

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

Formula PC-S42-A · Lectionary 106

Textual unit	Text / citation
Introductory Rites	
Entrance Antiphon	Psalm 54:6, 8 (Vulgate 53:6, 8). Sung entrance chant may instead be another text authorized under the four options in force for the dioceses of the United States.
Gloria	Required, the day being a Sunday in Ordinary Time; the text is of the Order of Mass, not of this formulary.
Collect	Proper to Week XVI: <i>Propitiare, Domine, famulis tuis . . . spe, fide et caritate ferventes . . . vigili custodia perseverent.</i>
Liturgy of the Word	
First Reading	Wisdom 12:13, 16–19. Verses 14–15 are not appointed.
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16, with the response drawn from 86:5a. One response path is printed; no alternative refrain is appointed for the day.
Second Reading	Romans 8:26–27.
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia with a verse adapted from Matthew 11:25 (printed <i>Cf.</i>): revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom to the little ones.
Gospel	Longer form Matthew 13:24–43 <i>or</i> shorter form Matthew 13:24–30. The forms are alternatives; only one is proclaimed.
Creed	Required, the day being a Sunday; the text is of the Order of Mass.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	
Offertory chant	No antiphon is supplied by this Missal for the preparation of the gifts; any music is locally chosen.
Prayer over the Offerings	Proper to Week XVI: <i>Deus, qui legalium differentiam hostiarum unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti . . . sicut munera Abel.</i>
Preface	No proper Preface. One of the Prefaces of the Sundays in Ordinary Time is used unless the Eucharistic Prayer chosen carries its own.
Eucharistic Prayer	No proper insert is appointed for this formulary.
Communion Rite	
Communion Antiphon, first	Psalm 111:4–5 (Vulgate 110:4–5): the memorial of wonders; food given to those who fear the Lord.
Communion Antiphon, second	Revelation 3:20: the knock at the door and the promised supper.
Communion chant	Either printed antiphon, or another text authorized under the four options in force for the dioceses of the United States.
Prayer after Communion	Proper to Week XVI: <i>Populo tuo . . . fac ad novitatem vitae de vetustate transire.</i>
Concluding Rites	
Dismissal	No text proper to this formulary; the Order of Mass supplies the blessing and dismissal formulas.
Sense	Synthesis
Literal	Divine power is the ground of divine leniency, and leniency teaches the just to be kind and gives ground for hope of repentance (Wisdom 12:16–19); the Spirit assists a weakness that does not know what to ask (Romans 8:26–27); and the kingdom is sown, infiltrated while men sleep, left unsorted until harvest, and—in the longer form only—shown to be small-seeded, hidden, and finally explained and divided (Matthew 13:24–43).
Allegorical	The Lord supplies his own allegory: sower, field, seed, weeds, enemy, harvest, and reapers are identified in Matthew 13:37–39. The Fathers read the identification in materially different directions—world or Church, doctrines or persons—and the liturgy leaves the reader with the identification rather than with any one of those settlements.
Moral	The servants’ question is answered by a prohibition, not by a permission: judgment about what may be pulled up is reserved (Matthew 13:29). The Collect asks for a vigilance directed at keeping the commandments; the Entrance Antiphon offers sacrifice <i>willingly</i> ; and Romans supplies the reason a petitioner may be wrong about his own petition.
Anagogical	The harvest is the end of the age; the furnace and the shining of the just are its two terms (Matthew 13:40–43). The Prayer over the Offerings sets every particular gift inside one sacrifice ordered to the salvation of all, and the Prayer after Communion asks passage out of oldness into newness of life.

Scriptural Date and Location

Textual unit / alternative	Citation	Location	Date
Entrance Antiphon	Psalm 54:6, 8 (Vulgate 53:6, 8)	Judahite temple prayer; transmitted in the Psalter of Jerusalem worship	Final form uncertain; collection closed in the Second Temple period
<i>Narrated event</i>	1 Samuel 23:19; 26:1	Wilderness of Ziph, Judean hill country south-east of Hebron	Reign of Saul, traditionally eleventh century BC
The superscription assigns the psalm to David when the Ziphites betrayed his hiding place; inherited attribution is not a dated autograph, and historical judgment leaves author and date open. The two half-verses the Missal prints stand at the psalm's turn from danger to willing sacrifice. The Missal cites the psalm as 53 in the Vulgate series; the same text is numbered 54 in the Hebrew series used by the United States Lectionary.			
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16; response from 86:5a	An individual's plea, composed largely of phrases drawn from older psalms and from Exodus 34:6	Uncertain; the borrowing suggests a relatively late compilation
The psalm carries a Davidic heading but no narrated occasion. Verse 9—all the nations coming to worship—places an individual petition inside a universal horizon; verse 15 quotes the divine self-description of Exodus 34:6. The appointed verses omit the psalm's complaint against violent adversaries (86:14).			
Communion Antiphon, first	Psalm 111:4–5 (Vulgate 110:4–5)	Praise sung in the assembly of the upright (111:1); temple setting	Post-exilic; commonly placed in the Persian or early Hellenistic period
An alphabetic acrostic in Hebrew: each half-line begins with a successive letter, a form that survives in neither Latin nor English. The remembered wonders are the Exodus deeds; the food given is, in the psalm's own frame, the covenant provision, not yet the Eucharist.			
First Reading	Wisdom 12:13, 16–19	Written in Greek at Alexandria in Egypt for a Jewish community living under Hellenistic and then Roman rule	Commonly placed in the last century BC
<i>Narrated event</i>	Wisdom 12:3–11	The land of Canaan, in the book's retrospect on its earlier inhabitants	Israel's occupation of the land, in the book's own frame
The book speaks in the persona of Solomon and is preserved only in Greek; Catholic canons receive it, and it is not in the Hebrew Bible. The appointed verses belong to a defence of God's slowness against Canaan; the Lectionary omits verses 14–15, which deny that any king or tyrant may call God to account and state that God's justice is the reason he governs justly.			
Gospel Acclamation	Cf. Matthew 11:25	Adapted, not quoted: Jesus' thanksgiving in Galilee, before the parable discourse	See the Gospel dossier below
The verse is a liturgical adaptation, marked <i>Cf.</i> in the Lectionary; it compresses Matthew 11:25 and supplies the phrase <i>mysteries of the kingdom</i> , which in Matthew belongs to 13:11 rather than to 11:25. It is an acclamation greeting the Gospel, not a passage read in course.			
Gospel (both forms)	Matthew 13:24–43; shorter form 13:24–30	Composed in Greek for a largely Jewish-Christian readership; Syria, and Antioch in particular, is the common modern proposal	Ancient tradition names the apostle Matthew; the modern majority dates the Greek Gospel after AD 70, often c. AD 80–90
<i>Narrated event</i>	Matthew 13:1, 36	Beside the Sea of Galilee, then indoors in a house—two distinct settings inside one appointed passage	Galilean ministry, c. AD 28–30
The longer form crosses from public parable to private explanation; the shorter form stops inside the first parable and never leaves the shore. At 13:35 Matthew cites Psalm 78:2 (Vulgate 77:2) as fulfilled; that quotation is part of Matthew's argument and is not separately appointed.			
Second Reading	Romans 8:26–27	Written from Corinth to house churches at Rome of mixed Jewish and Gentile membership	c. AD 56–58
Undisputed Pauline authorship; the letter names Tertius as the scribe (16:22). These two verses continue the groaning sequence of 8:22–23 and are read in course.			
Communion Antiphon, second	Revelation 3:20	Written on Patmos; addressed to the church at Laodicea in the Lycus valley of the Roman province of Asia	Traditionally the last years of Domitian, c. AD 95; an earlier date in the 60s is argued
The verse stands inside a rebuke: Laodicea is lukewarm, self-satisfied, and counselled to buy gold refined by fire (3:14–19). The knock is addressed to a community that thinks it needs nothing, and the promised meal is the offer that follows the reproof.			

The Propers: Themes and Movement

This Sunday's formulary joins texts of three kinds. The Order of Readings correlates the first reading with the Gospel, Romans is read in its own course, and the Missal texts are shared with Years B and C. What the layers have in common is a question about power and time: what may be done now, by whom, and what must be left to the end. The Liturgy of the Word states the question twice, from opposite ends—God's restraint in Wisdom, human incapacity in Romans—and the Gospel puts it into a field where somebody has already done damage.

Stage	Appointed units	Movement	Controlling relation
1. Approach	Entrance Antiphon (Ps 54:6, 8); Collect	From God as helper and upholder to a petition for fervent hope, faith, and charity kept under vigilant guard	Shared Ordinary Time texts, used in all three years
2. Instruction	Wisdom 12:13, 16–19; Psalm 86; Romans 8:26–27; Alleluia; Matthew 13:24–43 or 24–30	From the leniency of omnipotence, through prayer that does not know itself, to a field left unsorted until harvest	Wisdom and Gospel officially correlated; Psalm responsorial; Romans semi-continuous
3. Offering	Prayer over the Offerings; Preface of a Sunday in Ordinary Time	From many differing sacrifices to one sacrifice, and from the single offerer to the salvation of all	Shared Missal text; Preface selected under rubric, not proper
4. Communion and sending	Communion Antiphon (Ps 111:4–5 <i>or</i> Rev 3:20); Prayer after Communion	From remembered wonders and given food—or from a knock at a closed door—to passage from oldness into newness of life	Mutually exclusive printed alternatives; the choice is not recorded

Officially correlated: might that shows itself by sparing

Wisdom argues that God's leniency is a demonstration of strength, not a concession of weakness: because he is master of all, he can afford to judge with tranquillity, and he teaches his people from that fact that the just must be kind (Wis 12:16–19). Matthew's householder refuses the servants' proposal for a reason of the same shape—uprooting now would cost the wheat (Mt 13:29). Neither text says that the weeds are harmless or that the harvest is cancelled. Both say that a certain kind of action is refused for a season, and that the refusal is intelligible only if the end is certain.

Responsorial: the doctrine turned into address

Psalm 86 does not restate Wisdom's argument; it asks for the thing Wisdom describes. Its appointed verses move from God's readiness to forgive (86:5–6), through the coming of all nations to worship (86:9–10), to the divine self-description of Exodus 34:6—merciful, gracious, slow to anger—and a request for strength (86:15–16). The refrain fixes the psalm's first claim as the assembly's own sentence. Between the first reading and the psalm, then, a doctrine of divine patience becomes a petition made by people who need it applied to themselves.

Semi-continuous and independent: prayer in the dark

Romans 8:26–27 is read because Romans is being read in course. The General Introduction to the Lectionary is explicit that on Sundays in Ordinary Time the apostolic and Gospel courses run semi-continuously while only the Old Testament reading is harmonized with the Gospel (nn. 66–68, 107). The passage nevertheless meets the day's question from the human side: the petitioner does not know what to ask, and the Spirit's intercession supplies what the petition lacks. Any connection drawn between this and the servants' request is the reader's synthesis.

Shared and older: the Missal texts around the readings

The three orations and both Communion antiphons belong to Week XVI of Ordinary Time and are used in all three cycles. They may be heard with Matthew 13, and their own movement is coherent without the Gospel: grace multiplied and guarded (Collect); the many sacrifices of the law perfected in one, with Abel named and the gift of each ordered to the salvation of all (Prayer over the Offerings); and the passage from oldness to newness asked after Communion.

Layer	Relation to the day
Wisdom 12 and Matthew 13	Officially correlated by the Order of Readings; neither text settles what discipline is owed in any particular case
Psalms 86	Responsorial to the first reading
Romans 8:26–27	Semi-continuous; independent strand
Alleluia, cf. Matthew 11:25	Acclamatory; adapted wording; not part of the Gospel pericope
Orations and Communion antiphons	Seasonal, shared with Years B and C
Revelation 3:20 as Communion text	Appointed alternative; textual observation; whether it was chosen on 19 July 2026 is not recoverable from the books

Optional strands: the units the day does not fix

Four units of the day belong to no functional grouping at all, because the books leave them open. While they stay open, the formulary describes no actual celebration.

- *Entrance, preparation, and Communion music.* Four options are in force for the dioceses of the United States at the entrance and at Communion, and the printed antiphon is only the first of them; for the preparation of the gifts this Missal supplies no antiphon at all. Whether the assembly heard Psalm 54 or Psalm 111 in any form is not recoverable from the books.
- *Preface and Eucharistic Prayer.* No Preface is proper to Week XVI. One of the Prefaces of the Sundays in Ordinary Time is used unless the Eucharistic Prayer chosen supplies its own, so the two choices are coupled by rubric and can never be resolved separately.
- *The two Communion antiphons.* The rubric that ordinarily settles such pairs prefers the antiphon agreeing with the Gospel of the Mass. Here the second antiphon comes from the Apocalypse and neither is drawn from Matthew, so the rubric decides nothing and both remain open.
- *The sprinkling rite.* On Sundays the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the Penitential Act. That is a ritual substitution, not a proper text, and nothing in the day's formulary triggers it.

Branch-dependent: two Gospels of different lengths

The shorter form ends at the harvest instruction. An assembly that hears it receives the prohibition and the promise of a sorting, but not the mustard seed, the leaven, Matthew's fulfilment citation, the move indoors, the identification of the sower and the field, the angels, the furnace, or the just shining like the sun. The Alleluia's promise—revelation to the little ones—is answered inside the longer form, where the disciples ask for the explanation and receive it. Both forms belong to the day, and which was proclaimed on 19 July 2026 is not recoverable from the books.

The Propers: Detailed Commentary

The Latin edition, and the English

The Latin formulary stands in the third typical edition of the *Missale Romanum* (Typis Vaticanis, 2002) under the heading *Dominica XVI “per annum”*, printed pages 465–466, and the heading, the two Communion alternatives, the Latin incipits, and the element boundaries are that edition’s. The 2008 emended reprint is the Latin base of the United States English edition; the Congregation’s official list of variations for that reprint names, under *Tempus per annum*, only pages 457 and 471, so no listed change falls on this formulary—though the reprint’s own pages, where any purely typographic difference would stand, remain uncollated.

The English of the Roman Missal, Third Edition, for the dioceses of the United States is under copyright and is not reproduced here. No named United States altar book was collated. The Prayer over the Offerings appears below complete, on its public-domain witness; the Collect and the Prayer after Communion appear by incipit and the phrases the analysis turns on, each with an original summary, and never in a substitute translation. The same limit governs the readings: the Lectionary’s English is protected, so scriptural wording quoted in this guide is taken from the public-domain Douay–Rheims (Challoner) version and is named as such wherever it appears. Douay–Rheims numbers the psalms with the Vulgate; the Lectionary numbers them with the Hebrew. Both numbers are given at each first use.

Entrance Antiphon: Psalm 54:6, 8

The Missal prints the antiphon as *Ps 53, 6.8*—Vulgate numbering for what the Lectionary would call Psalm 54—and gives it in two movements: *Ecce Deus adiuvat me, et Dominus susceptor est animae meae*, then *Voluntarie sacrificabo tibi, et confitebor nomini tuo, Domine, quoniam bonum est*. In Douay–Rheims: “For behold God is my helper: and the Lord is the protector of my soul . . . I will freely sacrifice to thee, and will give praise, O God, to thy name: because it is good.”

The antiphon is a cut, and the cut is the point. Psalm 54 is a plea from hiding: its superscription places it when the Ziphites betrayed David’s position to Saul, and verse 7 asks that the evils be turned back on the enemies. The Missal keeps the confidence and the vow and leaves the enemies out. What enters the church, therefore, is not a complaint but the two sentences in which a hunted man says that he is upheld and that he will sacrifice *willingly*.

Augustine fastens on exactly that adverb. Expounding the psalm at *Enarratio in Psalmum* 53.10 he asks what a man could possibly offer, runs through the flock, the ram, the bull, and the Sabaeen frankincense, and answers with the sacrifice of praise: “Wherefore then *voluntarily*? Because truly I love that which I praise” (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers translation). The willingness is not an extra virtue attached to the offering; it is what makes praise a sacrifice rather than a payment.

Whether the assembly on any given Sunday hears this text at all is not determined by the Missal. In the dioceses of the United States the entrance chant may be the Missal antiphon, the Gradual psalm, a Simple Gradual antiphon, or an approved song (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 48); if there is no singing, the printed antiphon is recited. The antiphon is appointed; its audibility is a local decision.

The Collect

Propitiare, Domine, famulis tuis . . . The prayer asks God to be favourable to his servants and to multiply upon them the gifts of his grace, so that, fervent in the three theological virtues, they may persevere in his commandments under a watchful guard.

Its Latin, apart from any translation, has four marks. First, the prayer has no anamnesis: it opens directly with an imperative of mercy and never states a motive drawn from salvation history. Second, its request is for *multiplication* of gifts already given (*gratiae tuae . . . dona multiplica*), not for a new benefit; the theological virtues are presumed present and asked to burn (*ferventes*). Third, the virtues appear in the order hope, faith, charity—not the Pauline order of 1 Corinthians 13:13, and not the order in which they are ordinarily catalogued. Fourth, the purpose clause ends in a military or custodial image: perseverance in the commandments under *vigili custodia*, a watchful guard.

That last phrase stands beside the Gospel, where the trouble begins *cum dormirent homines*—while men were sleeping. The Collect is shared with Years B and C, and the likeness lies in the wording, which is precise: the Collect asks for

the wakefulness whose absence opens the parable, and it aims that wakefulness at the petitioner's own obedience rather than at the field.

First Reading: Wisdom 12:13, 16–19

The passage in its book

Wisdom 11:15–12:27 is a long digression defending God's way of punishing. Its thesis is stated at 11:26: "But thou sparest all: because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls" (Douay–Rheims). The argument then works through the Canaanites: God could have destroyed them at a stroke, "with one rough word" (12:9), but sent wasps ahead of the army so that they perished "by little and little," and "executing thy judgments by degrees thou gavest them place of repentance" (12:8, 10). The author knows the objection—these were a hopeless people (12:10–11)—and does not withdraw the principle.

The appointed boundary and what it removes

The Lectionary appoints 12:13 and then 12:16–19, omitting two verses. Verse 14 denies that any king or tyrant may confront God about those he has destroyed; verse 15 states the premise the following verses build on: "For so much then as thou art just, thou orderest all things justly: thinking it not agreeable to thy power, to condemn him who deserveth not to be punished" (Douay–Rheims). The omission is not neutral. It removes the polemical contrast with human rulers and the explicit statement that God's justice, not merely his strength, is what governs the sparing. What is left is the cleaner and more startling sequence: sovereignty (12:13), power as the source of justice and lordship as the ground of leniency (12:16), power shown precisely where it is doubted (12:17), judgment *cum tranquillitate*—"with tranquillity"—and government "with great favour" (12:18), and the pedagogy of 12:19: the just must be kind, and God's children are given good hope because he grants place for repentance.

The claim being made

The reading is not saying that God is lenient because judgment would be difficult, nor that leniency is indifference. It says the opposite of both: leniency is what omnipotence looks like when it has nothing to prove, and it is teaching. The verse that follows the appointed boundary makes the pedagogy explicit—God's slowness with enemies is an argument *a fortiori* for his care with his own (12:20–22)—and the same passage warns that the Israelites themselves are judged more circumspectly, not less.

Reception

The clearest liturgical reception of this chapter is inside the Missal itself. The Collect of the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time opens *Deus, qui omnipotentiam tuam parcendo maxime et miserando manifestas, multiplica super nos gratiam tuam*—God, who manifests his almighty power above all by sparing and showing mercy. That is Wisdom 12:16–18 turned into an address, and it shares with this Sunday's Collect the rare verb-and-preposition pair *multiplica super nos / super eos . . . multiplica*. Both prayers stand in the same 2002 Latin edition. The kinship is verbal and thematic, between two prayers of one book.

None of the patristic witnesses checked comments continuously on the discontinuous Lectionary unit 12:13+16–19, which is a liturgical construction rather than an ancient one. Thomas Aquinas's treatment of clemency and meekness (*Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 157) does not cite Wisdom 12:18: his clemency is built from Seneca's *De clementia* and Aristotle, not from this text. That question is the only place in Aquinas checked for the verse.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16

Psalm 86 (Vulgate 85) is unusual among the psalms in being made largely of other psalms. Its appointed verses run: God's readiness to forgive and the plea for a hearing (5–6); the coming of all the nations to worship and the confession that God alone is God (9–10); and the divine self-description "And thou, O Lord, art a God of compassion, and merciful, patient, and of much mercy, and true"—a quotation of Exodus 34:6—followed by the request that God turn and give strength to his servant (15–16, Douay–Rheims). The response is drawn from the psalm's own verse 5a, so the assembly repeats as its refrain the sentence on which the first reading's whole argument depends.

Two omissions run parallel to the Entrance Antiphon's. The appointed selection passes over verse 14, where a violent band seeks the psalmist's life, and over verse 17, where the psalmist asks that those who hate him may see and be

confounded. Twice on this Sunday the liturgy takes a psalm in which enemies are present and gives the assembly the verses without them—while the Gospel it is preparing keeps an enemy in the field and forbids doing anything about him. The contrast lies in the selections actually made.

Augustine’s exposition of this psalm opens with the sentence for which it is best known: God gave men no greater gift than to make his Word their Head, so that “it is one Saviour of His Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who both prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us” (*Enarratio in Psalmum* 85.1, NPNF translation). He prays for us as our priest, prays in us as our head, and is prayed to by us as our God. The whole-Christ reading supplies the category the second reading will need an hour later: a prayer that is at once the assembly’s own and not merely the assembly’s own.

Second Reading: Romans 8:26–27

Position in the letter

Romans 8:18–30 is built on three groanings: creation groans in travail (8:22), we ourselves groan awaiting the redemption of the body (8:23), and the Spirit intercedes “with unspeakable groanings” (8:26, Douay–Rheims). The two appointed verses are the third of these, and they are read because Romans is being read: the General Introduction to the Lectionary establishes that on Sundays in Ordinary Time the apostolic and Gospel courses are semi-continuous while only the Old Testament reading is harmonized with the Gospel (nn. 66–68). The same Introduction, at no. 68, expressly declines to impose “an organic harmony of themes designed to aid homiletic instruction” on Sundays.

The difficulty in the text

Paul says two things that have to be held together: that we do not know what to pray for as we ought, and that the Spirit’s intercession is heard by “he that searcheth the hearts.” The first is an admission of ignorance about the content or manner of prayer; the second locates the remedy inside the petitioner, where only God reads. Three witnesses solve this differently, each by his own argument.

Witness and locus	Reading	Argument that produces it
John Chrysostom, <i>Homily 14 on Romans</i> (on 8:26), NPNF translation	“The Spirit” here is the charism of prayer given in the apostolic assemblies to a particular person, who “asked the things that were profitable for all”; the deacon’s prayers for the people are its present symbol	Chrysostom says the verse is unclear now “owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place,” and reconstructs the first-century assembly to explain it. He also gives the pastoral occasion: scourged and driven out, believers would naturally pray for relief, and must not assume that relief is the good
Augustine, <i>Letter</i> 130 to Proba, nn. 25–28, NPNF translation	A “learned ignorance,” <i>docta ignorantia</i> , taught by the Spirit: we ask to be freed from tribulations without knowing whether the tribulation is healing pride, exercising patience, or punishing sin	Augustine begins from the objection that Paul could not have been ignorant of the Lord’s Prayer, and answers by narrowing the ignorance to particulars—specifically to trials, whose usefulness is hidden from the one enduring them
Thomas Aquinas, <i>Super Romanos</i> c. 8, lect. 5 (Latin, Corpus Thomisticum)	We can know in general what to ask, “sed in speciali hoc non possumus scire”; and as to manner, we cannot always tell whether we ask “ex ira, vel ex zelo iustitiae”	Three worked cases: an act of virtue may not suit this person (citing Gregory on the active and contemplative lives); a temporal good asked for sustenance may turn to ruin; deliverance from a temptation may remove a guard of humility, as with Paul’s thorn. For the manner, he cites the request of the sons of Zebedee, refused because it proceeded from vainglory

Aquinas then adds a control the other two do not: since “to ask” belongs to an inferior, and “to groan” belongs to one who suffers, the verse cannot mean that the Spirit himself petitions or grieves—a reading he says would concede the Arian and Macedonian position. He therefore glosses *postulat* as *postulantes nos facit*, “he makes us ask,” on the model of Genesis 22:12, where “now I know” means “I have made known”; the Spirit causes right desires by pouring out charity, and the groans are the ones he causes in our hearts, “the groaning of the dove.” The same gloss appears twice in the *Summa theologiae*: at II-II, q. 83, a. 5, where Romans 8:26 is the first objection against asking for anything definite, and is answered by the Spirit’s inspiring of holy desires; and at II-II, q. 83, a. 10, ad 1, where “the Holy Ghost is said to ask, because He makes us ask” (English Dominican translation).

The three readings are not interchangeable. Chrysostom locates the intercession in an office of the assembly; Augustine locates it in the interior of the sufferer; Aquinas locates it in the causality of desire and defends the Spirit’s divinity while doing so. All three agree on the negative point that the day’s Gospel will also need: the petitioner’s confidence about what should happen is not itself evidence.

The Gospel Acclamation

The Lectionary prints the verse with *Cf.*, marking adaptation rather than quotation. Matthew 11:25 in Douay–Rheims reads: “I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones.” The acclamation supplies the phrase “mysteries of the kingdom,” which in Matthew belongs to 13:11 rather than to 11:25; the adapted verse thus reaches across two chapters and hands the assembly the interpretive key just before the parables begin.

Chrysostom’s comment on the source verse is direct and unsentimental. By “the wise” Jesus means the scribes and Pharisees, and not true wisdom but “this which they seemed to have through natural shrewdness”; and he does not say “you have revealed it to fools, but to babes; to unsophisticated, that is, to simple-minded men” (*Homily 38 on Matthew*, NPNF translation). The acclamation is an act in itself, by which the assembly greets the Lord about to speak (General Instruction, no. 62); on this Sunday what it greets is a discourse whose whole structure is that some hear and do not understand.

The Gospel: Matthew 13:24–43, or 13:24–30

The literary unit

Matthew 13 is the third of the Gospel’s five discourses. It is built on a movement in space: Jesus sits by the sea and speaks to crowds (13:1–35), then leaves the crowds and goes into the house, where the disciples ask questions and receive explanations (13:36–52). The longer form of today’s Gospel crosses that boundary; the shorter form does not. Both forms open the second half of the seed material: after the sower and its explanation, three more parables follow—weeds, mustard seed, leaven—and then, indoors, the explanation of the weeds.

The parable of the weeds, 13:24–30

The Greek *zizania* is darnel, *Lolium temulentum*, a grass that closely resembles wheat until it heads. Douay–Rheims renders it “cockle.” The parable’s sequence is precise: good seed sown; an enemy oversowing “while men were asleep”; the mimicry exposed only when the blade bears fruit; the servants’ question about the seed’s provenance; the diagnosis “An enemy hath done this”; the servants’ offer to go and gather; the refusal, with its reason—“lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it”; and the harvest order, in which the weeds are gathered *first*, bound for burning, and the wheat gathered into the barn (Douay–Rheims).

Three cruxes have carried the passage’s reception, and the witnesses divide at each.

Crux	Origen	John Chrysostom	Thomas Aquinas
Who is asleep?	Those “who do not act according to the command of Jesus, Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation” (<i>Commentary on Matthew</i> X.2)	“It is no small danger, which He hereby suspends over our rulers, to whom especially is entrusted the keeping of the field; and not the rulers only, but the subjects too” (<i>Homily</i> 46.1); natural sleep is unavoidable, moral sleep is not	The sleep is the death of the apostles— <i>dormirent, scilicet per dormitionem mortis</i> —after which the heretics mingled with the wheat (<i>Super Matthaeum</i> 13, lect. 2)
What is the field?	“The whole world might be called a field, and not the Church of God only” (X.2); the seeds are good and evil words and opinions in the soul	The parable is about “the societies of the heretics”: error always arrives after truth, as false prophets after prophets (<i>Homily</i> 46.1)	<i>In agro suo, idest in mundo</i> —the world, which God brought forth by creation; but the weeds are sown <i>in medio tritici</i> , among the faithful, because the devil has no need to sow where he already possesses

Crux	Origen	John Chrysostom	Thomas Aquinas
What may the servants do?	The gathering belongs to the angels at the consummation; those who have received the evil seed “because of their having been asleep” will gnash their teeth in anger against themselves (X.2)	“It is not right to put a heretic to death, since an implacable war would be brought into the world”; but the Lord “does not therefore forbid our checking heretics, and stopping their mouths . . . but our killing and slaying them” (<i>Homily</i> 46.1)	Four reasons why the wicked are not to be uprooted for the sake of the good (<i>Super Matthaeum</i> 13, lect. 2)

Augustine takes the same verses in a fourth direction, and his is the reading that shaped Latin ecclesiology. In *The City of God* XX.9 he argues from the wording of the explanation itself: the angels “shall gather out of *His kingdom* all offences”—and since there are no offences in the kingdom where there are none, the gathering must be out of the present kingdom, which is the Church. Hence his conclusion, in the Latin of the critical edition, *Ergo et nunc ecclesia regnum Christi est regnumque caelorum . . . nec tamen cum illo regnant zizania, quamvis in ecclesia cum tritico crescant*: the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and yet the weeds do not reign with him, though they grow in the Church along with the wheat. Earlier, at XX.5, he had used the same parable as one of the Lord’s proofs that a day of judgment is coming, noting that Jesus there “did not name the judgment or the day of judgment, but indicated it much more clearly by describing the circumstances” (Dods translation).

Origen’s field and Augustine’s field are not the same field, and the difference is doctrinally live. Origen keeps the sorting cosmic and interior; Augustine makes it ecclesial, and used it against the Donatists, who held that a church containing traitors was no church. Against Petilian he presses the geography of the verse: do not separate yourself “because of the mixture of the tares, from the society of that good wheat . . . that grows together throughout the world until the harvest. For the field is the world,—not only Africa; and the harvest is the end of the world,—not the era of Donatus” (*Answer to the Letters of Petilian* III.2, NPNF translation). Irenaeus, much earlier, had read the sowing at the level of origins: the enemy is the apostate angel who “was envious of God’s workmanship,” and God turned the enmity back upon its author, sparing the man who fell into disobedience through want of care (*Against Heresies* IV.40.3, Ante-Nicene Fathers translation).

Aquinas’s four reasons, and the argument they answer

Aquinas asks why the wicked are not to be rooted out for the good’s sake and answers with four causes. First, the good are exercised by the wicked; he cites 1 Corinthians 11:19 and observes that without heretics the learning of the saints, Augustine’s among them, would never have been made plain. Second, one who is wicked now may become good later, as Paul did—“if Paul had been killed, we would lack the teaching of so great a master.” Third, some seem wicked and are not, so the uprooting would take the good with it: *nolite ante tempus iudicare*. Fourth, a person of great power drags many down with him if he is cut off, and therefore, he says, a whole congregation is not excommunicated, nor the prince of a people, lest with one many fall.

He then states the objection honestly—Isaiah 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 5:7 command the removal of evil—and records a disagreement rather than smoothing it. Chrysostom, he says, understands the prohibition to concern killing; Augustine “in a certain letter” says that he once thought heretics should not be coerced, but learned by experience that many are converted through compulsion. Aquinas’s own resolution follows Chrysostom conditionally: where it cannot be done without danger it must not be done; where the greater danger is that the Gospel perish in others through them, the case alters. He adds the qualification that a prince is not to be excommunicated when the scandal of excommunicating him would exceed the offence—unless the offence endangers the faith, “whatever loss may follow.”

The *Summa* carries the same material in its own idiom. At II-II, q. 10, a. 8, the first objection against compelling unbelievers is Matthew 13:28–29, quoted with Chrysostom’s *Homily* 46 attached by name; the reply distinguishes killing from excommunication and cites Augustine’s letter to Vincentius and *Contra epistolam Parmeniani* III.2 for the criterion—restraint slackens only where a man’s crime is so public and so hateful that he has no defenders capable of causing a schism. At II-II, q. 11, a. 3, ad 3, the tares objection returns and is met with a canonical maxim: “to be excommunicated is not to be uprooted.” At II-II, q. 64, a. 2, ad 1, the parable is the first objection against killing sinners at all, and the reply concedes its force in every case where the wicked lie hidden among the good or have followers enough that their death would endanger the good, “wherefore our Lord teaches that we should rather allow the wicked to live, and that vengeance is to be delayed until the last judgment.”

This reception history runs in both directions. The same verse was cited on both sides of the coercion question for more than a millennium, and Aquinas is a witness to that, not an escape from it. The controlling teaching is now explicit, and it reads the same passage in the other direction: the Second Vatican Council's *Dignitatis humanae* 11 grounds religious freedom partly in this very parable—Christ, “noting that the cockle had been sown amid the wheat, gave orders that both should be allowed to grow until the harvest time, which will come at the end of the world”—and declares at n. 2 that all are “to be immune from coercion . . . in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs.” Article 12 of the same declaration acknowledges that in the life of the People of God “there has at times appeared a way of acting that was hardly in accord with the spirit of the Gospel or even opposed to it,” while maintaining that the doctrine against coerced faith “has always stood firm.” Nothing in the parable or its reception bears on the protection of the vulnerable, criminal justice, safeguarding, the removal of dangerous persons from access, or proportionate ecclesiastical discipline; those questions are governed by other texts and by law, and the servants’ prohibition is about final sorting, not about ordinary responsibility.

Mustard seed and leaven, 13:31–33 (longer form only)

The second and third parables answer a different anxiety: not *why is there evil in the field* but *will anything come of so small a beginning*. Chrysostom reads them as a single reassurance addressed to twelve men: the mustard shows that the Gospel will spread despite the losses of the sower parable, and the leaven that a small quantity transforms a large one—“as the leaven, though it be buried, yet is not destroyed, but little by little transmutes all into its own condition” (*Homily* 46.2). He presses the verb: the woman did not *put* the leaven but *hid* it, so the apostles must not merely stand near the multitude but be mixed with it.

Aquinas reports a spread of interpretations rather than choosing one. Jerome takes the mustard seed as evangelical teaching, hot to the taste and a repellent of poisons; Chrysostom takes it as the apostles, small and despised; Hilary takes it as Christ himself, sown in death in the field of the people. On the leaven Aquinas pauses over a rule of reading: the same image may signify opposites—leaven is corruption at 1 Corinthians 5:7 and fervour and expansive power here—just as the rock is Christ in one place and hardness in another. The rule is Augustine’s, set out in *On Christian Doctrine* III.25, where the worked example is this same leaven—bad in “the leaven of the Pharisees,” good in the parable, which Augustine quotes there in Luke’s form (Luke 13:21)—and where the lion likewise stands for Christ in one text and for the devil in another. Here a Father’s hermeneutics governs a Doctor’s exegesis eight centuries later.

Two details of the mustard parable bear on its sense. Its final clause, that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches, is drawn from the imperial-tree imagery of Daniel 4 and Ezekiel 17:23, where the birds are the nations sheltering in a kingdom; the tree is a political image before it is a horticultural one. And the parable does not say that the seed is the smallest seed there is, but that it is least “of all seeds” in the sower’s field—a comparison within an agricultural repertoire, not a botanical claim.

The fulfilment citation, 13:34–35

Matthew closes the public half of the discourse by quoting Psalm 78:2 (Vulgate 77:2), on opening the mouth in parables and uttering what has been hidden from the foundation of the world. Chrysostom takes the citation as proof that the manner of teaching is not an innovation and that its purpose was “not that they might be ignorant, but that He might lead them to inquiry” (*Homily* 47). The quotation is part of Matthew’s argument; it is not a separately appointed reading.

The explanation, 13:36–43 (longer form only)

Origen makes the change of scene carry the meaning: Jesus is not in his house when he is with the multitudes, and to receive the explanation one must follow him in, so that “as His disciples we may come to Him when He goes into the house” (*Commentary on Matthew* X.1). He then warns that the explanation is not self-evident either: the closing words “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear” teach “those who think that in the exposition, the parable has been set forth with such perfect clearness that it can be understood by the vulgar, that even the things connected with the interpretation of the parable stand in need of explanation” (X.2).

The explanation gives seven identifications—sower, field, good seed, weeds, enemy, harvest, reapers—and then two terms: the furnace with weeping and gnashing of teeth, and the just shining as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Origen reads the gnashing as remorse turned inward, “angry against themselves,” and devotes a whole section to a difficulty in the second term: Daniel 12:3 and 1 Corinthians 15:41 teach that the righteous differ in glory like stars, but Matthew says they shine as *one* sun. His solution is temporal—differences belong to the beginning of blessedness,

and the single solar brightness to its consummation (X.3). His exegesis of the passage compares texts and states the difficulty before the answer.

What the shorter form does not contain

An assembly hearing Matthew 13:24–30 receives the sowing, the sleeping, the enemy, the servants’ zeal, the prohibition, and the harvest order. It does not receive the mustard seed, the leaven, the fulfilment citation, the move into the house, the identification of the field as the world, the naming of the enemy as the devil, the angels, the furnace, or the shining of the just. Every patristic and Thomistic reading of the explanation depends on the longer form. The prohibition, notably, is fully present in both.

Prayer over the Offerings

Deus, qui legalium differentiam hostiarum unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti, accipe sacrificium a devotis tibi famulis, et pari benedictione, sicut munera Abel, sanctifica, ut, quod singuli obtulerunt ad maiestatis tuae honorem, cunctis proficiat ad salutem.

The wording is established by a public-domain witness, the Supplement to the Gregorian Sacramentary in H. A. Wilson’s edition (1915), p. 171, which the 2002 edition follows word for word but for spelling and punctuation.

The prayer’s first clause is a compressed theology of the Letter to the Hebrews: the *differentiam*—the sheer multiplicity and diversity—of the sacrifices of the Law has been ratified, given legal force, in the perfection of one sacrifice. Its second clause asks that this offering be sanctified with a blessing equal to that given to the gifts of Abel, and its third asks that what individuals have offered for the honour of God’s majesty should profit all for salvation.

The Roman Canon uses the formula of that Abel clause at *Supra quae*, asking God to accept these gifts as he accepted *munera pueri tui iusti Abel*, with Abraham’s sacrifice and Melchizedek’s. If Eucharistic Prayer I is used on this Sunday, Abel’s gifts are therefore named twice in the same Mass, once in the Sunday’s own offering prayer and once in the Canon. Abel’s gifts are also the first offering in Scripture and the occasion of the first fratricide (Genesis 4:4–8); the formulary names them on a day whose Gospel begins with an enemy at work in a field.

The movement from *singuli* to *cunctis*—from what each offered to what profits all—is the prayer’s own logic, and it is the exact inverse of the servants’ proposal in the Gospel, which would have subtracted some from the field for the sake of the rest. The relation is the editor’s, between two texts printed for the same Mass.

Preface and Eucharistic Prayer: a coupled selection

Week XVI has no proper Preface. The Missal’s Ordinary Time rubric 5 provides that, unless a Eucharistic Prayer with its own Preface is used, one of the Prefaces of the Sundays in Ordinary Time is said (the Latin edition points to its pages 537–544). The General Instruction adds the governing detail for the one Prayer that cannot be recombined: “Eucharistic Prayer IV has an invariable Preface . . . It may be used when a Mass has no Preface of its own and on Sundays in Ordinary Time” (no. 365). The two selections are therefore coupled, not independent: they form one coupled branch. Which Preface or Prayer was used at any celebration on 19 July 2026 is not recoverable from the books.

The two Communion antiphons, and a rubric that does not fit

The 2002 Missal prints two Communion antiphons for Week XVI: Psalm 111:4–5 (Vulgate 110:4–5) and Revelation 3:20. The Ordinary Time rubric 6 states the principle behind such pairs—at Communion two antiphons are set down, the first from the psalms, the other usually from the Gospel; either may be chosen, with preference for the one that happens to accord with the Gospel of the Mass. On this Sunday that preference has no straightforward application, because the second antiphon is drawn not from a Gospel but from the Apocalypse, and neither antiphon comes from Matthew 13. The rubric’s ordinary criterion is thus unavailable here; the choice falls back on the general norms for the Communion chant (General Instruction, no. 87).

The first antiphon—“He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: He hath given food to them that fear him” (Douay–Rheims)—is read Eucharistically by Augustine with unusual directness. Miracles, he says, are reserved for their season so that human weakness, “intent upon novelty,” will remember them; but what would fear profit, “unless the gracious and merciful Lord gave meat unto them that fear Him? . . . meat that does not spoil, bread that comes down from heaven, which He gave to no deservings of ours”;

and he ends on the pledge: “Nor has He who has given a pledge, given the whole” (*Enarratio in Psalmum* 110.4, NPNF translation). The psalm’s own literal referent, apart from Augustine’s reading, is covenant provision.

The second antiphon carries its context with it whether or not the context is heard. Revelation 3:20 stands in the message to Laodicea, a church told that it is lukewarm and that its sense of needing nothing is precisely its poverty (3:14–19). The knock is offered to a community after a reproof, and the supper is the terms on which the reproof may be answered. Its liturgical suitability at Communion is obvious, and its original address remains corporate and critical: using it at Communion does not convert it into a purely individual invitation.

Prayer after Communion

Populo tuo . . . The prayer asks God’s favourable presence for the people he has steeped in the heavenly mysteries, *quem mysteriis caelestibus imbuisti*, and asks that he make them pass from oldness into newness of life.

The verb *imbuere* means to steep, to saturate, and also to instruct: the people have been soaked in the heavenly mysteries and taught by them at once. The petition then asks for a passage—*transire*—out of oldness into newness of life, *ad novitatem vitae*, the Pauline pair of Romans 6:4 and Ephesians 4:22–24. Read after the longer Gospel, the prayer asks for exactly the change that the parable says cannot be enforced from outside: the weeds are not converted by uprooting, and the Church’s own request at the end of the Mass is that its people be moved from old to new by God. The connection is the editor’s, and it holds equally under either Gospel form.

How the layers meet

Relation	Units	Basis
Officially correlated	Wisdom 12:13, 16–19 with Matthew 13:24–43 or 24–30	Established by the Order of Readings; the correlation is with the Gospel, not with the whole formulary
Responsorial	Psalm 86 with the first reading	Established; refrain drawn from 86:5a
Acclamatory	Cf. Matthew 11:25 before the Gospel	Established; wording adapted, and the phrase “mysteries of the kingdom” is imported from Matthew 13:11
Semi-continuous	Romans 8:26–27	Established by the Order of Readings; any thematic link to the Gospel is reader’s synthesis
Seasonal or ritual	Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, Prayer after Communion, both Communion antiphons	Shared with Years B and C; heard with these readings
Textual observation	<i>vigili custodia</i> beside <i>cum dormirent homines</i> ; <i>munera Abel</i> in prayer and Canon; the removal of enemies from both appointed psalms	The wording of the identified editions, and nothing beyond it
Documented reception	Origen, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas at the loci given above; <i>Dignitatis humanae</i> 11–12 on the parable and coercion	The witnesses at the identified editions and loci, in the translations named
Source-grounded synthesis	<i>singuli/cunctis</i> against the servants’ proposal; the Missal’s own Wisdom-shaped Collect at Week XXVI	Editorial conclusions drawn from checked texts

The Propers: Notable and Quotable

Four later uses redirect wording from this Sunday’s appointed Scripture, each a phrase from the Gospel—present in both the longer and the shorter form—turned to another purpose. Straight exegesis of these phrases stands in the commentary above, and none of the four is devotional reception. Each later text is public domain in the United States and is cited at its locus.

“Patiently bear with the wheat and the tares” becomes a rule of manners

Proper and branch: Matthew 13:30, both Gospel forms. *Later use:* Joseph Priestley, *An Essay on the First Principles of Government*, 2nd edition (1771), preface.

Priestley—Dissenting minister, and the chemist who would isolate oxygen—spends the preface attacking the constitution of church establishments. Then he turns on his own side: whatever is said against the abuses, “let us be particularly careful how we give offence to any serious and well-disposed minds, and patiently bear with the wheat and the tares growing together till the harvest.” He goes straight on to a doctrine of providence in which “every thing, even the grossest abuses in the civil or ecclesiastical constitutions of particular states, is subservient to the wise and gracious designs” of God.

The turn is double. First, a command about not uprooting persons becomes a rule about *tone* in controversy—patience with the prejudices of those educated inside an institution one is trying to dismantle. Second, the parable diagnoses the mixture as the work of an enemy, whereas Priestley’s providence absorbs even gross abuse into design; the borrowed sentence and the argument it introduces pull in opposite directions. Priestley does not cite chapter and verse, and the phrase governs his manner, not his programme; he continued to press for disestablishment. The 1771 work is public domain.

The harvest order reversed

Proper and branch: Matthew 13:29–30, both Gospel forms. *Later use:* *Doctrine and Covenants* 86:6–7, a revelation dated Kirtland, Ohio, 6 December 1832.

The passage rewrites the parable as an interpretation of church history—the field “was the world,” the apostles were the sowers, the tares were sown “after they have fallen asleep”—and then changes two things in the Lord’s own words. The reason for delay is transferred from the danger to the wheat to the weakness of the reapers: “pluck not up the tares while the blade is yet tender (for verily your faith is weak), lest you destroy the wheat also.” And the order of the harvest is inverted: “let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in bundles, and the field remaineth to be burned.” Matthew has the weeds gathered first (13:30), a detail Chrysostom thought was included so that the wheat would not be alarmed.

The turn is that a restraint grounded in the servants’ *ignorance* becomes a restraint grounded in their *immaturity*, and a sorting that begins with removal becomes one that begins with rescue. The passage is a scriptural claim inside another religious body’s canon. The 1832 revelation and its nineteenth-century printings are public domain.

“An enemy hath done this” applied to a sunk boat

Proper and branch: Matthew 13:28, both Gospel forms (King James wording). *Later use:* P. G. Wodehouse, *The White Feather* (1907), chapter 12.

Two schoolboys return from tea to find their hired boat gone from its mooring. They haul on the rope, the nose of the boat breaks the surface, and Dunstable delivers judgment: “‘There are more things in Heaven and Earth—’ said Dunstable, wiping his hands. ‘If you ask me, I should say an enemy hath done this. A boat doesn’t sink of its own accord.’” The culprit is a rival schoolboy named Albert.

The joke works only because the borrowed sentence is grave. In Matthew the householder’s answer explains the origin of evil in the field; in Wodehouse it explains a scuttled dinghy, and it arrives immediately after a half-finished line of *Hamlet*, so that the schoolboy’s whole rhetorical inheritance is being spent on vandalism. The wording is the King James version’s, not the Lectionary’s, and Wodehouse signals no source; the verbal match is exact and the sentence is distinctive enough to make dependence plain, but this is allusion, not quotation with attribution. The 1907 novel is public domain in the United States.

From parable to plant name

Proper and branch: the weeds of Matthew 13:25–30, both Gospel forms. *Later use:* *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (1897), s.v. “Tares”; *Chambers’s Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1908), s.v. “Darnel.”

Easton: “Tares. The bearded darnel, mentioned only in Matt. 13:25–30. It is the *Lolium temulentum*, a species of rye-grass, the seeds of which are a strong soporific poison. It bears the closest resemblance to wheat till the ear

appears, and only then the difference is discovered.” Chambers, a general English dictionary with no religious purpose, defines the plant by the parable: “Darnel . . . an annual of the rye-grass genus, the tares of Scripture,” with an etymology from Old French *darne*, stupid, “from its supposed narcotic properties.”

The turn is a migration of register. A word that entered English through a parable becomes the settled common name of a species, and the parable’s moral observation—that the counterfeit cannot be told from the wheat until it fruits—is restated as a field diagnostic. In Chambers the direction of definition is fully reversed: the plant is explained by Scripture rather than Scripture by the plant. That the identified species is a soporific is a coincidence neither lexicographer exploits. The identification of *zizania* with *Lolium temulentum* is the standard lexical judgment, not a demonstrated botanical fact of first-century Galilee; both reference works are public domain.

The Propers: Interpretive Possibilities

The six proposals below are original editorial syntheses produced with AI assistance for this guide. They are not the teaching of any authority cited, and no compositional intention is claimed for any Missal or Lectionary text. Each joins named appointed elements, states its mechanism and its use, and ends with the condition that would defeat it. A targeted precedent search for each distinctive conjunction is recorded, with its boundary and result, in `research/scope.md`.

1. The Collect reassigns the watch

Anchor: the Collect’s *vigili custodia perseverant*; Matthew 13:25, *cum dormirent homines*; and the ancient dispute over whose sleep is meant—Origen’s failure to watch and pray, Chrysostom’s negligent rulers and subjects, Aquinas’s death of the apostles.

Mechanism. The three witnesses argue about the identity of the sleepers, and each answer assigns responsibility to somebody else: to the careless soul, to the prelates, to a past generation. The Collect prayed a few minutes earlier contains the only imperative about watchfulness in the whole formulary, and it points in none of those directions: it asks that *these servants* persevere in *God’s commandments* under a watchful guard. The liturgical order thus answers an exegetical dispute about blame with a petition about the petitioner’s own obedience, before the dispute is even raised by the reading.

Use. It supplies a practical rule for hearing the parable: the question “who let this happen” is real but is not the question the assembly has just asked God to help it with. It also disciplines the homiletic temptation to distribute the parable’s blame among absent parties.

Limit. The Collect is shared with Years B and C and cannot be shown to have been written with Matthew 13 in view; vigilance language is common in Roman collects; and Matthew’s sleeping is at least arguably a neutral marker of night rather than a fault—Chrysostom himself grants that natural sleep is unavoidable. If the sleep is not culpable, the proposal weakens to a resonance.

2. The same gap is used by the enemy and inhabited by the Spirit

Anchor: Matthew 13:25, where the sowing occurs while men sleep; Romans 8:26, where the petitioner does not know what to ask; and the Alleluia’s adapted Matthew 11:25, where the mysteries are revealed to little ones.

Mechanism. Both readings locate decisive action precisely where the human subject is not in command of himself. The Gospel makes that unguarded interval the entry point of malice; Paul makes the corresponding interval in prayer—the not-knowing—the room in which the Spirit intercedes; the acclamation adds that the relevant knowledge is given rather than achieved. The three elements together describe non-mastery as a contested space rather than as either innocence or guilt.

Use. It yields a usable discernment rule: the fact that something happened while no one was in control settles nothing about its origin. Institutions and individuals may stop treating unconsciousness as an alibi without treating it as a verdict.

Limit. Romans is read semi-continuously and was not selected to comment on the Gospel; the General Introduction to the Lectionary (n. 68) expressly rejects an imposed thematic harmony on Sundays in Ordinary Time. Paul’s not-knowing concerns the content and manner of petition, not vigilance, and Aquinas’s reading of the verse turns on

the causality of desire rather than on any lapse of attention. The proposal is a synthesis across an independent strand and must be labelled as such wherever it is used.

3. Abel is named twice, and the second naming tests the first

Anchor: the Prayer over the Offerings, *sicut munera Abel*; the Roman Canon's *munera pueri tui iusti Abel* at *Supra quae*, under the branch in which Eucharistic Prayer I is chosen; and the Gospel's enemy who sows in another man's field.

Mechanism. Both prayers stand in the same Latin edition, and if Eucharistic Prayer I is used, this Sunday's Mass names Abel's gifts twice. Abel's offering is the first in Scripture to be accepted—and the acceptance is what provokes his brother to kill him (Genesis 4:4–8). The Sunday's own offering prayer asks that what individuals offer for God's honour (*singuli*) may profit all for salvation (*cunctis*). Set beside the Gospel, where servants propose to improve the field by subtraction, the doubled invocation of Abel marks the exact point at which an accepted offering can become a motive for removing a rival.

Use. It gives a concrete test for religious rivalry inside a congregation, an institution, or a movement: when acceptance in worship starts to license the elimination of a competitor, the Mass's own petition—each one's gift for everyone's salvation—has been reversed.

Limit. Eucharistic Prayer I is one option among several, and no evidence records which was used at any celebration of this Sunday; the offering prayer never mentions Cain, and Genesis 4 is not appointed. The Abel formula in the Canon is ancient and general, invoking accepted sacrifice rather than fratricide. Where another Eucharistic Prayer is chosen, only one naming occurs and the proposal's doubling disappears.

4. The liturgy disarms the psalms it gives the assembly

Anchor: the Entrance Antiphon, which takes Psalm 54:6 and 8 and passes over verse 7, where the evils are turned back on the enemies; the Responsorial Psalm, which takes Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16 and passes over verse 14, the violent band, and verse 17, where those who hate are confounded; and Matthew 13:29, where the servants are forbidden to act.

Mechanism. Three separate editorial acts converge. Two of them are modern selections in the Missal and the Lectionary, and one is inside the parable. Each removes from the assembly's mouth or hands the power to act against an adversary—while the Gospel simultaneously insists that an adversary exists and has already acted. The assembly is therefore given the enemy as a fact and denied him as an object of petition.

Use. It answers, at the level of what is actually printed, the charge that eschatological patience is merely deferred vengeance: on this Sunday the books do not hand the congregation even the psalmist's imprecations.

Limit. Pericope selection is often governed by length, singability, and the avoidance of difficult verses across many Sundays; no policy statement in the governing books ties these three omissions together, and other Sundays do appoint psalm verses about enemies. The convergence is real in this formulary and may not be generalized into a claim about the Lectionary as a whole.

5. When the parable is not explained, food is given instead

Anchor: the shorter Gospel form, Matthew 13:24–30, which stops before the disciples ask for the explanation; the first Communion Antiphon, Psalm 111:4–5, with its memorial of wonders and its food given to those who fear the Lord; and the Prayer after Communion's petition to pass *de vetustate* into *novitatem vitae*.

Mechanism. Under the shorter form the assembly is dismissed without the identification of sower, field, enemy, and harvest, and without the answer the Alleluia had promised to the little ones. What the rite then supplies at Communion is not information but memory and food, and what it asks at the end is not clarity but a change of life. The liturgy's response to an unexplained parable is thus structurally different in kind from the disciples' request in the house.

Use. It offers a rule for preaching and for catechesis on hard texts: the incomprehension of an assembly is not necessarily a deficit to be closed by more explanation, and the rite already provides another kind of answer.

Limit. The shorter form is one of two appointed alternatives and no evidence records which was proclaimed; the first Communion Antiphon is likewise one of two, and the sung chant may be neither. A homily may supply exactly the

explanation the shorter form omits. Under the longer form the explanation is given, and the proposal reduces to an observation about what Communion adds to it.

6. The psalm names the birds the Gospel leaves unnamed

anchors: the Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 86:9–10, where all the nations God has made shall come and worship; the mustard parable’s closing clause at Matthew 13:32, where the birds of the air dwell in the branches (longer form only); and Wisdom 12:13, the God who has care of all.

Mechanism. Matthew’s final clause is borrowed imagery: in Daniel 4 and Ezekiel 17:23 the birds sheltering in a great tree are peoples sheltering in a kingdom. Matthew does not gloss them, and the Gospel of the day never says who they are. The psalm does—and it is the one element in the formulary that does. Officially the psalm answers the first reading, not the Gospel; but its universal verse is the only printed text of the day that states what the mustard tree is for. The correlation runs backwards by appointment and forwards by content.

Use. It shows that the day’s universalism is printed rather than preached in: an assembly that sings verse 9 has already been told what the sheltering branches mean, and a homily need not import the theme from elsewhere.

Limit. This is the weakest of the six, and one checked witness runs against it: expounding this very clause, Aquinas takes the birds as *omnes qui habent animum in caelis*—those whose minds are in heaven, not the nations—while Chrysostom applies the parable to the spread of the Gospel without identifying the birds at all. The mustard parable belongs to the longer form only, and the psalm’s own horizon is an individual petition. If the birds are souls rather than peoples, the proposal fails and only the general theme of extension survives.

Appendix: Liturgical Resolution

Field	Resolved liturgical instance
Celebration	Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Rank and precedence	Sunday in Ordinary Time; rank 6 in the Table of Liturgical Days of the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar. It yields only to the celebrations ranked above it, none of which occurred on this date.
Season and colour	Ordinary Time, Week XVI; green
Registry identity	Stable parent PC-S42; formula key PC-S42-A; full publication slug <code>pc-s42-sixteenth-sunday-in-ordinary-time-year-a</code>
Form and coverage	One Mass form; Year A coverage only. Years B and C are separate targets and are not treated here.
Occurrence	Sunday, 19 July 2026, in the dioceses of the United States of America. The national liturgical calendar for 2026 lists no competing celebration on that date, and the Sunday is celebrated.
Governing edition-locale	Roman Missal, Third Edition, for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America (English, implemented 27 November 2011), whose Latin base is the <i>Missale Romanum</i> , third typical edition, in its 2008 emended reprint
Missal formulary owner	Ordinary Time, Week XVI. The reusable audit of that formulary is kept at <code>propers/temporal/shared/ordinary-time/weeks/16/propers/verified.md</code> in this provider tree; this leaf owns only the composition and the cycle-specific record.
Lectionary locator	Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition, no. 106
Psalter and adjacent ferial cycle	Psalter Week IV; the weekdays around this Sunday follow the independent ferial cycle II and do not import the Sunday readings
Other controlling books	General Instruction of the Roman Missal, especially nn. 48, 51, 61–62, 74, 87, 363, 365; General Introduction to the Lectionary, especially nn. 66–68, 105–107; <i>Tempus per annum</i> introductory rubrics 1–6 of the Latin Missal
Production coverage	The complete appointed textual inventory of one Mass, both Gospel forms, and both Communion antiphons. Music actually sung, Preface and Eucharistic Prayer actually used, and any local option exercised at any particular celebration are unresolved.

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
entrance-chant-selection	General Instruction no. 48 with the norms in force for the dioceses of the United States	locally selected	Entrance chant; whether the printed antiphon is used at all	Unresolved
sunday-sprinkling	General Instruction no. 51; the Missal's appendix rite	ritual substitution	Replaces the Penitential Act where used	Unresolved
gospel-long-form	Lectionary no. 106	appointed alternative	Matthew 13:24–43	Treated in full; not shown to have been selected
gospel-short-form	Lectionary no. 106	appointed alternative	Matthew 13:24–30; omits 13:31–43 from proclamation	Treated in full; not shown to have been selected
offertory-chant-selection	General Instruction no. 74	locally selected	Music at the preparation of the gifts	Unresolved; this Missal supplies no Offertory antiphon
preface-sunday-ordinary-time	<i>Tempus per annum</i> rubric 5	permitted	Preface, when the Eucharistic Prayer chosen has none of its own	Unresolved; coupled with the next branch
eucharistic-prayer-iv-coupled	General Instruction no. 365	permitted	Eucharistic Prayer IV with its invariable Preface; excludes a separately chosen Preface	Unresolved; coupled with the previous branch
communion-antiphon-psalm-111	Week XVI formulary; <i>Tempus per annum</i> rubric 6	appointed alternative	First Communion Antiphon	Treated; not shown to have been selected

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
communion-antiphon-revelation-3	Week XVI formulary; <i>Tempus per annum</i> rubric 6	appointed alternative	Second Communion Antiphon	Treated; not shown to have been selected
communion-chant-selection	General Instruction no. 87 with the norms in force for the dioceses of the United States	locally selected	Communion chant; whether either printed antiphon is used	Unresolved

Rubric 6 of *Tempus per annum* directs that, of the two Communion antiphons, preference be given to the one that accords with the Gospel of the Mass. Neither Week XVI antiphon is drawn from Matthew 13, so that preference supplies no resolution here; the two remain open alternatives under the general norm.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

As of. Every source named in this guide was consulted, and every statement in it was checked, on 25 July 2026. Liturgical books, calendars, and official web texts change; nothing here is warranted beyond that date.

What this guide covers, and what it does not

It covers one Mass: the appointed textual variable parts of the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, in the edition-locale named in the resolution appendix, together with both Gospel forms and both Communion antiphons. It does not cover Years B and C, the Ordinary Time weekdays of Week XVI, the Liturgy of the Hours, chant repertories, translations other than those named, or any diocesan, religious, parish, or church-proper overlay. Local selections listed as unresolved in the branch table were not established by any evidence available here and are not narrated as though they had been.

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These are limits on what this guide may lawfully contain, and they are also limits on what it can therefore prove. They are not incidental.

Material	Ceiling accepted here
English Roman Missal (ICEL translation, confirmed for the dioceses of the United States, 2011)	Under copyright. No oration, antiphon, or other English Missal text is reproduced, in whole or in part, anywhere in this guide. Prayers are identified by their Latin incipits and analysed through original summaries. Nothing here may be used as a translation or as an approved liturgical text.
Latin <i>Missale Romanum</i> , third typical edition (2002; 2008 emended reprint)	Not freely reproducible in bulk. Short Latin incipits and argument-bearing phrases are quoted. Of the three orations only the Prayer over the Offerings is printed complete, on the wording of its public-domain witness, the Supplement to the Gregorian Sacramentary in H. A. Wilson’s edition (Henry Bradshaw Society 49, 1915; public domain in the United States), p. 171, which the 2002 text follows word for word but for spelling and punctuation; the Collect and the Prayer after Communion are given by incipit and phrase only. What was actually verified is the 2002 text at pages 465–466, read at pages 280–281 of the exact registered digital reproduction. The 2008 reprint’s own pages were not inspected; the official variation list was checked instead and names no change to this formulary.
Lectionary for Mass (United States, second typical edition)	Under copyright. No Lectionary wording is reproduced. Citations, boundaries, response locus, and branch structure are given; scriptural wording quoted in this guide comes from the public-domain Douay–Rheims (Challoner) version, always named, and differs from what is proclaimed.
No named United States altar book was collated	The publisher-specific English printings were not inspected. Any claim depending on the exact English wording of an oration is therefore outside this guide’s evidence, and no such claim is made.
Official texts of the Holy See quoted here	The General Instruction, the General Introduction to the Lectionary, the Universal Norms, and <i>Dignitatis humanae</i> are quoted in short excerpts with attribution; they retain their own rights and are not relicensed by this repository.

Material	Ceiling accepted here
Patristic and Thomistic translations	Ante-Nicene Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, the Dods <i>City of God</i> , and the English Dominican <i>Summa</i> are public domain and are named at each use. Latin from Corpus Thomisticum and from the CSEL text of <i>The City of God</i> is quoted in short extracts; any English rendering of a Latin phrase not taken from a named public-domain translation is a working gloss of this guide, never a substitute translation.

Source and verification scope

Verification here means that the wording or fact was read by the authoring agent at the identified witness on 25 July 2026. It does not mean collation against a printed critical edition, a page-image facsimile, or an official delivery artifact, except where the record says so. The occurrence, colour, Lectionary number, Psalter week, and reading citations were read in the official 2026 liturgical calendar of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; the complete Lectionary 106 structure, including the response locus and both Gospel forms, was read in an archived capture of the conference’s own daily-readings page for the date, because the live page was not retrievable. The Latin formulary was read in the registered reproduction identified above, whose bytes matched the hash recorded in this repository’s source library. Patristic and scholastic loci, and every later work in the notable-and-quotable gallery, were read in the public transcriptions named in the references.

Search method and its boundary

Reception was sought first in direct commentaries and homilies on each appointed passage, then in the major Greek and Latin Fathers reachable in public English transcriptions, then in Thomas Aquinas’s scriptural commentaries and the *Summa*, and only then in later doctrinal or liturgical illumination. Searches were run over public transcription corpora and over the repository’s own tracked text of *The City of God* in both Dods’s English and the CSEL Latin. Negative results recorded in **research/scope.md** are bounded by that corpus, those languages, and this date; they are correctable and are never claims that no witness exists. No exhaustive patristic, manuscript, critical, musical, canonical, or local-calendar survey is claimed.

Registry, records, and unresolved global questions

This leaf adopts the stable postconciliar proper registry’s parent, formula key, slug, ordering, and ownership rules without modification and asserts no edition-specific delta. Its disposition and its dated occurrence are entered in this edition-locale’s registry directory, which evaluates only the targets it lists: every other target of the stable registry remains unassessed there, and no disposition for any of them is implied by this leaf’s existence. The identity and resolution record is **instance/manifest.md**; the composition audit is **propers/verified.md**; the reusable Missal audit is the Week XVI owner named in the resolution appendix; the operational research audit, reception matrix, precedent searches, and negative results are in **research/scope.md** and **research/source-audit.md**.

Review state

Completed: source research and same-day verification of every witness quoted; classification of every cross-element relation; multi-pass build with clean logs; the generation-metadata gate; and page-by-page visual review of the rendered document. Outstanding: collation of a named United States altar book; inspection of the 2008 reprint’s own pages; independent scriptural, patristic, Thomistic, liturgical, and theological review; and any ecclesiastical approval. Internal checking is not independent review, and production quality is not ecclesiastical approval. This guide is a study aid. It is not an official liturgical book, a translation, a critical edition, or a substitute for the approved books.

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