. Ecclus 36:18: B.C. 190–170 or c. B.C. 280, that article’s dates for the book’s composition, the interval preferred. Ps 121:1: before c. 165 B.C., the Psalter’s critical composition boundary, given with the Gradual. Neither holds at both loci, so the element has no single date. The antiphon’s opening and close are neither the Vulgate’s nor the Greek’s.			
Gospel	Mt 9:1–8	Matthew in Judea, for the Jews, before his departure from Jerusalem. Event: “his own city” across the lake (9:1), Capernaum for Chrysostom, Nazareth for Jerome	Event – No narrated-event date in the chronology corpus. Composition – disputed: c. A.D. 38–45; c. A.D. 40–42; A.D. 40–45; c. A.D. 60–68; c. A.D. 64–67; c. A.D. 50.
<i>Narrated event: the healing of the paralytic, after the crossing from the country of the Gerasens (8:28–9:1) and before the call of Matthew (9:9); the record gives the episode no date.</i> Traditional attribution: St Matthew the Apostle. The Date column keeps the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i>’s ranges as disputed alternatives: early writers counting years from the Ascension; a dispersal of the Apostles by a tradition it calls “admittedly not too reliable”; the Catholic critics of its day; a later apostolic departure; and St Irenaeus, whom it finds too uncertain for a positive conclusion. The last figure, from “The New Testament” (1912), dates the Aramaic original alone. The same Matthew article reports the Protestant and liberal critics of its day as widely divided, from shortly before the fall of Jerusalem to well into the second century. The town locates the healing, not the writing.			
Epistle	1 Cor 1:4–8	Paul at Ephesus (16:8), to “the church of God that is at Corinth” (1:2)	Composition – disputed: A.D. 56; A.D. 57.
Traditional attribution: St Paul, with Sosthenes (1:1). The <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i>’s “Epistles to the Corinthians” (1908) has Paul, at Ephesus, learn of party strife at Corinth and write at once; the table in its “St. Paul” (1911) gives the year of the letters to Corinth and Galatia. Two Catholic authorities disagree, and both are shown. The first calls the evidence for Paul’s authorship so strong that the most advanced critical schools of its day admitted it.			

The Propers: Themes and Movement

This Mass asks for a peace it does not define, shows a power exercised on earth, and confesses in its Collect that without God we cannot please God. It opens with *Da pacem*, a request, and a destination: “We shall go into the house of the Lord”. It closes with a command to bring sacrifices and come into the Lord’s courts, and a prayer to be made worthy of what has been received. Between them stand a thanksgiving for a grace already given to a divided church, a man carried to Jesus and forgiven before he is healed, and Moses at an altar in the sight of Israel.

The Introit’s antiphon is cited to Ecclus 36:18, the close of the son of Sirach’s prayer for “Jerusalem, the city which thou hast sanctified”. The chant keeps that verse’s middle clause word for word, *ut prophetae tui fideles inveniantur*, and changes its frame: it asks *pacem* where the Vulgate asks *mercedem* and the Greek a reward, adds *Domine*, and prays for *servi tui, et plebis tuae Israel*, one servant and the people, where the Vulgate has many servants. The words *Da pacem* stand in no verse of the Clementine Vulgate. Its word for those who pray is *sustinentibus te*, those who wait for thee: the verb is patient endurance, and what the antiphon asks is what waiting cannot produce. The psalm verse is the opening of Ps 121, a Song of Ascents, the pilgrim’s joy at the call to go up to the house of the Lord, and the same verse returns after the Epistle as the Gradual’s respond. The destination named at the entrance is named a second time.

The Collect asks that *tuae miserationis operatio*, the working of God’s mercy, may direct our hearts, and gives as its reason *quia tibi sine te placere non possumus*. The one we are to please is God, and the one without whom we cannot please him is God himself; the 1861 Philadelphia missal renders *sine te* “without thy help”. The prayer asks for one thing, and the verb of it is God’s: his mercy does the directing, and the hearts it directs are ours. It is the Mass’s only collect, and the Mass’s other petitions are of the same kind, that God should do in us what we cannot begin.

The Epistle is the thanksgiving that opens St Paul’s first letter to Corinth. He gives thanks “for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus”: they are rich “in all utterance and in all knowledge”, nothing is wanting to them in any grace as they wait for the Lord’s revelation, and he “will confirm you unto the end without crime”. The name of Christ stands in four of the five verses. The lesson stops one verse before *Fidelis Deus* and two before the appeal “that there be no schisms among you” (1:10), so that the church thanked for its riches is the church about to be told of its parties. In these five verses the Corinthians do nothing but receive and wait. The grace “is given” them, they “are made rich”, the testimony of Christ “was confirmed” in them, and the confirming to the end is Christ’s. Every gift the lesson names, their utterance and their knowledge among them, is one they did not make, and the thanks for it go to God.

The Gradual sings verses 1 and 7 of Ps 121. Between them the psalm sets the pilgrims’ feet in the courts of Jerusalem, “built as a city, which is compact together”, and bids them “pray ye for the things that are for the peace of Jerusalem”; verse 7 is that prayer, *Fiat pax in virtute tua: et abundantia in turribus tuis*. The Introit’s peace now has a place: a city with strength and towers. The Alleluia takes one verse of Ps 101, the prayer of the poor man, at the point where its lament has turned to Sion: “The Gentiles shall fear thy name, O Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.” The Missal drops the connective *Et* and stops before the reason the next verse gives, “For the Lord hath built up Sion”. Both chants sing of the house the Introit’s verse set out for. The Gradual stands the pilgrims inside the walls of Jerusalem and prays for her peace; the Alleluia sets the nations and their kings before a Sion the Lord has had mercy on and built, so that the peace asked for at the entrance is already a city before which the nations fear the Lord’s name.

The Gospel, Mt 9:1–8, stands between the Gerasenes who begged Jesus to leave their coasts and the call of Matthew at the custom house. Jesus crosses the lake “and came into his own city”. Men bring a paralytic lying on a bed; “seeing their faith”, Jesus says to the sick man, “Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee”. Some of the scribes say within themselves, “He blasphemeth”. Jesus asks which is easier to say, and to show “that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins” he bids the man rise, take up his bed

and go home. The man does so, and the crowds fear and glorify God “that gave such power to men”. The Creed follows.

The Offertory takes the Mass to the foot of Sinai. Its antiphon is a compilation and not a quotation of the verses it cites. Where Exodus says that Moses built an altar, *aedificavit*, the antiphon says that he hallowed it, *sanctificavit*, the verb the Vulgate uses of the altar’s consecration; it adds *sacrificium vespertinum in odorem suavitatis*, the language of the daily evening offering; and its last words, *in conspectu filiorum Israel*, stand in the same chapter at 24:17, where the glory of the Lord is seen on the mountain. The chapter it cites goes on to the blood of the covenant sprinkled on the altar and the people. The antiphon once had verses in which Moses intercedes for the people after the golden calf; the 1962 Missal sings the antiphon alone. In it every finite verb has Moses for its subject: he hallows the altar, offers the holocausts, immolates the victims and makes the evening sacrifice, and the people are named only at the end, as those in whose sight it is done.

The Secret says what the altar is for: *per huius sacrificii veneranda commercia*, through the venerable exchanges of this sacrifice, God makes us *unius summae divinitatis participes*, sharers in the one supreme Godhead. The verb, *efficis*, is present. The prayer asks that as we know God’s truth, *cognoscimus*, so we may attain it by a worthy life, *assequamur*: the knowing is indicative and already given, the attaining subjunctive and asked for; and the Missal directs the Preface of the Most Holy Trinity after it. The Communion sings the middle of Ps 95:8–9, a psalm headed in the Vulgate “when the house was built after the captivity”: *Tollite hostias, et introite in atria eius*. Its two commands come in order: the sacrifices are brought first, and then the courts are entered. Where the Vulgate has *in atrio sancto eius*, the Missal sings *in aula sancta eius*. The Postcommunion begins *Gratias tibi referimus*, thanks for the sacred gift by which the communicants have been *vegetati*, quickened, and asks *ut dignos nos eius participatione perficias*. It gives thanks before it asks: the gift has been received, thanks are returned for it, and only then does the prayer ask that the communicants be made fit for what they have already been given. The Mass whose Epistle begins *Gratias ago* ends its prayers with thanks.

Three habits run through the whole. The first is the house. The Introit and the Gradual go up to it, the Alleluia sees the nations come to Sion as it is built, the Communion enters its courts, and in the Gospel the forgiven man is sent *in domum tuam*. The second is the visible given for the invisible. The Gospel proves an unseen forgiveness by a seen healing; the rest of the formulary takes visible things, an altar, victims, an evening sacrifice, a gift received, and claims an invisible work done through them, *efficis* in the Secret and *vegetati* in the Postcommunion. The third is that nothing in the Mass is self-made. The Collect says so outright; the Epistle’s riches are “given”; the paralytic is carried in, and says nothing; and the last prayer asks God himself to make the communicants worthy of what they have already received.

Three readings of the whole Mass follow from these texts, each developed at length in the expansive study. The first hears the formulary from its chants, as one ascent from the prayer for peace to the entry into the Lord’s courts, and finds the peace of the city in the charity of which it is built. The second hears it from the Gospel, as the Son of man’s power on earth to forgive, shown in his own city and set beside the altar of the covenant whose blood, in the words of institution, is shed “for the remission of sins”. The third hears it from the Collect, as a Mass that gives thanks at both ends for what no one in it earned, with a man at its centre who was carried. They differ in emphasis, as three governing questions put to one set of texts; each accounts for something the others leave aside, and they answer several of the same questions differently, the crowd’s praise at the end of the Gospel among them, where two of them part over whose judgement of it to follow.

The Propers: Detailed Commentary

Which house, and which city?

The first reading hears the whole Mass from the chants that name a house: Ps 121:1 at the Introit and again at the Gradual, Ps 101:16 at the Alleluia, Ps 95:8–9 at the Communion. Its principal witness is St Augustine, who expounded all three psalms. He begins Ps 121 from its title, a Song of degrees, “for these degrees are not of descent, but of ascent”, and the ascent is to a city: “there is in heaven the eternal Jerusalem, where are our fellow-citizens, the Angels: we are wanderers on earth from these our fellow-citizens. We sigh in our pilgrimage; we shall rejoice in the city” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 121, 2). His psalter read the first verse otherwise than the Missal, *Jucundatus sum in his qui dixerunt mihi*, joy in those who said, and he builds on the persons: *Jucundatus sum in Prophetis, jucundatus sum in Apostolis*. What his reading gives the Mass is the plural it shares with the Missal, *ibimus*. No one goes up to this house alone.

St Hilary of Poitiers reaches the same city by another road. The one who remembers that he is a future dweller *ciuitatis caelestis uiuis lapidibus extructae*, of the heavenly city built of living stones, must cry with the prophet *Laetatus sum*, and Hilary refuses the earthly city in so many words: *non utique . . . hanc terrenam et caducam . . . sed illam liberam et caelestem Hierusalem* (*Tractatus super Psalmos*, in Ps. 121, 1–2). He names its builders, *a Moyse in lege, a prophetis in passionibus suis, a domino in corpore, ab apostolis in martyriis, a sancto spiritu in uirtutibus*, and gives the plural its reason: *quia unum ecclesiae corpus est*, one not by a heaping of bodies but *per fidei unitatem, per caritatis societatem, per operum uoluntatisque concordiam, per sacramenti unum in omnibus donum* (121, 3, 5). Cassiodorus hears the Holy Spirit as the one who said the words at which the psalmist rejoices, *qui cordi eius tacita voce loquebatur*, and the house as *domus de uiuis lapidibus fabricata* (*Expositio psalmorum*, in Ps. 121).

The Greek readers of the same psalm read another city. St John Chrysostom sets Ps 121 at the return from Babylon: the exiles longed for the house of prayer, and the city built as a city is the city they found in ruins, its towers thrown down and its walls cast to the ground (*Expositio in Psalmum CXXI*, PG 55, cols. 347–348). Theodoret reads it the same way, and neither reads the Church or heaven there. St Robert Bellarmine holds both in order, the return from exile first and then “the celestial, and not the earthly Jerusalem”; so does Schuster, commenting on this Mass: “All this is, of course, to be glorified by a spiritual interpretation. The peace which is here described is the atmosphere of the heavenly Jerusalem.” In the first reading the order is the same: the return from exile is the Gradual’s literal sense and the heavenly city of Augustine, Hilary and Cassiodorus its allegory. Chrysostom’s own turn to his hearers then serves the literal sense well. Call men to the hippodrome and many run together; call them to the house of prayer and few are not sluggish, so that Christians show themselves slower to go up than the returning Jews were.

The Alleluia brings the nations to the same building. Augustine reads Ps 101:16 in the psalm’s own order: God has had mercy on Sion, his servants have taken pleasure in her stones, and therefore “let the heathen fear Thy Name, let another wall approach also from the heathen, let the Corner Stone be recognised” (101, s. 1, 16). The verse the Alleluia stops before gives the work its present tense: “This work is going on now. O ye living stones, run to the work of building, not to ruin” (101, s. 1, 17). Theodoret, who reads Ps 121 of the earthly city alone, reads this verse first of the neighbours who marvelled at Israel’s return, and then says that it was fulfilled properly and truly only after the Incarnation. At this psalm the Greek and the Latin readers meet.

The Communion completes the movement. Augustine reads its psalm under its title, the house built after the captivity, and at the Communion’s verse he describes the entry: “Rejoice, because ye have entered into the courts; rejoice, because ye are being built into the temple of God. For those who enter are themselves built up, they themselves are the house of God” (95, 9). Cassiodorus uses one image, the house of living stones, at all three psalms, and at this one says that the Church *nec aedificari desinit donec usque ad finem saeculi praedestinatorum numerus impleatur*, does not cease to be built until the number of the predestined

is filled. In the first reading the request of the first words, *Da pacem*, is answered in the chants by the completion of a building.

The Gospel's "his own city" enters here too, and it is where the first two readings meet. The first reads it allegorically with St Hilary: the Gerasene town that begged Christ to leave *Judaici populi habet speciem*, and, rejected there, he returns to his own city, for *Deo civitas fidelium plebs est*, carried in the boat, which is the Church (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* VIII.4). Hilary names no town, and St Thomas Aquinas, in the same lecture in which he harmonises the Gospels with three cities, Bethlehem by birth, Nazareth by upbringing and Capernaum by dwelling, reads *in civitatem gentium, quae sibi datae sunt*. The second reading takes the clause as the literal place of a verifiable sign, and there the witnesses divide over the town. Chrysostom says Capernaum, "that which had Him continually inhabiting it"; St Jerome says Nazareth, *unde et Nazaræus appellatus est*; St Augustine, reconciling Matthew with Mark, places the healing at Capernaum and offers two explanations of the phrase (*De consensu evangelistarum* II.25.58). Nothing in the text settles the town, and nothing in either reading waits on it: the allegory holds whichever town is meant, and the literal sign needs only that there was one. The third reading does not use the clause.

What peace is, and what threatens it

The Gradual's versicle, *Fiat pax in virtute tua*, is the one place where the Mass says where its peace is to be found, and only the first reading asks what it means. Augustine asks what a city's strength is and answers with charity: "peace be in thy love; for thy strength is thy love", proving it from "Love is strong as death" and drawing the cost: "this love slayeth what we have been, that we may be what we were not; love createth a sort of death in us" (121, 12). Cassiodorus says the same in almost the same words, *Virtus quippe ipsius pax sine dubitatione sanctorum est, quae vocatur et charitas*. Hilary joins peace and strength without making them one: *pax enim ecclesiae et unitas virtutem nobis firmitatemque praestat*, the Church's peace and unity give us strength and firmness (121, 14). On the towers of the same verse the three give three allegories. For Cassiodorus they are the martyrs, who defend the city with their bodies; for Hilary the faithful and holy men who give the rest the firmness of towers; for Augustine the city's *excelsi*, the few who will sit in judgment and receive the many.

The Epistle shows what threatens such a city, and here two of the readings draw on the same homily of St John Chrysostom for different things. The Corinthians are rich "in all utterance and in all knowledge", and the verses after the lesson show them dividing into parties. For the first reading Chrysostom supplies the remedy. Under the colour of praise Paul "touches them sharply", and "he always fastens them as with nails to the Name of Christ", so that "by incessant application of that glorious Name he may foment their inflammation, and purge out the corruption of the disease" (*Homilies on First Corinthians* 2). A city is not held together by its gifts but by the one Name its members bear. Augustine and Chrysostom agree that the unity is not the citizens' achievement, and differ in what they are looking at: Augustine watches a building rise, Chrysostom attends to one coming apart. The Mass sets the lesson of a divided church between two chants of the city at peace.

For the third reading the same homily supplies its controlling point: the gifts are given: "now a favor is not a debt nor a requital nor a payment: which indeed every where is important to be said, but much more in the case of the Corinthians who were gaping after the dividers of the Church." And on "the grace of God": "For where grace is, works are not; where works, it is no more grace. If therefore it be grace, why are you high-minded? Whence is it that you are puffed up?" Even the praises, Chrysostom says, only seem to be theirs, "for not even did this praise belong to them, but to the grace of God. For that they had remission of sins, and were justified, this was of the Gift from above" (2, 1–5). Theodoret and St Thomas Aquinas keep that the gifts are God's and add that the praise is true. Theodoret says that Paul soothes his hearers before the cure and yet says nothing false; Aquinas, that the thanks come first *ut correctionem suorum defectuum tolerabilius ferant*, and that the riches of utterance and knowledge belong to the more perfect,

whom the rest share through charity (*Super I ad Corinthios* c. 1, lect. 1). Ambrosiaster names the grace given in Christ as the gift by which the believer *gratis accipit remissionem peccatorum*.

The second reading hears the Epistle differently again, through the continuation of *The Liturgical Year* (Dom Lucien Fromage). The continuation reads the gifts for which Paul gives thanks, after the September Ember ordinations, as above all “the powers conferred by the imposition of the bishop’s hands on the ministers of the Church”. The three uses do not conflict. Chrysostom himself is the witness both for the one Name that binds and for the grace that leaves no room for boasting.

Power on earth: the unseen proved by the seen

The second reading’s centre is the Gospel’s sixth verse, *Ut autem sciatis, quia Filius hominis habet potestatem in terra dimittendi peccata*. The forgiveness of the paralytic’s sins cannot be verified; his rising from his bed can, and the second is done so that the first may be believed. Chrysostom reads the order of the two healings that way. Christ “healed first that which is invisible, the soul, by forgiving his sins”, and then offered the visible miracle as evidence: “because the one is unseen, the other in sight, I throw in that, which although an inferior thing, is yet more open to sense; that the greater also and the unseen may thereby receive its proof” (*Homilies on Matthew* 29, 1–2). He notices the grammar as well: at first Christ “said not, ‘I forgive thee thy sins,’ but, ‘thy sins be forgiven thee:’ upon their constraining, He discloses His authority more clearly”. St Jerome gives the argument in fewer words, *Fit igitur carnale signum, ut probetur spirituale*, and adds that the one who reads the scribes’ silent thoughts shows himself God: *Eadem majestate et potentia qua cogitationes vestras intueor, possum et hominibus peccata dimittere* (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* I, on 9:4–6).

On why the sins came first, Jerome and Aquinas differ in confidence. Jerome offers a possibility, *Et idcirco forsitan dimittuntur prius peccata tua, ut causis debilitatis ablatis, sanitas restituatur*: perhaps the sins are forgiven first so that, the cause of the weakness taken away, health may be restored. Aquinas states it without the *forsan*: the sins are forgiven first *quia peccatum erat causa aegritudinis*, as a good physician *qui causam curat* (*Super Matthaeum* c. 9).

St Augustine finds the whole point in one word of address. Matthew’s Christ says “Son”, Luke’s “Man”, and the difference “served to indicate that He who forgave sins to man was Himself God”, while the patient, being a man, could not say “I have not sinned” (*De consensu evangelistarum* II.25.57). Chrysostom and Augustine reach the same conclusion by different roads. Aquinas then presses the words of verse 6 one by one: *Filius hominis* excludes Nestorius, *in terra* excludes Photinus, since the power to forgive is Christ’s already on earth. And he raises the objection on which the second reading turns: the verse seems not to prove Christ’s divinity, *quia etiam ipsi Apostoli habebant potestatem*. His answer is the distinction on which the second reading rests: *ipsi habebant per viam administrationis, non auctoritatis*, the Apostles had it by way of ministry, not of authority. He draws it at the verse that says *in terra*, to keep the authority Christ’s.

The two other readings take the verse otherwise. For the third, what matters is not the power but its object: a man who could do nothing and was forgiven. For the first, the Gospel is chiefly the city Christ enters. Only the second hears the Mass turning on the two words *in terra*, as a statement of where the power is exercised; a simpler reading of the same texts could remember the power as Christ’s alone, and the difference between them lies in those two words.

Whose faith, and who was carried

The third reading’s Gospel is the man, and on him the witnesses divide in the open. *Et videns Iesus fidem illorum*: Mt 9:2 says “their faith” and no more. St Jerome reads the phrase in its strongest form: the man was brought *quia ipse ingredi non valebat*, and *Videns autem Iesus non ejus fidem qui offerebatur, sed eorum qui offerebant*, Jesus saw not the faith of the one offered but of those who offered him. He marvels that Christ calls such a man son, *quem sacerdotes non dignabantur attingere*, and reads the story of the

soul, which, lying powerless, is offered to the Lord by a perfect teacher and, once healed, *tantum roboris accipit, ut portet statim lectulum suum* (PL 26, cols. 54–55). St Ambrose, on Luke’s telling, takes the same side, *Magnus Dominus qui aliorum merito ignoscit aliis*, and turns it to his hearer: *adhibe Ecclesiam quae pro te precetur*, call in the Church to pray for you (*Expositio in Lucam* V.11).

Chrysostom begins from the same point and refuses to stop there. Christ saw “the faith of them that had let the man down”, but “in this case the sick man too had part in the faith; for he would not have suffered himself to be let down, unless he had believed”; and when the scribes murmur, the man “gives himself up to the power of the healer”. Aquinas will not choose: *Curat aliquando Dominus aliquem propter fidem suam: aliquando propter preces suas, et aliorum*. The disagreement is real, and the verse does not settle it. What both sides grant is what the third reading rests on: the man did not come by himself. Whether the faith Christ saw was the bearers’ alone or his as well, it brought him only as far as he was carried.

St Hilary carries the story over to all humankind. *Jamque in paralytico gentium universitas offertur medenda*: in the paralytic the whole body of the nations is offered for healing, brought by angels, called son because Adam was God’s first work, and pardoned the first transgression, *non enim paralyticum peccasse aliquid accepimus* (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* VIII.5). The nations, too, were brought, and the first sin forgiven them is Adam’s. The third reading hears the Alleluia in the same key: its nations fear the Lord’s name because God has had mercy on Sion and built her, not because they found him, and Augustine reads the verse in that order, “Now that Thou hast pitied Sion . . . hence preaching hath increased among the heathen”.

The Collect says outright what the Epistle implies. *Quia tibi sine te placere non possumus*: the Latin says more simply than the English “without thy help” that without God himself we cannot please God. Berno of Reichenau explains the prayer from the Communion that follows it: *Et quia Deo nec in sacrificio, nec in oblatione hostiarum sine ejus adjutorio placere possumus, nec in atria ejus introire, nec in aula ejus adorare eum, merito sacerdos ex sua et nostra voce Deum deprecatur, dicens: Dirigat corda nostra* (*Libellus* V). Schuster calls it a prayer that “should establish us in humility. All the good which we do is the work of grace”, and quotes the question of the same letter as the Epistle, *quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis?* (1 Cor 4:7). The Collect has a place in the other two readings as well: in the first because a city no one can build for himself is still the city to which the people go up, in the second because the power at work in the Mass is expressly not ours.

“Such power to men”: the one disagreement between two readings

The Gospel ends with the crowds, who “feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men”. Here, and here only, two readings follow different judgements. St John Chrysostom hears a confession that falls short: Christ “makes the invisible evident by that which is in sight. But nevertheless they still creep upon the earth”. He does not rebuke them but raises their thoughts by his words: “Since for the time it was no small thing for Him to be thought greater than all men, as having come from God” (*Homilies on Matthew* 29, 2). St Ambrose, at Luke’s parallel, judges more severely and in his own way: those who watch the man rise are unbelievers, *Spectant surgentem increduli*, who *divini operis miracula malunt timere quam credere*, and *quia non diligebant, calumniabantur* (*Expositio in Lucam* V.15). Chrysostom’s crowd glorify God and fall short; Ambrose’s fearers are the calumniators. St Hilary judges otherwise. All has been concluded in its order, *conclusa sunt omnia suo ordine*, and the honour is fitting, paid not for what one man could do but because *potestas hominibus ac via data sit per verbum ejus, et peccatorum remissionis, et corporum resurrectionis, et reversionis in coelum*, a power and a way have been given to men through his word (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* VIII.8). The men for whom God is glorified are those who receive the forgiveness, not those who give it.

The third reading takes Hilary’s side, and the choice changes where its Gospel ends. On Chrysostom’s reading the Gospel closes on praise that still falls short and must be raised. On Hilary’s the crowd glorifies

God for what men have received, and the third reading hears in that praise the thanksgiving, *Gratias ago*, with which the Epistle opens.

Neither Father gives the second reading its own sense of the verse. That sense is Bl. Ildefonso Schuster's, commenting on this Mass, and it is the third of three. The crowd's words "may be understood as a subjective judgement on the part of the people who had not yet grasped the divine nature of Christ"; they have "a still deeper meaning", the divine nature working the miracle through the human; and "Further", the narrative is "symbolical and prophetic. This power of remitting sins had to be communicated to men—that is, to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood" (*The Sacramentary* III, p. 169). The continuation of *The Liturgical Year* reads the Gospel of the pastors' prerogative of forgiving sins, names it as the keys exercised in Penance, and applies the verse's closing words to the Church allegorically: the angels "sing glory to God, who gave such power to men".

None of the Fathers read here takes verse 8 of the Church's ministry. Chrysostom's crowd falls short, Hilary's men are the receivers, Jerome passes from the risen man to the call of Matthew, and Luke's parallel, on which Ambrose comments, does not contain the words. The second reading's ministerial sense stands in four places. Ambrose, glossing the scribes' question, says that God alone forgives sins, *qui per eos quoque dimittit, quibus dimittendi tribuit potestatem*, who forgives also through those to whom he has given the power (V.13); he says it of the scribes' question, the parallel of Matthew's verse 3, not of the crowd's words. Aquinas says it at verse 6. Schuster reads it, prophetically, in verse 8. The continuation places that power in the keys and in Penance, not at the altar.

The altar, the exchange and the courts

At the Offertory the three readings hear one compiled antiphon three ways. For the first, its point is its last clause, the one that stands verbatim in the chapter it cites: Moses offers *in conspectu filiorum Israel*, and the people are present at their own sacrifice. For the third, its point is its grammar: every finite verb has Moses for its subject, he sanctifies, offers, immolates and makes the evening sacrifice, and the people are named only as those in whose sight it is done. For the second, its point is the chapter it cites, which goes on to the blood sprinkled on altar and people, "This is the blood of the covenant" (Ex 24:8). Chrysostom, expounding that sacrifice as the Letter to the Hebrews tells it, joins it to the remission of sins: the old rites were "not a perfect purification, nor a perfect remission", but "in this case He says, This is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins", and "With this blood not Moses but Christ sprinkled us" (*Homilies on Hebrews* 16, 3–5). Chrysostom is expounding Hebrews and not the Offertory's verses; Cornelius a Lapide, on Exodus itself, reads the covenant blood as the type of the blood Christ named in instituting the Eucharist. In the second reading the altar meets the Gospel's power through that blood alone. Schuster regrets that the Missal has cut the antiphon to a single verse, losing the lines in which the lawgiver "intercedes for the apostate people, imploring mercy for them"; the 1962 Missal sings only Moses who sanctifies and offers.

The Secret divides the same way. For the second reading it claims for a visible rite an invisible effect, in the present, *efficit*, as the Gospel's sign claimed an invisible forgiveness; Schuster explains the exchange, "whilst we offer him our gifts he, in his turn, bestows on us the gift of himself". For the third it divides its verbs: *sicut tuam cognoscimus veritatem* is indicative and already given, *sic eam dignis moribus assequamur* is subjunctive and asked for. For the first it names the unity toward which the city is built, and names it first as God's, *unius summae divinitatis participes*.

The Communion's *Tollite hostias* names sacrifices, and its witnesses identify them in two ways that do not exclude each other. The third reading hears the verse with one of them and the second with the other. Augustine names the one present a creature can bring: "Confession is a present unto God . . . Enter with an humble heart into the house of God, and thou hast entered with a present. But if thou art proud, thou enterest empty. For whence wouldest thou be proud, if thou wert not empty?" (95, 9). Cassiodorus reads

the *hostiae* as *conscientiae pura libamina, unde non sanguis currat, sed piae lacrymae defluant*, and notices the order of the imperatives, *prius posuit, tollite, et sic introite*: first bring, and so enter. That offering of the heart is the one the third reading hears. Theodoret reads the rational sacrifices “we see continually offered and sacrificed by the priests”, and the expositions under St Athanasius’s name the spiritual sacrifices of the churches’ “priests, I mean, and presidents”; that is the sacrifice the second reading hears. Neither identification denies the other. Bellarmine gives both, the contrite heart first and then the Eucharistic sacrifice offered “through the hands of the priests of the New Testament”, and the continuation holds both together: the Communion “is addressed to the priests, and, at the same time, to us all”, and with the priest’s Victim we bring “other victims, that is ourselves”. The first reading hears the same verse as the entry into courts where “those who enter are themselves built up”. Schuster sets the two covenants side by side: “In the Old Covenant it was the people who brought gifts to God in his temple, in the New it is God who gives himself to his people.”

Where the Mass sends its people

The Gospel ends with a man sent home, *vade in domum tuam*, and the Postcommunion with a prayer, *ut dignos nos eius participatione perficias*. Each reading ends where the Mass sends its people, and each hears that prayer asking for something still to come.

The first leaves them at the courts, with the city still ahead. The house the Introit says we will go into is entered in this Mass in sign, and the psalm’s *ibimus* stays future: the city is the eternal Jerusalem, *unde nunquam aliquis velit exire* (Cassiodorus), and “when the building is finished, and the house dedicated” the time for running is over (Augustine, on Ps 101).

The second leaves them forgiven and sent home. Hilary makes the return home the last step of an order: the remission of sin, the power of resurrection, the end of the body’s weakness and pain, and last the way into paradise, which Adam left, given back to believers (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* VIII.7). Ambrose calls that home the true one, *quae hominem prima suscepit: non jure amissa, sed fraude* (V.14). Aquinas sends the forgiven man *in domum aeternitatis, vel in conscientiam propriam*, and reads the command morally: *Surge, a peccato per contritionem; tolle lectum, per satisfactionem*. St Bede, on Luke, reads the bed taken up as the flesh curbed by the reins of continence (*In Lucam* II, on 5:24).

The third leaves them giving thanks for a gift and asking to be made worthy of it. The Corinthians wait for the Lord who “will confirm you unto the end without crime”. The readers divide at that verse: for Chrysostom it is “also covertly accusing them”, marking them as still wavering; for Aquinas, for whom *sine crimine* is *sine peccato mortali*, it is a promise of perseverance, as it is for Ambrosiaster and Cornelius a Lapide. On either reading the confirming is the Lord’s work. The Postcommunion asks God himself for the fitness, and its order, the gift, the thanks and then the prayer to become fit for it, is the third reading in small; Schuster’s conclusion is that a fervent Communion “is the best preparation for the next”.

Pressed too far, a reading governed by the confession that without God we cannot please him would become quietism, and the formulary refuses that: the Secret’s *dignis moribus assequamur*, the Communion’s *Tollite hostias, et introite* and the Gospel’s *Surge, tolle lectum tuum, et vade* all ask something of the one who prays. Chrysostom, on the Epistle’s “waiting for the revelation” (1:7), says that Paul terrifies them with the judgment seat, “implying that not only the beginnings must be good, but the end also”. The Collect answers the objection itself: it says not that we cannot please God, but that we cannot please him *sine te*. The man in the Gospel does rise and walk. What he could not do was be forgiven, or bring himself to where forgiveness was given, and Aquinas notices the shape of the command: *quia portabatur, praecepit ut portaret*, because he was carried, he commanded him to carry. The one who was carried now carries what carried him.

In all three readings the last word of the formulary is the one the Postcommunion gives. The first hears in it a city still being built, the second a people forgiven on earth and still to be perfected, the third a gift

that even at the end is asked of God. The Mass that began by asking peace for those who wait ends by asking to be made worthy of what it has received.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

Edition, formulary and occurrence. This concise study treats the Mass *Dominica decima octava post Pentecosten*, II classis, of the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1962, pp. 410–411, nos. 1669–1678, in the universal 1962 calendar and no particular calendar. Its occurrence on 27 September 2026 rests on the Missal’s own calendar and general rubrics (RG 111 b, 127 b; RGMR 427, 434 b, 494 b), and agrees with the dated 2026 Ordos of the Fraternity of St Peter and of the Institute of Christ the King in France, cited for the date only; the particular solemnity each prints for its own institute is no part of the universal formulary.

Relation to the expansive study. Every claim here is drawn from the canonical study of this same formulary, *The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*, which prints the appointed Latin with its public-domain English, treats each element in its own setting, and develops the three readings at length, each with its own four senses; nothing evidence-dependent is added here. The four rows on the first page orient a reader and do not replace those readings’ own senses. The dossier’s Date cells, relation labels, alternatives and unresolved states are exactly those of the generated chronology record, as in the study; the map and the dossier’s explanatory rows condense the study’s. The joins between elements are the editor’s; each Father and later writer is cited only for what he said of his own passage, and the liturgical commentators for the elements of this Mass they expound.

Text, English and rights. Every Latin form of the ten elements was read for the study on the page images of the CMAA facsimile of the typical edition and compared with the Pustet *Missale Romanum* of Ratisbon, 1862, in which each element’s wording already stands; the collation is in `propers/verified.md`. The Latin source of the Introit’s and the Offertory’s distinctive wording, and the psalter behind the Communion’s *in aula sancta*, were not identified. The scriptural English is the Douay–Rheims in Challoner’s revision at the canonical verses, so that it does not render the Missal’s Latin where a chant adapts its source; the English of the Collect is the anonymous translation printed by Cumiskey in Philadelphia in 1861. Neither is an approved liturgical translation of the 1962 Missal, and English renderings of patristic Latin not drawn from a named translation are glosses of the Latin beside them. The Latin of the formulary rests on its public-domain antecedent, the Pustet Missal (17 U.S.C. 103(b)); the Douay–Rheims, the 1861 English, the Fathers in Migne and Zingerle, and the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English of Chrysostom, Augustine, Bellarmine, Schuster and the continuation of *The Liturgical Year* are in the public domain; the Corpus Thomisticum text of Aquinas on First Corinthians is quoted briefly from a modern presentation; the *New American Bible* introduction and the Ordos are cited, not reproduced.

Reception and its limits. The witnesses named here are those the study’s sweep read at the loci below. Chrysostom on Matthew and Augustine on the psalms and the harmony of the Gospels are quoted from the Nicene and Post-Nicene English, with Augustine’s Latin read in Migne at the loci quoted; Chrysostom on First Corinthians and Hebrews from New Advent’s delivery of the same translation. The Greek of Chrysostom on Ps 121, of Theodoret and of the expositions under St Athanasius’s name was read in Migne’s columns. Bellarmine was read only in O’Sullivan’s abridged English of 1866, in a web transcription; Cornelius a Lapide in optical text layers of the Antwerp printings, and he is summarised rather than quoted; St Ambrose and St Bede on Luke in transcriptions of Migne, not on page images; St Hilary on Matthew in the Maurist text, not its modern critical edition. No patristic commentary on Ecclus 36:18 or on the Offertory’s cited verses of Exodus was located. The continuation of *The Liturgical Year* is Dom Lucien Fromage’s, by the library’s standing registry, and is never cited as Guéranger’s. The history of the formulary’s texts in the early sacramentaries and lectionaries is given in the expansive study, not here.

Chronology and records. The Date cells on the second page come from the Scripture chronology corpus through the record generated for this formulary. For the composition of the three psalms that record gives only the modern critical boundary for the Psalter, from the introduction to the Psalms in the *New American Bible, Revised Edition* (summarized, not quoted), and holds no traditional date of their composition. For the Gospel and the Epistle it holds the traditional dates the *Catholic Encyclopedia* reports; for the Communion’s psalm a superscription setting and a prophetic referent; for the Offertory a relative date within the narrative; and for the Introit a separate answer at each of its two loci, so that the element has no single date. The Gospel’s narrated event is undated. The search, its loci, the disagreements and the negative results are in `research/scope.md`, the reasoning behind the three readings in `research/interpretations.md`, and this companion’s production record in `research/production-review.md`.

References

Liturgical books and Bibles

- *Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum, Summorum Pontificum cura recognitum*, editio typica (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1962), CMAA facsimile: *Rubricae generales* 111, 127; *Rubricae generales Missalis* 427, 434, 494; pp. 410–411 (nos. 1669–1678).
- *Missale Romanum* (Ratisbon: Pustet, 1862), pp. 350–351, *Dominica XVIII. post Pentecosten*.
- *The Roman Missal, Translated into the English Language for the Use of the Laity* (Philadelphia: Eugene Cumiskey, 1861), pp. 444–445.
- The Holy Bible, Douay–Rheims version, revised by Bishop Richard Challoner: Ex 24; Ps 95; 101; 121; Eccclus 36; 50:29; Mt 8:28–9:9; 1 Cor 1:1–13; 4:7; 16:8. *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae editionis* (Clementine Vulgate): Ex 24; 29:41; Lev 8:11; Num 7:1; Ps 95; 101; 121; 140:2; Eccclus 36:18; Mt 9:1–8. *The Septuagint* (CATSS text) at Sir 36:15, for the comparison of wording.

Fathers, Doctors and saints

- St Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 8: on Ps 95, 9; Ps 101, s. 1, 16–18; Ps 121, 2, 12. Latin in Migne, PL 37, cols. 1618–1619, 1628. *De consensu evangelistarum* II.25.57–58, 1st ser., vol. 6.
- St Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus super Psalmos*, ed. A. Zingerle, CSEL 22 (1891), in Ps. 121, 1–5, 14; *Commentarius in Matthaeum* VIII.4–8 (Migne, PL 9, cols. 959–962).
- St Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* V.11–15 (Migne, PL 15, cols. 1357–1359).
- St Bede, *In Lucae evangelium expositio* II, on Lk 5:24 (Migne, PL 92, cols. 388–389).
- St Jerome, *Commentarii in Matthaeum* I, on 9:1–8 (Migne, PL 26, cols. 54–56).
- St John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 29, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 10; *Homilies on First Corinthians* 2 and *Homilies on Hebrews* 16, 1st ser., vols. 12 and 14 (New Advent); *Expositio in Psalmum CXXI* (Migne, PG 55, cols. 347–351).
- Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, in Ps. 95, 101 and 121 (Migne, PL 70).
- Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in Psalmos*, in Ps. 95, 101 and 121 (Migne, PG 80), and *Interpretatio in I ad Corinthios*, on 1:4–8 (PG 82, col. 229).
- *Expositiones in Psalmos* printed under the name of St Athanasius, on Ps 95 (Migne, PG 27, cols. 415–416).
- Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Corinthios Primam*, on 1:4–8 (Migne, PL 17).
- St Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Matthaei lectura* c. 9 (Venice, 1745), pp. 120–122; *Super I ad Corinthios* c. 1, lect. 1 (Corpus Thomisticum).
- St Robert Bellarmine, *A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. J. O’Sullivan (1866, abridged): on Pss 95:8; 121.
- Cornelius a Lapide, *Commentaria in Pentateuchum* (Antwerp, 1700), on Ex 24:4–8; *Commentaria in omnes D. Pauli epistolas* (Antwerp, 1614), on 1 Cor 1:8.

Liturgical commentators and chronology sources

- Bl. Ildefonso Schuster, *The Sacramentary (Liber Sacramentorum)*, vol. 3 (London, 1927), pp. 167–170.
- The continuation of Prosper Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year* (Dom Lucien Fromage), vol. 11, trans. Laurence Shepherd (London, 1909), pp. 393–409.
- Berno of Reichenau, *Libellus de quibusdam rebus ad Missae officium pertinentibus* V (Migne, PL 142, col. 1070).
- *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1907–1912): “Biblical Chronology” and “General Chronology” (1908); “Epistles to the Corinthians” (1908); “Ecclesiasticus” (1909); “Gospel of St. Matthew” (1911); “St. Paul” (1911); “The New Testament” and “Temple of Jerusalem” (1912).
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, introduction to the Psalms, on their dating; summarized, not reproduced.
- Fraternité Saint-Pierre (France), *Ordo du mois*, and Institut du Christ Roi Souverain Prêtre (France), *Ordo*, entries for 27 September 2026.

Last revised (UTC): 2026-10-01T22:25:46Z

Reuse and rights. To the extent Triptych holds the rights, project-created content and design are licensed under CC BY 4.0. Scripture, liturgical or official texts, received prayers or hymns, quotations, fonts, and other third-party material retain their own status; public-domain material remains public domain. Identify changes. Attribution implies neither Triptych nor ecclesiastical approval. See LICENSE and THIRD_PARTY.md in the source.