

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A · Lectionary no. 109 · Ordinary Time Week XVII formulary

Roman Missal, Third Edition, and *Lectionary for Mass*, Second Typical Edition, for the dioceses of the United States of America

Textual unit	Text / citation
Introductory Rites	
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Cf.</i> Ps 67:6–7, 36 (Vulgate/Septuagint numbering; Ps 68 Hebrew). Latin incipit <i>Deus in loco sancto suo</i> . An approved entrance chant may be used instead.
Penitential Act	No proper text. On a Sunday the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace it; that rite has its own texts.
Collect	<i>Protéctor in te sperántium, Deus</i> . One text, shared by Years A, B and C.
Liturgy of the Word	
First Reading	1 Kings 3:5, 7–12. Verse 6 falls inside the span and is not proclaimed.
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–128, 129–130; response <i>Cf.</i> Ps 119:97a. Verses from six of the psalm's twenty-two alphabetic stanzas; the refrain from a seventh.
Second Reading	Romans 8:28–30.
Gospel Acclamation	<i>Cf.</i> Matthew 11:25, set between the Alleluia.
Gospel	Matthew 13:44–52, <i>or</i> the shorter form Matthew 13:44–46. Only one is proclaimed.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	
Offertory chant	No Missal antiphon. Any chant used is a local selection.
Prayer over the Offerings	<i>Súscipe, quæsumus, Dómine, múnera</i> . Shared by Years A, B and C.
Preface	None proper. A Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time is used unless the Eucharistic Prayer chosen carries its own.
Eucharistic Prayer	No proper insert. The choice is coupled to the Preface decision above.
Communion Rites	
Communion Antiphon	Either Ps 102:2 (Vulgate/Septuagint; Ps 103 Hebrew), <i>Bénedic, ánima mea, Dómino</i> ; <i>or</i> Matthew 5:7–8, <i>Beáti misericórdes</i> . The Missal prints them as alternatives; an approved chant may be used instead.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Súmpsimus, Dómine, divínium sacraméntum</i> . Shared by Years A, B and C.
Sense	Synthesis
Literal	A young king, newly succeeded and calling himself a child, is offered whatever he will ask and asks instead for a heart able to hear and to judge; the psalm's speaker prefers instruction to gold; Paul tells Roman believers that God works toward good for those who love him and has purposed their conformity to his Son; and Jesus, closing a discourse in parables, likens the kingdom to a buried treasure, one costly pearl, a net taking fish of every kind, and a trained scribe who produces new things and old.
Allegorical	The Latin tradition identified the hidden treasure variously as Christ concealed in the flesh (Hilary), as the sense hidden under the letter of Scripture (Origen, Jerome), as heavenly desire hidden in ascetical discipline (Gregory the Great), and as sacred doctrine within the Church (Aquinas, who reports the first three without adjudicating). These are competing figures, and none of the witnesses named settles among them.
Moral	The petitions turn value into conduct: the Collect asks that passing goods be so used now that what abides may already be held, and the Prayer over the Offerings returns what came from God's own bounty. Solomon's refusal of long life, riches and his enemies' lives is the reading's own contrast, and the psalm's ranking of the commandments above gold and topaz is the assembly's answer to it.
Anagogical	Only the longer Gospel form reaches the shore, the sorting and the furnace; the shorter ends in joy and purchase. Romans carries its chain of verbs through to <i>glorified</i> , a past tense for what is not yet seen, and the Prayer after Communion names the sacrament a perpetual memorial of the Passion ordered to salvation. What is hoped for is adherence to what remains, not the securing of a possession.

Scriptural Date and Location

Textual unit / alternative	Citation	Location	Date
First Reading	1 Kings 3:5, 7–12	Written: Judah, or Babylonia during the exile; place unnamed by the book	Final form commonly placed in the sixth century BC
<i>Narrated event</i>	The dream at Gibeon	The high place at Gibeon, about ten km north-west of Jerusalem	Early in Solomon's reign, conventionally about 970–960 BC
The book names no author. Jewish tradition credits Jeremiah; modern accounts generally place Kings within a longer Deuteronomistic history reaching its present shape in or after the exile, with earlier court and annalistic material behind it. Neither reconstruction is a premise here. The audience of the finished book is a people who have lost the monarchy and are asked to judge it. Verse 6, Solomon's recital of God's mercy to David, falls inside the appointed span but is not proclaimed.			
Entrance Antiphon (adaptation)	<i>Cf.</i> Ps 67:6–7, 36	Israel; a sanctuary and procession setting is internal to the psalm	Uncertain; the psalm is widely judged archaic in parts
The received heading assigns the psalm to David; modern study treats it as one of the most textually difficult in the Psalter and does not settle its date. The Missal splices the end of v. 6, the opening of v. 7, and the closing v. 36, and marks the result <i>Cf.</i> It is therefore an adaptation, not a proclamation of the psalm.			
Communion Antiphon A (alternative)	Ps 102:2	Israel; no locale is named in the psalm	Uncertain; postexilic language is often noted
The received heading assigns the psalm to David. The antiphon quotes the opening summons to bless and not to forget, without the psalm's later catalogue of benefits. Selection of this antiphon rather than the alternative is a local decision that this guide does not resolve.			
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–128, 129–130; response <i>Cf.</i> Ps 119:97a	Israel; no narrative setting	Uncertain; a postexilic Torah piety is commonly proposed
Psalm 119 is anonymous and alphabetic: twenty-two stanzas of eight verses, each stanza's verses beginning with the same Hebrew letter. The appointed verses are drawn from six stanzas and the refrain from a seventh, so the sung text is a liturgical selection and not a continuous biblical pericope. Its horizon is Israel's delight in <i>torah</i> .			
Communion Antiphon B (alternative)	Matthew 5:7–8	Written: eastern Mediterranean, Antioch often proposed and unproved	Composed after AD 70; often placed about AD 80–90
<i>Narrated event</i>	Two of the Beatitudes	A mountainside in Galilee, before a crowd and the disciples	Within the Galilean ministry
Ancient tradition, reported by Papias through Eusebius, names Matthew the apostle and a Semitic-language original; the canonical Greek text's relation to that report is disputed. The two beatitudes are adjacent but distinct sayings, and the antiphon quotes them without their surrounding series.			
Gospel Acclamation (adaptation)	<i>Cf.</i> Matthew 11:25	Same written setting as above	Same as above
<i>Narrated event</i>	Jesus's thanksgiving to the Father	Galilee, after the woes on the unrepentant towns	Within the Galilean ministry
The acclamation abbreviates and adapts the verse; it does not proclaim it whole, and Matthew 11 is a distinct scene from Matthew 13. The Latin of this verse and of the appointed Ps 118:130 share the word <i>parvuli</i> , the little ones to whom understanding is given.			
Gospel (long and short forms)	Matthew 13:44–52; short form 13:44–46	Same written setting as above	Same as above
<i>Narrated event</i>	Close of the parable discourse	By the Sea of Galilee, then indoors with the disciples	Within the Galilean ministry
Matthew's third discourse begins in a boat before crowds and continues in a house with the disciples alone; the treasure, pearl, net and scribe belong to the indoor portion. The short form ends with the purchase of the pearl; the long form alone reaches the shore, the separation and the householder's new and old.			
Second Reading	Romans 8:28–30	Written from Corinth, or its port Cenchreae, to believers at Rome	About AD 56–58
Authorship by Paul is undisputed; Tertius names himself as the scribe at 16:22. The Roman congregations included Jewish and gentile believers whom Paul had not yet met. These verses stand inside a long argument that runs from present suffering to the assurance that nothing separates from God's love; that frame is not proclaimed with them.			

The Propers: Themes and Movement

This formulary has two independent architectures laid over one another. The Missal's texts for Week XVII are shared by Years A, B and C; the Lectionary's Year A texts pair one Old Testament scene with one Gospel while the apostolic course runs on its own. Heard together, the two architectures pose a single question in three registers: what is worth wanting. Solomon is told to name whatever he wishes; the psalmist ranks instruction against bullion; a finder and a merchant liquidate everything for one object; and the Collect asks for the skill of using what passes without losing hold of what remains.

Stage	What the appointed texts actually do
1. Gathering	The Entrance antiphon names God in his holy place and as the one who settles those of one mind in a house, then asks nothing; the Collect turns immediately to petition, and its single request concerns the right use of goods.
2. Asking and ranking	The first reading gives a request that refuses three obvious goods and receives a fourth; the responsorial psalm answers by ranking the commandments above gold and topaz and asking for understanding.
3. Finding and spending	The Gospel replaces asking with finding. Two men sell everything, and in the long form a net and a shore add a sorting that no purchaser controls.
4. Returning	The Prayer over the Offerings hands back what came from God's bounty; the Communion antiphon either recalls benefits or names mercy and clean-heartedness; the Prayer after Communion calls the sacrament a perpetual memorial of the Passion.

Officially correlated: a request answered by a discovery

The General Introduction to the Lectionary makes the Old Testament reading of an Ordinary Time Sunday harmonize with the Gospel. Here the correlation is unusually exact and unusually asymmetrical. Solomon must choose in advance, in the dark, with nothing yet in hand; the man in the field and the merchant choose after the fact, with the object already found. Both stories end in a transfer of property, but Solomon's costs him nothing and the finders' costs them everything.

The pairing therefore sets two shapes of wisdom side by side rather than illustrating one. The first reading praises a petition; the Gospel praises a purchase. What joins them is a governed refusal: Solomon does not ask for long life, riches, or his enemies' lives, and the finders do not keep what they had. The Lectionary's own arrangement sets these side by side; it does not make Solomon an early merchant or the merchant a wise king.

Responsorial: the psalm as the reading's own answer

Psalm 119 is not a third reading. It is the assembly's reply, and the verses chosen make that reply pointed. Two of the five strophes rank divine instruction above precious metal, which is the same comparison Solomon's refusal makes narratively; the last strophe asks for the light and understanding that Solomon was given. The refrain, drawn from a stanza the sung verses otherwise skip, states love of the commandments as the disposition under which all of this is heard.

The psalm's own horizon is Israel's delight in *torah*, and it keeps that horizon when Christians sing it. And the sung text is a selection from six of the psalm's twenty-two stanzas: no ancient commentator expounded these particular verses as a unit, because the unit did not exist before the modern Lectionary made it.

Semi-continuous and independent: Romans keeps its own course

Romans 8:28–30 arrives on this Sunday because the apostolic course has reached it; the Lectionary does not correlate it with the parable, and Paul's clause about God's purpose is no rule about property. The passage does its own work: it grounds confidence in God's initiative and ends in a chain of verbs whose last term, *glorified*, is written in a past tense for something not yet seen.

Its proximity to the Gospel is still audible. Both texts move from something hidden to something possessed; both refuse to make the outcome a human achievement alone. Where they differ is decisive: the parables describe a person acting, and Paul describes God purposing.

Shared euchology: the Missal's grammar of passing and abiding

The three orations are Year-neutral. The Collect's closing petition uses a distinctive Latin idiom of this typical edition: a contrast between goods that pass and things that abide, asking that the second be held *already*, now. The same idiom appears in the Missal's Advent Post-Communion prayer, where the faithful are described as walking among passing things. The Collect is therefore not eccentric; it speaks the book's own eschatological dialect.

That dialect meets the readings on its own terms. The Prayer over the Offerings describes the gifts as drawn from God's bounty before they were offered, which is precisely what the man in the field cannot say about his treasure. The Prayer after Communion names the sacrament a perpetual memorial of the Passion, supplying the one costly purchase that the Gospel's two buyers only image.

Branches: what is actually heard depends on two choices

Two authorized alternatives change the celebration materially, and neither is resolved by the books. If the shorter Gospel is chosen, the assembly hears value, joy and total expenditure, and hears nothing of the net, the furnace, the question "Have ye understood all these things?", or the scribe with new and old. The wording is the public-domain Douay-Rheims, a study translation, not the proclaimed Lectionary text. If the longer form is chosen, the movement acquires an end that no buyer controls. Preaching that imports the net into a celebration that did not proclaim it reports something that did not happen.

The Communion antiphons are likewise alternatives, and an approved chant may replace either. One recalls benefits received and forbids forgetting; the other names mercy and clean-heartedness with their promised ends. The first closes the circuit of gift and memory opened by the Prayer over the Offerings; the second supplies a moral test for those who have just been fed. Both are lawful, and the books leave the choice open.

Two further variables lie outside the proper texts, though both change the celebration. The blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the Penitential Act on a Sunday, bringing texts of its own that belong to the Order of Mass and not to this formulary. And because Week XVII supplies no Preface of its own, both the Preface and the Eucharistic Prayer are chosen locally, as a coupled pair: some Eucharistic Prayers bring their own Preface and so settle the question, while others leave it open. The proper texts and their relations stand however either choice falls.

The shape of the whole

If the whole formulary is heard together, its movement is from a question about worth to an act of receiving. It begins by naming a God who gathers rather than a God who demands; it asks, in the Collect, for competence with things that do not last; it hears a king refuse the three goods any king would want and a psalm rank instruction over bullion; it watches two strangers spend everything on one object; and it ends by receiving, without payment, the memorial of a purchase made by someone else. The formulary never resolves the tension between spending everything and being given everything. It stages both, in that order, and leaves the assembly holding the second.

The Propers: Detailed Commentary

The Latin Missal cited below is the 2002 typical edition identified in the appendix. Protected wording is not reproduced: the orations are described and cited by incipit, short Latin phrases appear only where an argument turns on them, and where scriptural wording is quoted the version is the public-domain Douay-Rheims, named as such, never the copyrighted Lectionary text actually proclaimed in the United States.

Entrance Antiphon: a spliced text older than either Vulgate

The Missal marks the antiphon *Cf. Ps 67:6–7, 36*, and the abbreviation is doing real work. Three separate clauses are joined: the closing words of v. 6, which place God in his holy place; the opening of v. 7, which describes him settling people together in a house; and the second half of v. 36, which gives might and strength to his people. The intervening material – God as father of orphans and judge of widows, the release of prisoners, the rebellious who dwell in tombs – is not sung. The result is a composed text about presence, gathering and strength, not a proclamation of Psalm 67.

The middle clause is the interesting one. The Missal reads *unánimes in domo*, “those of one mind.” Neither standard Latin Bible agrees.

Witness	Ps 67(68):7, first clause	Sense
<i>Missale Romanum</i> 2002, Week XVII	<i>Deus qui inhabitare facit unánimes in domo</i>	God settles the like-minded in a house
Clementine Vulgate (Ps 67:7)	<i>Deus qui inhabitare facit unius moris in domo</i>	God settles those of one custom in a house
<i>Nova Vulgata</i> (Ps 68:7)	<i>Deus, qui inhabitare facit desolatos in domo</i>	God settles the desolate in a house

The divergence is not a printing error. The identical wording, with the identical citation, stands as the Introit of the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost in the pre-conciliar Missal, which means the postconciliar book kept the chant repertory’s ancient Latin psalter form rather than conforming the antiphon to either critical recension. The bishops’ official *Antiphonary* keys this antiphon to a page of the *Graduale Romanum*, which is consistent with that account; no *Graduale* page was collated for this antiphon, and the pre-conciliar comparison rests on a community transcription rather than a collated printing, so no collated witness yet confirms the derivation, which remains the best-supported explanation of a verified difference.

Two further facts bear on this antiphon. First, the same text, under the same *Cf.* citation, is the Entrance antiphon of the Ritual Mass for the Dedication of a Church in the same typical edition. The antiphon is thus, within this book’s own usage, a text about a building becoming a household. Second, Augustine had already read the verse that way. Expounding Psalm 68 (Vulgate 67), he refuses to let “his holy place” name a location: as though someone were asking in what place God is, the psalm answers by describing the like-minded dwelling in a house, so that we should not seek him apart from ourselves (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 68, §6). His comment on the final verse, the one that supplies the antiphon’s third clause, reads the promised strength as the power by which death is destroyed (§40). Augustine wrote both remarks on the source verses, before the antiphon existed in this form, and they show that its ecclesial register is not a modern imposition.

Collect: a revised petition in the Missal’s own idiom

The Collect opens by addressing God as protector of those who hope in him, adds the relative clause that without him nothing is strong and nothing holy, asks that mercy be multiplied, and then states the purpose: that under God as ruler and guide the petitioners may so use passing goods now as already to be able to cling to those that abide.

Three facts bear on the prayer.

The address is formulaic, not proper. The invocation *Protéctor in te sperántium, Deus* opens two different prayers in the 2002 Missal. Besides this Collect it begins an optional Prayer over the People appointed for Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent, which continues quite differently, asking blessing, protection and perseverance in love. The address is therefore no signature of this Sunday.

The petition was rewritten in the reform. The pre-conciliar Collect of the Third Sunday after Pentecost shares the whole first half word for word and then diverges:

Form	Closing petition
Pre-conciliar (Third Sunday after Pentecost)	... <i>sic transeámus per bona temporália, ut non amittámus æténa</i> – so pass through temporal goods that we do not lose the eternal.
<i>Missale Romanum</i> 2002, Week XVII	... <i>sic bonis transeúntibus nunc utámur, ut iam possímus inhærére mansúris</i> – so use passing goods now that we may already be able to cling to those that abide.

Four changes are substantive. The goods are no longer “temporal” but “passing,” which is a description of their duration rather than of their order. The verb of relation to them changes from passing *through* to *using*. The eschatological verb changes from not losing to clinging. And two adverbs are added, *now* and *already*, which move the petition’s horizon into the present. The revised prayer asks for a competence exercised in time, not merely for a safe transit through it. The pre-conciliar side of this comparison rests on a community transcription rather than a collated printing.

The closing idiom is the book’s own. The exact phrase *inhærére mansúris* occurs eight times in the 2002 Missal. Seven are the Post-Communion prayer of the First Sunday of Advent, repeated on the Mondays and Thursdays of the Advent weeks, where it is paired with a description of the faithful as walking *inter prætereúntia*, among passing things. The eighth is this Collect, which is the only place the phrase *bonis transeúntibus* occurs at all. The passing/abiding contrast is therefore a shared redactional dialect of this typical edition, and the Collect is its Ordinary Time instance.

What the prayer asks for has an obvious patristic name. Augustine’s *On Christian Doctrine* opens by dividing things into those to be enjoyed and those to be used, and defines the terms exactly: to enjoy is to rest in a thing for its own sake; to use is to employ what is at one’s disposal to obtain what one loves (I.3–4). The Collect asks for that competence and then names its term with a different verb again: not *fruí* but *inhærére*, to cling. The distinction matters pastorally. A prayer that asked only to “use” the world could be heard as instrumentalism; the added verb of adherence names a relation to God that is not itself a use.

Read against this year’s readings, though it serves all three years alike, the Collect states in petition what the first reading states as narrative and the Gospel as action. It asks for the disposition that makes such rankings possible, and locates it not in the petitioner’s strength but under a ruler and a guide.

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7–12

The pericope, and the three things it leaves out

The scene is Solomon’s night at Gibeon, “the great high place,” early in a reign that has just been secured by violence. The Lectionary appoints the offer, the request and its approval, and it draws three boundaries that change the reading’s shape.

Omission	What stands in the Bible	Effect on the proclaimed text
v. 6, inside the appointed span	Solomon’s recital of the great mercy shown to David his father, and of the son given to sit on his throne.	The dynastic warrant is removed. What the assembly hears is a young man’s self-description without the family credential that in the text precedes it.
vv. 13–14, immediately after	God adds riches and glory unasked, and makes long life conditional on walking in his ways.	The reading ends on the granting of the wise heart. The reward that follows the refusal of reward, and the condition attached to long life, are not proclaimed.
vv. 16–28, later in the chapter	The judgment between the two women and the living child.	The famous demonstration is absent. Anything a homily draws from “the judgment of Solomon” is drawing on a text that was not read.

Verse 3 has already noted that Solomon sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and the narrator says so as a qualification, not a compliment. The book will end with Solomon’s apostasy and the kingdom’s division. Neither fact is proclaimed today, and both stand in the book: the man who asks so well is the same man the book will judge, and the request is not a character reference.

One phrase, three languages

The request is usually quoted as “an understanding heart,” and that rendering conceals what is asked for.

Witness	1 Kings 3:9, the request	What is asked
Hebrew	<i>lēb shōmēa</i> , with <i>shōmēa</i> a Qal participle of <i>shāma</i> ’, to hear	A <i>hearing</i> heart: an organ of attention, not of analysis. The verb is rendered “hear” or “hearken” in the overwhelming majority of its biblical occurrences and “understand” in a handful.
Septuagint (3 Kingdoms 3:9)	<i>kardian akoueîn</i>	Literally “a heart to hear.” The Greek keeps the Hebrew idiom, then moves at v. 11 to understanding for hearing judgment and at v. 12 to a prudent and wise heart.
Clementine Vulgate (3 Kings 3:9)	<i>cor docile</i>	A <i>teachable</i> heart. The Latin shifts the metaphor from listening to docility.
Douay-Rheims	“an understanding heart”	The English follows the Latin’s direction and completes the shift toward cognition.

What God grants is described differently again: at v. 12 the Latin gives *cor sapiens et intelligens*, a wise and understanding heart, and at v. 11 the thing asked is summarised as *sapiéntiam ad discernéndum iudícium*, wisdom to discern judgment. So the request is for hearing, the summary is for discernment, and the gift is for wisdom and understanding. Hebrew, Greek and Latin all perform that movement; the Latin alone begins it already at teachability.

Reception: Ambrose and Augustine

Ambrose’s treatment in *On the Duties of the Clergy* II.8 is the standard patristic locus, though the chapter is not about Gibeon at all: it is about *counsel* as the third thing that commends a man to others, and its thesis is that good advice requires prudence and justice together, since “prudence cannot exist without justice” (§43). Ambrose then narrates the judgment between the two women (§§44–45), calls Solomon’s penetration of the hidden maternal affection divine (§46), and divides the achievement: it was wisdom “to distinguish between secret heart-thoughts, to draw the truth from hidden springs,” and justice that the false claimant should not take another’s child (§47). Only in that section’s closing clause does the appointed verse appear, and it appears as the judgment’s ground: Solomon “had asked for wisdom, so that a prudent heart might be given him to hear and to judge with justice.” Ambrose therefore does receive the appointed verse directly, but backwards, from the scene the Lectionary does not appoint.

Augustine’s Solomon is a different figure again, and he cuts the other way. In the *City of God* Solomon is a type who fails to resemble what he typifies: whoever thinks Nathan’s promise was fulfilled in him “greatly errs,” since one need only look at the house of Solomon “full of strange women worshipping false gods” (XVII.8). And the diagnosis in XVII.20 is exact about the appointed scene’s aftermath: “This man, after good beginnings, made a bad end. For indeed prosperity, which wears out the minds of the wise, hurt him more than that wisdom profited him.” The man who asks so well is not thereby safe, and the book that records the request also records the ruin.

Where the expected witnesses fall short

Where a witness would be expected and is absent, the absence matters: the checked witnesses are thinner on this text than its fame suggests.

Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Rule* is the obvious candidate: a whole treatise on the government of souls, written by a man who had been a prefect. In all four books Solomon appears sixteen times, every time as the tag attached to a quotation from Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Sirach, and Gibeon does not appear at all. The nearest approach is Book III’s warning that Solomon, granted such wisdom, fell because no discipline of tribulation guarded it – the grant presupposed, the petition never invoked.

Cassian’s second *Conference*, the classic treatise on discretion, likewise never cites the request. Its royal exempla are failures: Saul, who preferred his own offering to obedience, and Ahab, who preferred his own clemency to a divine

command. The tradition’s foundational text on discernment was built on kings who lacked it rather than on the king who asked for it.

Aquinas is the third. The whole of *Summa theologiae* II-II q. 45 on the gift of wisdom, q. 47 on prudence, and q. 83 on prayer, and I-II q. 68 on the gifts of the Spirit, contains no reference to Solomon or to 3 Kings 3. The absence is most striking at q. 83, a. 6, where Aquinas holds that temporal things may lawfully be desired “not indeed principally, by placing our end therein, but as helps whereby we are assisted in tending towards beatitude” – which is precisely the logic of Solomon’s refusal, argued instead from Augustine. The convergence is real and the dependence is not evidenced. The silence holds for those four questions and says nothing of the whole Thomistic corpus.

The fourth is modern: Benedict XVI, in a national parliament, changed this verse’s register rather than expounding it (see *Notable and Quotable*).

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–128, 129–130

What the selection is made of

Psalm 119 is the Psalter’s longest poem and its most rigidly built: twenty-two stanzas of eight verses, each stanza’s verses beginning with the same successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and almost every verse containing a synonym for the law. Knowing where the appointed verses sit inside that grid is not antiquarianism; it shows what the Lectionary has done.

Sung verses	Stanza (letter, ordinal)	Position within the stanza	What the verse says, in the Douay-Rheims
57	HETH, 8th (vv. 57–64)	First verse	“O Lord, my portion, I have said, I would keep thy law.”
72	TETH, 9th (vv. 65–72)	Last verse	“The law of thy mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver.”
76–77	JOD, 10th (vv. 73–80)	Fourth and fifth	Mercy for comfort, and tender mercies that one may live, “for thy law is my meditation.”
<i>Response:</i> 97a	MEM, 13th (vv. 97–104)	First verse	“O how have I loved thy law, O Lord!”
127–128	AIN, 16th (vv. 121–128)	Last two	Commandments loved “above gold and the topaz”; “I have hated all wicked ways.”
129–130	PHE, 17th (vv. 129–136)	First two	“Thy testimonies are wonderful”; “the declaration of thy words giveth light: and giveth understanding to little ones.”

Three features of the selection are objective and consequential. It is discontinuous: it draws from six of the twenty-two stanzas and skips the rest. It is edged: it takes the opening verse of one stanza, the closing verse of another, the closing pair of a third and the opening pair of a fourth, so that the sung text repeatedly stands at a seam. And its refrain comes from a stanza none of whose other verses is sung, and which falls chronologically between the second and third of the sung groups. No ancient commentator expounded this sequence as a unit, because the unit is a modern liturgical construction. What the Fathers expounded is the individual verses, and they did so at length.

Two Fathers who found the psalm hard

Both of the great Latin expositors of Psalm 118 leave a record of the difficulty, and both remark on the appointed verses.

Augustine expounded every other psalm before this one, and his preface says why: he deferred it “not so much on account of its well-known length as on account of its depth, knowable to few.” He adds the reason that difficulty is not the usual kind: with other obscure psalms the obscurity at least shows itself, whereas this one “presents such a

surface that it is believed to need a reader and a hearer, not an expositor.” The man who wrote thirty-two sermons on it found it anything but easy.

Ambrose supplies something more particular. Opening the section that begins at the first of our appointed verses, he records a dispute about where that verse belongs: most codices attach v. 57 to the *end* of the seventh letter, but the Greek psalter corrected against the Hebrew shows it opens the eighth. The Lectionary’s first sung verse therefore sits on a seam already contested in the fourth century.

Direct exegesis at the appointed verses

Augustine’s exposition happens to cover five of the six appointed groups directly. The paragraph numbers below are those of the standard English edition, which is abridged and does not print his thirty-two sermon divisions; his Latin lemma at v. 130 also differs slightly from the Gallican Psalter the liturgy uses, reading that God’s words *make the little ones understand* rather than *give understanding to the little ones*.

Verse	Augustine’s comment, at the English edition’s paragraph number
57, “my portion”	The possession is deferred and conditional in a particular way: “the Lord will be each man’s portion then, when he has kept His law” (§57).
72, above gold and silver	He reads the comparison as one between two loves rather than two valuations, and the sentence is quotable as it stands: “love loves the law of God more than avarice loves thousands of gold and silver” (§71).
76, mercy for comfort	He notes that the preceding verse has already said “in thy truth thou hast humbled me,” and takes mercy and truth as the pair in which the psalm asks to be consoled (§76).
127–128, above gold and topaz	Grace has this object, “that the commandments, which could not be fulfilled by fear, may be fulfilled by love”; therefore they are above gold and topaz (§126). The hatred of the unrighteous way is then the navigator’s avoidance of the rock on which precious freight is lost (§127).
129–130, wonderful, and light to little ones	Wonder is the reason for search, not a substitute for it: because the testimonies are wonderful, the soul searched them, growing “more curious from the difficulty” (§128). And on the little ones: “What is the little one save the humble and weak?” – the law was given “that it might make you a little one instead of great” (§129).

Two of these bear directly on the day. The comment on v. 72 supplies the psalm’s own answer to the first reading: the ranking of instruction over bullion is not asceticism about money but a competition between loves, which is exactly what the Gospel’s two buyers demonstrate in action. And the comment on v. 130 lands on the same Latin word as the Gospel acclamation. The psalm says that God’s words give understanding to *parvuli*; the acclamation says the Father has revealed these things to *parvuli*. Augustine’s gloss – the humble and weak, made little rather than great – is the bridge, and it was written about the psalm, not about the pairing.

Ambrose reaches the same two verses by a different route, and his register is social rather than epistemological. On v. 57 he asks how rare on earth is the man who can say that the Lord is his portion, and answers with a portrait: one whom lust does not inflame, avarice does not goad, ambition does not lay low, envy does not waste – a man “born for God, not for himself.” He then works through the Levite, who has no earthly inheritance because God is his portion, to Peter at the Beautiful Gate, whose “silver and gold I have none” becomes the psalm verse’s proof: this is my portion, and my portion is Christ. On v. 72 he is blunter still. Not everyone says that the law is better than thousands of gold and silver, “indeed it is a rare man who says it”; Peter said it and proved it by the effect. And Ambrose then names who cannot: not the miser brooding on buried gold, and not the moneyed man who ransacks his daily profits, piles up wealth, lays snares for legacies, and keeps tireless vigil at a sick man’s bedside. The legacy-hunter of Roman satire has walked into a psalm commentary, and he is there because the verse is about a ranking of loves that a whole way of life contradicts.

The psalm keeps its own horizon. These are the words of an Israelite whose delight is in *torah*, and Christian reception does not annul that literal sense. The Old Testament is proclaimed in this liturgy as Scripture in its own right, not as a cipher awaiting decryption, and the two Fathers quoted above both treat it that way even where their conclusions are Christological.

Second Reading: Romans 8:28–30

An independent strand, and why that matters here

Romans is read semi-continuously through these Sundays. This pericope arrives because the course has reached it, and the *General Introduction to the Lectionary* says as much about the apostolic course in Ordinary Time: the Lectionary does not correlate it with Solomon or the parables. Nor is it a theological key to the treasure; a sentence about God’s purpose is not a rule about property.

Within Romans the verses sit at a hinge. Chapter 8 has moved from life in the Spirit through the groaning of creation to the Spirit’s intercession in prayer, and after v. 30 turns into the assurance that nothing separates us from the love of God. What is proclaimed is the middle term, and the frame on either side is not.

The text, and one textual question

In the public-domain Douay-Rheims: “And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints. For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

The Latin behind the whole Western reception is: *diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum* – “all things work together unto good.” In that construction the grammatical subject is *all things*, not God. A minority of Greek witnesses supply *ho theos* explicitly, so that God is the one who makes all things work together; modern critical editions note the variant, and the common modern English renderings that make God the subject of the verb reflect it. Nothing doctrinal turns on the choice – the surrounding clause about purpose and calling supplies the divine agency either way – but the version in a reader’s hand may be resolving a textual question rather than translating an unambiguous sentence.

Four words carry the argument. *Praescivit*, foreknew, translating *proegnō*; *praedestinavit*, marked out beforehand, translating *proōrisen*, literally “bounded in advance”; *conformes*, conformed, from *symmorphous*, sharing a form; and *primogenitus*, firstborn, from *prōtotokos*. The chain is not a description of a mechanism. It is a set of five past-tense verbs, the last of which – *glorified* – describes something no reader has yet seen.

Where the interpreters actually divide

The tradition’s fault line is not where popular accounts put it. It does not run between those who believe in predestination and those who do not; every witness below affirms the word, because Paul uses it. It runs through three words in v. 28: *called according to his purpose*. Whose purpose?

Reading	Who holds it, and where	What follows
The purpose is the purpose of <i>those called</i>	Chrysostom, <i>Homily 15 on Romans</i> , expressly to answer the question why, if calling sufficed, not all are saved: the calling was not forced, all were called, not all obeyed.	Election presupposes something in the called. In <i>Homily 16</i> , on Romans 9, he speaks of an election made according to foreknowledge, God knowing which soul is worthy of being saved.
The purpose is <i>God’s</i>	Augustine, <i>On the Predestination of the Saints</i> 32 and 34, distinguishing a general calling from the certain calling of those called according to God’s purpose.	“God elected believers; but He chose them that they might be so, not because they were already so.” Foreknowledge, on this account, cannot be the reason of predestination.
The purpose is God’s, and the syntax of v. 29 is itself at stake	Aquinas, <i>Super Romanos</i> , cap. 8, lect. 6, siding with Augustine and naming the alternative construal explicitly.	The foreseen-merits reading requires joining <i>to be made conformable to foreknew</i> rather than <i>to predestinated</i> . Aquinas prefers the other construal, so that conformity is the term of predestination and not its reason.

Two facts about this table are uncomfortable for partisans.

First, Augustine changed his mind, and said so. Before his episcopate he had written, in an exposition of propositions from Romans, that God “chose the faith, in the foreknowledge that He would choose that very person whom He foreknew would believe in Him.” That is close in substance to what Chrysostom would later argue. Augustine quotes his own earlier sentence, names it as error, and repudiates it (*On the Predestination of the Saints* 7). Describing his own work for Simplician on Romans 9 he wrote the line that records the reversal: in solving that question “I laboured indeed on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God’s grace overcame” (*ibid.* 8). The early Augustine stood closer to Chrysostom than to his later self.

Second, Chrysostom’s argument in *Homily 15* is narrower than it is usually reported to be. He does not there expound *foreknew* as foreknowledge of a foreseen choice; his whole weight falls on *purpose*, and his comment on the rest is doxological – what the Only-begotten is by nature, these have become by grace. The explicit appeal to foreknowledge of the soul’s worth comes in the next homily, on Romans 9; the two are often merged into a position neither states.

What Aquinas actually holds

Aquinas is regularly conscripted by both sides, and his text resists both.

On v. 28 he asks the blunt question whether even sins work together for good, and answers that they do – not because sin becomes good, but because the one who falls rises more cautious and more humble, and because the good of the saints lies especially in perseverance to the end. He frames it with a physician’s image: a malady is tolerated in the foot in order to cure the head.

In the *Summa* his account is tighter still. Predestination “is not anything in the predestined; but only in the person who predestines” – a plan in the divine mind, whose execution is the calling and glorifying that Romans 8:30 names (I, q. 23, a. 2). Reprobation is deliberately *not* its mirror image: it “is not the cause of what is in the present – namely, sin,” since guilt proceeds from the free choice of the one reprobated (a. 3, ad 2). And on whether foreseen merits cause predestination he answers with a distinction rather than a slogan: in particular, one effect of predestination can be the reason of another, so that God pre-ordains glory on account of merit and pre-ordains the grace by which merit is possible; as a whole, nothing in us can be the cause, “because whatsoever is in man disposing him towards salvation is all included under the effect of predestination; even the preparation for grace” (a. 5).

The boundaries the Church has actually drawn

The Church has drawn three markers, and their limits matter as much as their content.

Orange II (529) condemned the view that the beginning of faith and the very desire for faith belong to us by nature rather than grace (can. 5), and its Conclusion states with abhorrence that no one is foreordained to evil by God’s power – closing the semi-Pelagian and the double-predestinarian exits at once.

Trent, Session VI (1547) forbids presuming that one is certainly among the predestined, since apart from special revelation it cannot be known whom God has chosen (ch. 12); forbids claiming absolute certainty of final perseverance while requiring firm hope (ch. 13); and condemns, in canon 17, the claim that grace of justification is given only to the predestined while others are called but “by the divine power, predestined unto evil.” Romans 8:28–30 is not cited anywhere in that decree.

The Congregatio de auxiliis was the most serious attempt to settle the underlying dispute, and it did not settle it. After some eighty-five conferences held before two popes, Paul V’s decree of 5 September 1607 allowed each party to defend its own doctrine, forbade either to censure the other, and directed both to await a decision of the Apostolic See that has never been given. Neither the Bañezian nor the Molinist account is thereby *the* Catholic position.

The *Catechism* accordingly speaks with deliberate reserve in its one thematic sentence on the word: because to God all moments of time are present in their immediacy, when he establishes his eternal plan of predestination “he includes in it each person’s free response to his grace” (600). Romans 8:28 is quoted directly at 313, where the constant witness of the saints is offered as its confirmation; Romans 8:28–30 is quoted in full at 2012, opening the treatment of the universal call to holiness, and cited at 1821 as a ground of hope coupled at once with the caution about perseverance.

Conformity, and what the verse does not say

The passage's centre of gravity is not selection but shape: *conformed to the image of his Son*. Aquinas identifies this conformity with adoptive sonship, and notes that the Son who is *unigenitus* by eternal generation becomes *primogenitus* by the conferral of grace on others. The Second Vatican Council states the same thing anthropologically: the Christian, "conformed to the likeness of that Son Who is the firstborn of many brothers," receives the first-fruits of the Spirit and so becomes capable of the new law of love (*Gaudium et spes* 22, which cites this verse in its notes).

Romans 8:28 says that God works toward good for those who love him amid all things. It does not say that all things are good. The *Catechism*, having granted that God draws greater goods even from the greatest moral evil ever committed, adds the sentence that belongs with the verse: "But for all that, evil never becomes a good" (312), and states plainly that God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil (311). Neither the verse nor the *Catechism* licenses telling an injured person that the injury was for the best, pressing anyone toward reconciliation without safety, discouraging lament, or displacing medical care, reporting, restitution, and civil or ecclesiastical justice.

Gospel Acclamation: *Cf. Matthew 11:25*

The acclamation is an adaptation, marked *Cf.*, of Jesus's thanksgiving that the Father has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to little ones. It belongs to a different scene from the parable discourse, in Matthew 11 and not 13; Chrysostom treats the source verse in his thirty-eighth homily on Matthew as thanksgiving over revelation given to the humble, and Aquinas comments on it at *Super Matthaeum*, cap. XI.

The Latin makes a link that the English loses. The acclamation's *parvulis* – little ones – is the same word that closes the last appointed psalm verse, where the unfolding of God's words *intellectum dat parvulis*, gives understanding to little ones. Within the Latin liturgical books, then, the psalm asks for exactly what the acclamation says has been given. The link is verbal and Latin, and it does not hold in the Hebrew and Greek behind the two texts.

Revelation "to little ones" is not a commendation of ignorance, and not a warrant for treating docility as a reason to withhold explanation from anyone.

Gospel: Matthew 13:44–52, with the shorter form 13:44–46

Where the pericope stands

Matthew's third great discourse begins with Jesus seated in a boat and the crowds on the shore (13:1–2). At 13:36 he leaves them and enters a house, and everything appointed today is spoken indoors to the disciples alone. That change of audience is not decoration: the sower, the tares, the mustard seed and the leaven were public, while the treasure, the pearl, the net and the scribe are addressed to people who have already had an explanation and are then asked whether they understood.

Two authorized forms exist, and the difference between them is one of ending rather than length: the longer runs to the close of the discourse's teaching, the shorter stops after the pearl, and the Lectionary prints them as alternatives.

The text, in a public-domain version

The United States Lectionary wording is under copyright and is not reproduced. The public-domain Douay-Rheims, which follows the Latin the commentators below actually read, runs: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it" (13:44–46). The longer form adds the net that gathers "all kind of fishes," the sorting on the shore, the angels who "separate the wicked from among the just," the question "Have ye understood all these things?", and the closing saying that "every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old" (13:47–52).

One philological point governs that last verse. The Greek participle at 13:52 is *mathēteutheis*, "made a disciple," the same verb used of making disciples of the nations at 28:19; the Vulgate renders it *doctus*, taught or learned, and the

Douay follows with “instructed.” The Latin tradition therefore inherited a scribe characterised by *learning* where the Greek characterises him by *discipleship*, and the commentators duly debate what kind of knowledge he has.

Six witnesses who do not agree

Witness and locus	What the field and treasure are	Why the finder hides it	What the purchase costs
Origen, <i>Commentary on Matthew</i> X.5–6	The field is the Scriptures, planted with what is manifest in history, law and prophets; the treasure is the meaning concealed beneath, in which Christ is hidden. He offers as an alternative that the field is Christ himself.	Prudence: it is not safe to reveal the hidden senses to everybody. Buying the field means acquiring the Scriptures themselves.	Not quantified; what is surrendered had been a source of evil to the one surrendering it.
Hilary of Poitiers, <i>In Matthaeum</i> XIII.7	<i>Thesaurus in agro, Christus in carne</i> : the treasure is God found within man.	Because the field still had to be bought; the detail exists to make the purchase necessary.	Finding is free, since evangelical preaching is unrestricted; possession is not. Heavenly riches are not held except at the loss of the world.
Jerome, <i>Commentarii in Matthaeum</i> II	Either the Word of God hidden in the flesh of Christ, or the holy Scriptures in which knowledge of the Saviour is stored. He leaves the disjunction open.	Expressly <i>not</i> from envy: as a guardian unwilling to lose it, the finder hides it in his heart.	Everything, on the model of Philippians 3; but the old pearls are not condemned, only outvalued.
Gregory the Great, <i>Homiliae in Evangelia</i> I.11	Neither text nor flesh: the treasure is heavenly desire and the field is the discipline of heavenly study.	Because malignant spirits waylay the road, and because a treasure carried openly invites theft; hence his formula that the work be public while the intention stays hidden.	The love of bodily things, killed by a charity “strong as death.”
Augustine, <i>Quaestiones Evangeliorum</i> I.13 and <i>Quaestiones XVII in Matthaeum</i> q. 12	The two Testaments within the Church. On the pearl he treats the shift from plural to singular as the problem, answering with the sinless Mediator, or love of neighbour, or the one Word.	Not his question; he asks instead what is paid.	The price is ourselves: selling our goods we receive no greater price than ourselves, not because the pearl is worth only that much but because we cannot give more.
Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Matthew</i> 47	The gospel itself, hidden in the world; the two parables follow mustard seed and leaven so that extent is declared first and worth second.	Unbelievers are ignorant of the believers’ wealth; the owner alone knows he is rich.	“Unless you sell all, you buy not,” joined to a watchful and inquiring soul; yet the transaction is “gain, and not loss,” and must be done with joy.

Three of these readings are genuinely incompatible. Origen, Jerome and Hilary locate the treasure in something objectively given, a text or an incarnation, so that the finder’s work is discovery. Gregory locates it in the finder’s own desire and in the ascetical practice that shelters it, so that the work is formation. Augustine locates it in the Church’s possession of both Testaments, so that the work is belonging. Aquinas, commenting on the chapter, reports the first three by name – attributing them to Chrysostom, Gregory and Jerome – declines to adjudicate, and adds a fourth of his own: sacred doctrine hidden in the field of the Church (*Super Matthaeum*, cap. XIII, lect. 4).

A second disagreement runs underneath: Origen’s reason for hiding the treasure is esoteric, and Jerome blocks exactly that reading by making the concealment custody rather than envy. Aquinas keeps both by distinguishing times – hidden when newly found, manifest when the finder is confirmed – which also saves the command that light should shine before others.

The pearls in the plural

The detail most often lost is that the merchant seeks *good* pearls, plural, before finding one. Origen presses this hardest: because some pearls are worthless, the good ones must be identified, and he identifies them as the true words of law and prophets, with heretical words as “the darkened pearls.” He then draws the conclusion that turns the parable into a curriculum – there is a time to gather the goodly pearls, and a time after their gathering to find the one – and warns that those who expect to reach the one pearl without a clear exposition of law and prophets are mistaken. Jerome makes the same identification and turns it into open polemic against Marcion and Mani, while adding the qualification that finding the new pearl does not condemn the old ones; by comparison every other gem is simply cheaper.

Gregory does something else entirely: for him the pearl is the sweetness of the heavenly life, whose brightness alone shines in the mind so that everything earthly looks deformed beside it. Augustine treats the plural-to-singular movement as a grammatical puzzle with three possible solutions, and then supplies the sentence no one else reaches: whichever the pearl is, its price is ourselves. Aquinas registers the divergence explicitly – Chrysostom and Jerome expound it of evangelical doctrine, Gregory of heavenly glory, Augustine in three ways – and adds that the pearl is called *one* because virtues are many while truth is one.

The net, and whose sorting it is

Only the longer form proclaims the net, and its interpreters split again on what the net *is*. For Origen and Jerome it is Scripture, Old and New woven into one mesh; for Gregory it is the Church, entrusted to fishermen and gathering wise and foolish, free and slave, rich and poor; for Hilary it is Christ’s own preaching. Aquinas allows either doctrine or Church and fixes the point as universality against particularity: the Law was given to one nation, the evangelical law gathers all.

Two witnesses distinguish the net from the earlier parable of the tares, and they draw the line differently. Chrysostom distinguishes by the *ground* of ruin: the tares perished for choosing wicked doctrines, the inattentive hearers of the sower for negligence, and the bad fish for wickedness of life – and these last are the most wretched, because they had attained knowledge. Aquinas distinguishes by *position*: the net covers good and bad not cut off from the Church, whereas the tares are those cut off by diversity of dogmas. Gregory adds the observation that keeps the image from fatalism: caught fish cannot change what they are, but we are caught bad and changed into good, so the time to think about it is during the catching and not on the shore.

The separation is performed by angels at the end of the age. Nothing in the parable, and nothing in the checked reception, authorises identifying a living person as a bad fish, treating anyone as already sorted, or converting an eschatological image into a warrant for exclusion.

New things and old: the one place Gregory dissents

Matthew 13:52 was read by Chrysostom, Origen, Jerome, Hilary and Augustine as a statement about the two Testaments, and all five deploy it against people who sever them. Chrysostom’s version is sharpest: Christ here calls the Old Testament *a treasure*, so those ignorant of the Scriptures cannot be householders, and heretics are excluded because, not having the old, they do not have the new either. Jerome makes the apostles “notaries of the Saviour” who bring forth new and old so that whatever they preach in the Gospel they may prove from law and prophets. Hilary states the principle most economically: new and old belong to one householder and one treasury. Origen adds a logical move – by conversion of the proposition, whoever does not bring forth new and old is not such a scribe – and suggests that the householder is Jesus himself. Aquinas adopts that identification and seconds the polemic with a one-line aside: the Manichees were not such householders, because they did not bring forth the old.

Gregory alone rejects the two-Testament reading as insufficient, and his reason is exegetical rather than doctrinal. If new and old simply meant the two Testaments, he argues, we should have to deny that Abraham was learned, since he announced the words of neither; and we could not compare Moses to the instructed householder, since he taught the Old but did not utter the sayings of the New. Excluded from that understanding, he says, we are called to another: the *old* is that the human race should descend to punishment for sin, the *new* that through the Mediator’s coming one may enter the kingdom. The householder is then the preacher, who must know how to speak new things about the sweetness of the kingdom and old things about the terror of punishment, so that penalties may frighten

those whom rewards do not attract. This is a homiletic doctrine rather than a canonical hermeneutic, and it is a real disagreement rather than a variation of emphasis.

Two observations of Augustine’s stand beside it. Preaching on the verse he insists on conservation: the old things “are not taken away, but laid up in a treasury,” and one who brings forth only the new or only the old is not the instructed scribe, because what is brought out of the old is illustrated by the new (*Sermon* 74, formerly numbered 24 on the New Testament, §5). And in the *City of God* he notices the word order – “He did not say old and new” – and explains it as following the order of merit rather than the order of time (XX.4).

Aquinas twice on the same verse

Two Thomistic treatments of Matthew 13:44 exist, and they pull in opposite directions.

In the Matthew commentary Aquinas is thoroughly allegorical. He organises the three images by the dignity each displays – the treasure shows the abundance of evangelical doctrine, the pearl its beauty, the net its universality – and he glosses “selleseth all” as *contemnit*, despises, rather than as literal liquidation, with the purchase understood as acquiring good company or the spiritual leisure one lacked.

In the *Summa*, by contrast, Matthew 13:44 appears exactly once, and not in any question about poverty, the counsels, or religious life. It appears in the treatment of theft, where Aquinas is distinguishing kinds of found property: gems on the seashore belong to the finder, and so does treasure long buried and belonging to nobody, “except that according to civil law the finder is bound to give half to the owner of the land. Hence in the parable of the Gospel it is said of the finder of the treasure hidden in a field that he bought the field, as though he purposed thus to acquire the right of possessing the whole treasure” (II-II, q. 66, a. 5, ad 2). The parable is cited as evidence about treasure trove, and it thereby explains the narrative detail every allegorist has to work around: the man buys the field because buying the field is how one lawfully gets the treasure.

The *Summa* is silent on the pearl. The Latin of its four parts contains no citation of Matthew 13:45–46, and the question on religious poverty argues instead from Matthew 19:21. The silence holds for those four parts, not for the *Supplementum*, which was not searched, or the whole Thomistic corpus.

What each authorized form actually proclaims

Branch	What is heard	What is not heard
Long form, 13:44–52	Value, joy, total expenditure, purchase; then the net, the shore, the sorting by angels, the furnace, the question about understanding, and the scribe with new and old.	Nothing of the appointed pericope is withheld.
Short form, 13:44–46	Value, joy, total expenditure, purchase. The reading ends on the merchant’s completed transaction.	The net, the eschatological separation, the question “Have ye understood all these things?”, and the whole saying about the trained scribe.

The short form is authorized and complete as proclaimed, not a deficient version of the long one. But a difference of ending changes what the celebration says, and preaching that reaches for the dragnet or the householder’s treasury when the shorter form was read describes a text the assembly did not hear.

Prayer over the Offerings: gifts recognised before they are given

The prayer asks God to accept the gifts *which we bring from your own bounty*, and then makes a double petition: that these sacred mysteries, by the working power of grace, may both sanctify the offerers in the conduct of the present life and lead them to everlasting joys.

The governing phrase is the preparation rite’s own. *De tua largitate* – “from your bounty” – is exactly the phrase the priest has just used, twice, over the bread and over the chalice: blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received this bread, this wine, which earth has given and human hands have made. Four occurrences of the phrase stand in the 2002 Missal’s two printings of the Order of Mass, and the Week XVII

Prayer over the Offerings picks it up at the moment those gifts are placed on the altar. The oration is therefore not making a new claim; it is repeating, in the collect form, what the preparation rite has just said, and doing so at the point where the assembly might otherwise imagine it is giving something of its own.

That is a real correction to a possible misreading of the day's Gospel. The two buyers in the parable dispose of property they own. The Prayer over the Offerings says the Church cannot: what it hands over was already a gift. The two statements are not in conflict – the parable is about the cost of the kingdom to a purchaser, the prayer about the origin of what is offered – but the liturgy has placed them within a few minutes of each other, and hearing both is more truthful than hearing either alone. *Sacrosanctum concilium* 48 asks precisely this of the faithful: that they learn to offer themselves along with the immaculate victim.

Preface and Eucharistic Prayer: a coupled, unresolved choice

Week XVII has no proper Preface and no proper Eucharistic Prayer insert, so two decisions are made locally, and the books fix neither. Under the Missal's Ordinary Time rubrics and GIRM 365 a Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time is used unless the Eucharistic Prayer selected carries its own; the decisions are therefore coupled. GIRM 365(d) binds Eucharistic Prayer IV to its own inseparable Preface, excluding a Sunday Preface altogether, while 365(b) leaves Prayer II free to use its own or another that qualifies.

The consequence is modest but real: the Prefaces of Sundays in Ordinary Time differ in what they say, and none is appointed to these readings. Whatever is heard between the Prayer over the Offerings and the Sanctus is a lawful choice, not a proper text, and the proper texts and their relations stand whichever was made.

Communion Antiphon: two alternatives, unresolved

The Missal prints two antiphons joined by *Vel*, and one is sung unless an approved chant replaces both. They pull in different directions, and the difference matters because it changes what the communicant is given to say.

Alternative	What it does	Direct reception at an exact locus
A. Ps 102:2 (Vulgate; Ps 103 Hebrew)	The soul is addressed and told to bless and not to forget the recompenses. It is a command against amnesia, placed at the moment of reception.	Augustine, <i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i> 103, §2, presses the noun: they are called recompenses, not awards, “for something else was due, and what was not due has been paid.” The verse is about gratuity, not merit.
B. Matthew 5:7–8	Two adjacent beatitudes, mercy and clean-heartedness, each with its promise. It is a moral test, placed at the same moment.	Augustine, <i>On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount</i> I.2.7–8: the merciful are blessed who relieve the miserable, “for it is paid back to them”; and a pure heart is a <i>single</i> heart, since God is seen with the heart and not with the outward eyes.

Either antiphon may be sung; which one is, the books leave open. Both fit the day: A closes a circuit the Prayer over the Offerings opened, since a congregation told that its gifts came from God's bounty is told at Communion not to forget the recompenses; B supplies the disposition that the first reading's request and the Gospel's sorting both imply, without naming anyone. One further connection has a narrow reach. In the same work Augustine correlates the beatitudes with the gifts of the Spirit, assigning *counsel* to the merciful and *understanding* to the clean of heart (I.4.11–12) – the two gifts closest to Solomon's request in the first reading. The correspondence is Augustine's, made about the Beatitudes and not about this antiphon; it illuminates the antiphon without commenting on it.

Prayer after Communion: the one purchase the parables only picture

The prayer states what has just been received – a divine sacrament, the *perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son* – and asks that this gift, given with ineffable love, may profit our salvation.

The phrase *passiónis Filii tui memoriæ perpétuum* occurs once in the 2002 Missal, here. Its content is the Council's: at the Last Supper Christ instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross through the centuries and to entrust to the Church “a memorial of His death and resurrection” (*Sacrosanctum concilium* 47). What the oration adds is the attribution of motive – the gift was given out of a love the prayer refuses to measure – and the petition that it be efficacious for salvation rather than merely commemorated.

Set beside the day's Gospel this produces a genuine inversion. In the parables a man finds a treasure and pays everything he has for it. In the Prayer after Communion the assembly has just received, without price, the memorial of a Passion in which someone else paid. Augustine's answer to the pearl's cost – that the price is ourselves, “not because it is worth only that much, but because we cannot give more” – sits exactly on the seam between the two, and the Church has always read the sacrament as the place where that inadequate price is accepted.

Where the euchology and the readings meet

The three orations are shared by Years A, B and C, and the relations below rest on the texts themselves, not on an official correlation.

Point of contact	Euchological text	Appointed reading
Ranking of goods	Collect: use passing goods now so as already to cling to what abides.	The psalm ranks commandments above gold and topaz; Solomon declines riches; the buyers convert everything into one object.
Origin of what is offered	Prayer over the Offerings: the gifts come from God's own bounty.	Solomon receives what he asks and also what he does not ask; Romans grounds everything in a divine purpose.
What is finally received	Prayer after Communion: the perpetual memorial of the Passion, given out of ineffable love.	Romans ends in <i>glorified</i> ; the long Gospel form ends in a sorting no purchaser controls.

Two apparent contacts do *not* hold. The Collect's ruler-and-guide language is not a comment on Solomon's kingship: it is addressed to God about the petitioners, not about a monarch. And the Entrance antiphon's “house” is not the field of the parable; they are different images from different books.

The Appointed Texts: Rights-Limited Study Sheet

Publication boundary

The approved U.S. Missal and Lectionary English is protected and is not reproduced. Below stands every appointed unit in order: lawful Latin incipits, public-domain biblical loci, exact alternatives, and descriptions identifying the appointed matter without replacing the liturgical books.

Textual unit	Text / citation
Introductory Rites	
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Cf.</i> Ps 67:6–7, 36 (modern 68); <i>Deus in loco sancto suo</i> ; God provides a dwelling and strength.
Collect	<i>Protéctor in te sperántium, Deus</i> ; protection and guidance in using passing goods while adhering to those that endure.
Liturgy of the Word	
First Reading	1 Kings 3:5, 7–12; Solomon asks for a hearing heart able to judge the entrusted people and distinguish good from evil.
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–130; response <i>cf.</i> v. 97a; instruction is loved above wealth and asked to give light.
Second Reading	Romans 8:28–30; divine purpose amid groaning tends toward conformity to the firstborn Son.
Gospel Acclamation	<i>Cf.</i> Matthew 11:25; the Father’s revelation is received by the little ones.
Gospel	Long: Matthew 13:44–52, treasure, pearl, net, sorting, and the instructed scribe. Short: Matthew 13:44–46, treasure and pearl only.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	
Prayer over the Offerings	<i>Súscipe, quæsumus, Dómine, múnera</i> ; bounty first received is offered back, with present sanctification sought.
Communion Antiphon A	Ps 102:2 (modern 103); bless the Lord and do not forget his benefits.
Communion Antiphon B	Matthew 5:7–8; mercy and purity of heart retain their distinct promises.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Súmpsimus, Dómine, divínium sacraméntum</i> ; the perpetual memorial of the Passion is ordered toward saving fruit.

Source-Grounded Synthesis Across the Propers

Discernment received before it is exercised

The Entrance names the God who gives a house and strength; the Collect asks that God protect, rule, and guide; Solomon admits that succession has not supplied the wisdom required by succession. Ambrose reads the hearing heart as the basis of just judgment, and Benedict XVI receives it as conscience attentive to truth and peace. The canonical sequel prevents idealization: the recipient of wisdom can cease to live wisely. Authority needs a truth it did not create, a people it does not own, and continuing correction after the first good request.

Unlike acts of valuation

The Lectionary warrants hearing the Old Testament reading with the Gospel but does not erase their asymmetry. Solomon chooses what to ask before possessing it; the finder and merchant act after recognizing worth. One receives an unpurchased gift, while the others surrender rival claims. Psalm 119 answers by preferring divine instruction to bullion. Chrysostom emphasizes gain, and Francis distinguishes sudden discovery from patient search. Their reception supports joyful reordering; it makes neither grace merchandise nor creation contemptible.

Hope takes a filial form

Romans 8 is appointed semi-continuously, not as commentary on the treasure. Its frame is groaning, weak prayer, suffering, and inseparable love. Augustine, Chrysostom, and Aquinas resist making creaturely evil good by definition. The promised good is conformity to the Son. Divine providence can draw saving fruit through suffering while harm remains condemnable and protection, lament, medicine, reporting, restitution, and justice remain intact.

Bounty returned, and one branch heard

The offering prayer says the gifts first came from divine bounty, preventing the Eucharist from becoming a purchase parallel to the merchant's. Communion follows one branch: remembered benefits from Psalm 102, or mercy and purity from Matthew 5. The final prayer names the sacrament as perpetual memorial of the Passion and asks for saving fruit. The long Gospel contributes net, judgment, and the new-and-old scribe; the short Gospel does not. A celebration holds gift, valuation, action, memory and judgment together only through the branches it actually proclaims.

Movement	Primary anchors	Reception	Counterweight
Received discernment	Entrance; Collect; 1 Kings 3	Ambrose; Benedict XVI	Wisdom received is not fidelity guaranteed.
Reordered value	Psalm 119; Matthew 13	Chrysostom; Francis	Grace is not purchased.
Filial hope	Romans 8; acclamation	Augustine; Chrysostom; Aquinas	Evil is not made good.
Eucharistic return	Offerings; Communion A/B; final prayer	Psalm and beatitude reception	One antiphon, not both.

The Propers: Notable and Quotable

Five later uses of wording from today's appointed Scripture, each verified in a primary text at the locus given, and each one *changes* what the words are doing rather than merely repeating them.

1. A royal petition becomes a constitutional argument

Trigger: 1 Kings 3:9, the request for a hearing heart to discern between good and evil.

Later use: Benedict XVI, address to the German Bundestag, Reichstag Building, Berlin, 22 September 2011, published under the title *The Listening Heart: Reflections on the Foundations of Law*.

The address takes the appointed verse as its whole frame. Having noted that Solomon asks for a listening heart in order to govern and to discern between good and evil, it turns the question on the legislature in front of it: what would *we* ask for? and answers that there is ultimately nothing else to wish for but a listening heart, "the capacity to discern between good and evil, and thus to establish true law, to serve justice and peace."

The turn. A private night-vision granted to a hereditary monarch is converted into a criterion for elected legislators in a secular parliament, and thence into an argument that positive law is answerable to something it does not create. The verse stops being about Solomon and becomes a question addressed to majority rule. There is also a philological turn that only the German original shows: the phrase used throughout is *ein hörendes Herz*, a literal calque of the Hebrew idiom, which steps past the Latin *cor docile* that had carried this verse through the Western tradition. The address recovers the hearing heart from behind the teachable one. It is a modern protected text, quoted only in the short phrases required.

2. The pearl becomes an illegitimate child, and then a joke on a minister

Trigger: Matthew 13:46, the one pearl of great price bought with everything the merchant had.

Later use: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), chapters 6 and 8.

Hawthorne uses the phrase twice, and the second use depends on the first. In chapter 6 Hester names her daughter "Pearl," the narrator explains, "as being of great price,—purchased with all she had,—her mother's only treasure!" In chapter 8 the Reverend Mr Wilson, examining the child, tells her with great solemnity that she must take heed to instruction "that so, in due season, thou mayest wear in thy bosom the pearl of great price" — and the child, who by the novel's own metaphor already *is* that pearl, refuses to answer him and escapes through the window.

The turn. The Gospel's figure for the supreme worth of the kingdom is first transferred to a child conceived in adultery and priced in a mother's ruin, and then put back in a clergyman's mouth as devotional boilerplate addressed to the very object it has been made to name. The second occurrence is the sharper: the phrase is used piously by a man who cannot see what is standing in front of him.

3. The pearl is not bought but spent

Trigger: Matthew 13:45–46, the merchant who sells all and buys.

Later use: Henry van Dyke, *The Story of the Other Wise Man*, chapter 5, titled "A Pearl of Great Price" (first published 1895; consulted in the Harper printing).

Artaban, a fourth magus, spends three decades and two of his three jewels on works of mercy that keep him from reaching the King. In the last chapter he surrenders the pearl to ransom a girl from slavery: "This is thy ransom, daughter! It is the last of my treasures which I kept for the King." Dying, he hears the sentence from Matthew 25 about what is done to the least.

The turn. The parable's logic is reversed. In Matthew the pearl is acquired and everything else spent; in van Dyke the pearl is *spent*, and what is acquired is the King — by a transaction the wise man believes has ruined his quest. The story argues that the parable's arithmetic runs in the other direction too, and it says so by taking Matthew's phrase for its chapter title.

4. Providence as the punchline of a farce

Trigger: Romans 8:28, that to them that love God all things work together unto good.

Later use: P. G. Wodehouse, “A Sea of Troubles,” in *The Man with Two Left Feet* (1917).

Mr Meggs, a dyspeptic hypochondriac, has written farewell letters, given them to his typist to post, changed his mind, chased her through the town, and been arrested on suspicion of murder before the misunderstanding is cleared up. At exactly this point the narrator interposes the verse as a one-sentence paragraph: “All things work together for good.” Next morning Mr Meggs wakes stiff and cured: the unaccustomed exercise has fixed his digestion.

The turn. Paul’s clause about divine purpose amid suffering is applied, deadpan and without comment, to an accidental cardiovascular benefit obtained during an attempted felony. The joke works only because the reader recognises the register the sentence has been lifted out of, and it is a good-natured rather than a hostile use – which is precisely why it shows how portable the verse had become in ordinary English by 1917.

5. The trained scribe becomes a rule of ecclesiastical controversy

Trigger: Matthew 13:52, the householder who brings forth new things and old.

Later use: George Tyrrell, S.J., *Nova et Vetera: Informal Meditations for Times of Spiritual Dryness* (Longmans, Green, 2nd impression 1898), meditation CCXXXII, headed “Novelties,” p. 269.

Tyrrell takes the verse’s Latin tag for his title and, in this meditation, for a thesis about argument. He begins with a reading note – “Many seem to think there is here a full stop, but there is not” – and then turns the householder’s two treasures into a test that both parties in a church quarrel fail: “He who despises either the old or the new is no *scriba doctus in regno cælorum*; he knows but one half of that kingdom, its ‘conservative’ aspect, or its ‘liberal’ aspect.” He states the principle flatly: “A thing is not true because old, or false because new, or false because it is old, or true because it is new. Yet in the practice of controversy all these propositions are denied repeatedly.”

The turn. In Matthew the verse describes a competent teacher; in Tyrrell it becomes a weapon against party spirit, and the register shifts from formation to polemic. The circumstances sharpen it: the book carried an *imprimatur* from the Archbishop of Westminster, and its author was dismissed from the Society of Jesus in 1906 and excommunicated in 1907. A verse about holding old and new together became the motto of a man the Church would shortly judge to have failed at exactly that. The use is a reception of the verse, and nothing in it settles the Modernist controversy.

Two resemblances without dependence

The English word *dragnet* in its police sense is not Matthew’s. The standard etymology derives it from *drag* plus *net*, attests the fishing sense from the 1540s, a figurative sense from the 1640s, and the police sense by 1894, with no biblical dependence recorded; and the word predates by centuries the translations that use it at Matthew 13:47, where older English versions read simply “net.” The two nets are cousins through the fishing trade, not through Matthew.

Candide is not Paul’s, for a comparable reason. Voltaire’s “best of all possible worlds” parodies a metaphysical thesis, not a Pauline verse, and he names the target: Pangloss, unrepentant after being hanged and dissected, cannot retract because Leibniz could never be wrong. The resemblance to Romans 8:28 is structural, not citational.

The Propers: Interpretive Possibilities

Disclosure, once, for the whole section. Everything below is an editorial proposal generated in the course of preparing this guide by an AI system. None of it is attributed to any authority cited, none of it claims to state what the Missal’s redactors or the Lectionary’s compilers intended, and none of it is offered as a historical or doctrinal conclusion. Each proposal names its anchors, states its mechanism, says what the ordinary element-by-element reading misses, and ends with the strongest limit or disconfirming condition known to the editor. A targeted precedent search was run for each conjunction over the corpus named in the scope appendix; the result is recorded in each entry and audited in the research record. A negative result there is bounded and correctable, never a claim that a connection is unknown.

1. A teachable heart and a taught scribe: the Latin arc nobody hears in English

Anchors. 1 Kings 3:9 in the Vulgate, *cor docile*; Matthew 13:52 in the Vulgate, *scriba doctus in regno cælorum*; the Gospel acclamation's *parvulis*; and Ps 118:130's *intellectum dat parvulis*.

Mechanism. In the Latin books that formed Western reception, this formulary runs a single lexical arc that the English dissolves. The first reading asks for a heart that is *docile*; the long Gospel's last verse praises a scribe who is *doctus*; both come from *doceo*. Between them the psalm asks that understanding be given to *parvuli*, and the acclamation announces that it has been.

What the element-by-element reading misses. Treated separately, the first reading is about royal government and the last Gospel verse is about scriptural competence; they seem to belong to different worlds. The Latin makes them the same request at two stages of its answer, which is why Augustine's gloss on the little ones – that the law was given “that it might make you a little one instead of great” – lands so exactly between them.

Precedent. *Not located in the checked corpus.* Origen's treasury of the scribe and Augustine's exposition of the little ones are near analogues, but no checked witness joins the four anchors.

Controlling limit. This is a property of the Latin, not of the texts. The Hebrew asks for a *hearing* heart from *shama*, and the Greek of 13:52 calls the scribe one *made a disciple*; neither pair shares a root. The arc is therefore evidence about how the Latin liturgical books could be heard, not about what Matthew or the Deuteronomistic historian wrote. And the scribe belongs to the long form only: choose the short Gospel and the arc has no ending.

2. The Collect's revision supplies the verb the parables need

Anchors. The pre-conciliar Collect's petition to *pass through* temporal goods so as not to *lose* the eternal; the 2002 Collect's petition so to *use* passing goods now as already to *cling* to what abides; and the Gospel's two verbs, *sells* and *buys*.

Mechanism. The older prayer's grammar is locomotive: goods are a terrain one crosses, and the danger is loss in transit. The revised prayer's grammar is transactional and relational: goods are something one *uses*, and the goal is adherence. That is exactly the grammar the parables require, because the man in the field and the merchant do not pass through their possessions; they convert them. The revised Collect is the only text in the formulary whose verbs match the Gospel's.

What the element-by-element reading misses. Taken as a Year-neutral prayer with a generic eschatological point, the Collect gives no sign that its revision moved it, verb by verb, toward the kind of action the Gospel narrates.

Precedent. *Not located in the checked corpus.* The comparison of the two Collects rests on their texts, set out at the Collect; joining it to the Gospel's verbs is the proposal.

Controlling limit. The Collect is shared by Years A, B and C, and the pre-conciliar prayer was attached to a different Sunday with different readings. No compositional intent may be claimed, and the pre-conciliar side of the comparison rests on a community transcription rather than a collated printing. The proposal is disconfirmed if a collated pre-conciliar text differs from the transcription used.

3. Two acquisitions: the house God settles and the field a man buys

Anchors. The Entrance antiphon, which in this same Missal is also the Entrance antiphon for the Dedication of a Church; Augustine's reading of its middle clause, that God's holy place is not a location but the like-minded dwelling together; and Matthew 13:44, where a man acquires ground.

Mechanism. The celebration opens with a text the book itself uses when a building is consecrated, and whose subject is God settling people in a house. Twenty minutes later it narrates a man acquiring a field in order to own what is buried in it. Two acquisitions are therefore staged in one rite, and they run in opposite directions: in the first, people are the thing settled and God is the agent; in the second, ground is the thing acquired and a person is the agent. The rite does not resolve the tension, and the tension itself offers a way of talking about property that neither sanctifies nor denounces it.

What the element-by-element reading misses. The antiphon is normally treated as a gathering text and the parable as a stewardship text, so the fact that both are about *getting a place* passes unnoticed.

Precedent. *Not located in the checked corpus.* Augustine’s ecclesial reading of the psalm verse is a near analogue for half the proposal.

Controlling limit. The antiphon’s “house” and the parable’s “field” are different images from different books, joined only by the calendar and by the Missal’s reuse of one text in an unrelated Ritual Mass. If an approved chant replaces the Missal antiphon, the first anchor disappears from the celebration entirely.

4. Two complete verb-chains, and the one place both are true

Anchors. Romans 8:29–30, five verbs in a row whose subject is God – foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified; Matthew 13:44–46, a run of verbs whose subject is a man – found, hid, rejoiced, went, sold, bought; and the Prayer after Communion, in which what is received is a memorial of a Passion given out of another’s love.

Mechanism. The assembly hears two complete and internally consistent chains of action, one entirely divine and one entirely human, and hears nothing that reconciles them; the candidate reconciling clause in Romans, “to them that love God,” is the very phrase over which Chrysostom and Augustine divide. The formulary’s own answer, if it has one, is enacted rather than argued: at Communion something is received that was bought by someone else and handed over without price.

What the element-by-element reading misses. Read separately, Romans looks like doctrine and the parables like ethics; read as two verb-chains meeting at the Communion rite, the problem of grace and action becomes a shape in the liturgy rather than a footnote.

Precedent. *Not located in the checked corpus.* Chrysostom, Augustine and Aquinas all treat the grace-and-action question at Romans 8, and Augustine separately says the pearl’s price is ourselves; no checked witness stages the conjunction liturgically.

Controlling limit. Romans is semi-continuous, so the juxtaposition is calendrical and not designed, and the proposal must not be used to settle a question the Church has deliberately left open. It also fails as stated when the long Gospel form is proclaimed, since the net introduces a third agent – angels – belonging to neither chain.

5. The gifts Solomon asked for, handed back at Communion

Anchors. Solomon’s request for a heart able to hear and to judge; the long Gospel form’s sorting, performed by angels and by no one present; the alternative Communion antiphon’s two beatitudes, mercy and clean-heartedness; and Augustine’s correlation of those two beatitudes with the gifts of *counsel* and *understanding*.

Mechanism. If the long Gospel and the second Communion antiphon are both chosen, the celebration opens with a man asking for discernment, shows a judgment that no human being in the story performs, and then, at reception, gives the communicant two beatitudes whose associated gifts are exactly the faculties the first reading requested. The discernment Solomon asked for is neither withheld nor turned into a licence to judge others: it is returned as mercy and purity of heart.

What the element-by-element reading misses. Preaching on the net almost always has to add a warning against judging, and the preacher supplies it from outside the appointed texts. On this reading the formulary supplies the correction itself, and supplies it in the mouth of the assembly rather than the homilist. It also answers a question the first reading leaves open: Solomon asks for discernment in order to *judge* a people, and the Lectionary withholds the scene in which he does so. A celebration that ends by naming mercy and clean-heartedness has said what became of the request without staging a verdict.

Precedent. *Near analogue located.* Augustine’s correlation of beatitudes with gifts is explicit and verified, but it is made about the Sermon on the Mount, not about this antiphon or this Sunday.

Controlling limit. Doubly branch-dependent, the proposal describes a possible celebration rather than this one, and it collapses if either the short Gospel or the psalm antiphon is used. The final separation remains God’s: nothing here licenses a communicant to perform in miniature the sorting the parable reserves to angels.

6. Two endings the assembly may not be given

Anchors. 1 Kings 3:13–14, immediately after the appointed reading, where riches and glory are added unasked and long life is made conditional; and Matthew 13:47–52, present or absent according to which Gospel form is read.

Mechanism. The Lectionary cuts the first reading one verse before its reward; a community choosing the short Gospel cuts the discourse before its judgment. The assembly then hears two stories that both end at the moment of decision, with neither consequence disclosed. That is not a defect but a describable shape, and it is the shape in which the day's Collect makes most sense: a prayer for the right use of passing goods is said by people who do not yet know how the story ends.

What the element-by-element reading misses. Omissions are usually noted one at a time, as facts about boundaries. Treated together they make a positive claim: this celebration is arranged around decisions whose outcomes it declines to display. That shape says something specific about why a prayer for the right use of passing goods belongs on this Sunday rather than a prayer for perseverance or for reward.

Precedent. *Not located in the checked corpus.* Ancient commentators expound continuous texts and do not discuss modern Lectionary boundaries at all, so no witness could have made this observation.

Controlling limit. The two omissions are not parallel in authority: one is fixed by the appointed pericope and the other is a local choice among two authorized forms. If the long Gospel is proclaimed, half the proposal disappears – and the celebration then hears a judgment that the first reading's own ending, still unread, does not supply.

Appendix: Liturgical Resolution

Field	Resolved liturgical instance
Celebration	Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Rank, season, colour	Sunday in Ordinary Time; Ordinary Time; green
Parent and formula key	PC-S43; PC-S43-A
Form	The single appointed Sunday Mass; this parent has no Vigil or Day distinction
Sunday cycle	Year A, in the liturgical year running 30 November 2025 to 22 November 2026
Independent weekday cycle	Cycle II, resolved separately and never inferred from the Sunday letter
Occurrence	Sunday 26 July 2026. The temporal Sunday is celebrated. The General Roman Calendar assigns Saints Joachim and Anne to 26 July as an obligatory Memorial, and the Universal Norms provide that a Sunday yields its celebration only to Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord (n. 5); the Memorial is accordingly omitted without commemoration or transfer, and it does not appear on that date in the national calendar
Edition-locale	<i>Roman Missal</i> , Third Edition, English, for the dioceses of the United States of America, implemented 27 November 2011, over the Latin <i>editio typica tertia</i> , <i>reimpressio emendata</i> of 2008
Lectionary locator	<i>Lectionary for Mass</i> , Second Typical Edition, Volume I, no. 109
Other controlling books	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i> , United States edition of 2011 with the 2021 emendations; the Missal's <i>Tempus per annum</i> rubrics
Calendar and territory	General Roman Calendar as implemented nationally; USCCB <i>Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America</i> for 2026. Diocesan, religious, parish, titular, dedication and patronal calendars are not resolved
Formulary owner	Ordinary Time Week XVII, the shared Missal record for this collection. Its orations and antiphons are shared by Years A, B and C; this leaf owns only the Year A composition
Production coverage	One target, PC-S43-A. The B and C targets under this parent are not treated

Branches actually available on this Sunday

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
gospel-long-form	Lectionary no. 109 prints a longer and a shorter Gospel	appointed alternative	Gospel	Unresolved; mutually exclusive with the short form
gospel-short-form	Same	appointed alternative	Gospel	Unresolved; ends at 13:46, so the net, the sorting, the question and the scribe are not proclaimed
communion-antiphon-psalm	The Missal prints Ps 102:2 first	appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon	Unresolved
communion-antiphon-beatitudes	The Missal prints Mt 5:7–8 under <i>Vel</i>	appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon	Unresolved
sprinkling-rite	The Missal permits the blessing and sprinkling of water on Sundays	ritual substitution	Penitential Act	Unresolved; substitutes its own texts and adds no proper of this formulary
compatible-preface-and-eucharistic-prayer	Ordinary Time rubrics; GIRM 365(b)	permitted	Preface; Eucharistic Prayer	Unresolved; a Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time with a compatible Eucharistic Prayer

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
eucharistic-prayer-iv-with-preface	GIRM 365(d)	conditional	Preface; Eucharistic Prayer	Unresolved; if Prayer IV is chosen its own Preface is inseparable, so no Sunday Preface is used
entrance-or-communion-chant-substitution	GIRM 48 and 87	permitted	Entrance Antiphon; Communion Antiphon	Unresolved; an approved chant may replace the Missal antiphon

The two Gospel branches are mutually exclusive, and so are the two Communion antiphons. The Preface and Eucharistic Prayer branches are coupled rather than independent, because the choice of Eucharistic Prayer can itself settle the Preface. No branch here creates a formula key, and every one stays unresolved.

What the following weekdays are, and are not

The Sunday's Year A readings, Gloria, Creed and Sunday Preface are not carried into the week that follows; the national calendar assigns those ferias the independent Cycle II course, Monday 27 July no. 401 through Thursday 30 July no. 404, with the Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary and Lazarus on the Wednesday. Two consequences are easily misread.

First, in 2026 the Thursday's ferial Gospel is Matthew 13:47–53, the net and the scribe with new and old. If the shorter Sunday form was chosen, that material is proclaimed four days later – but it arrives by the weekday course, not as a completion of Sunday. Two independent arrangements meet there.

Second, the Week XVII Missal formulary is *available* on an eligible Ordinary Time feria under the Missal's rubrics and GIRM 363, and such use would be a recorded local selection. Availability is not appointment, and it imports no Sunday reading, no Gloria, no Creed and no Sunday Preface.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

As of. Every edition, calendar, occurrence and source claim in this guide is stated as of **25 July 2026**. Liturgical books, national calendars and the sources cited here can change; a later reader must re-resolve them.

What this guide covers, and what it does not

It covers one formula target, PC-S43-A, in one edition-locale, for one civil date. It does not cover the Year B or Year C targets under the same parent, any other Sunday or weekday, or any Ritual, Votive or Various Needs Mass. The Missal formulary belongs to the shared Week XVII owner and is common to all three cycles.

The calendar resolution is national: diocesan, religious, parish, titular, dedication and patronal calendars were not consulted and could modify this celebration in a particular church. Four textual branches remain unresolved and are listed in the resolution appendix; the guide states what each would produce and asserts none.

Sources and the layers actually verified

Layer	State
Latin typical text	Verified. The complete Week XVII formulary was read in the exact registered digital reproduction of the 2002 <i>editio typica tertia</i> – a digitally typeset secondary reproduction, not a page-image facsimile, carrying no running heads or folio numbers. Printed pagination is therefore reported from the source record and the book's own index, not from a folio this guide read.

Layer	State
2008 emendation state	Verified as a bounded negative. The official <i>Tempus per annum</i> variation list, read in the exact Dicastery issue, has two entries, at printed Missal pp. 457 and 471, neither at Week XVII. The accompanying notice, also read, states that the reprint is not a new typical edition and that its pagination is unchanged from 2002 apart from the concluding matter and indexes – but also that layout was improved in rare cases. This is evidence of no <i>listed</i> change, not of page identity.
United States English Missal	Not collated. No named altar-book printing was available. Every statement about the English orations and antiphons in this guide is a description of content, never a reproduction of wording.
Lectionary and calendar	Verified. The reading boundaries, the Gospel alternative, the psalm response citation and the occurrence were read in the official 2026 national calendar and the official occurrence page for 26 July 2026.
Chant books	Not collated. The official <i>Antiphonary</i> was read at its Week XVII page and supplies the antiphon citations and pointers to the <i>Graduale Romanum</i> ; no <i>Graduale</i> page was inspected.
Pre-conciliar comparison	Secondary transcription only. The 1962 Introit and Collect used for comparison come from a community transcription project, not from a collated printing. The findings drawn from that comparison are reported as strong but not fully collated.
Scripture	Public-domain texts only. Clementine Vulgate and Douay-Rheims, read verse by verse at an identified online edition; the <i>Nova Vulgata</i> at the Holy See’s site for one comparison. Hebrew and Greek forms come from an identified interlinear resource, not a critical edition.
Patristic and medieval reception	Verified at named loci, in translation or public Latin transcription. No critical edition was collated and no fresh translation made; several Latin texts were read in scans of nineteenth-century printings. Where a text could not be opened, that is said at the point of use.

Search method and its boundaries

Reception was sought by reading complete works or sections at exact loci, not by harvesting quotation aggregators. The corpora searched were: standard English translations of Chrysostom, Origen, Augustine, Ambrose, Cassian and Gregory in the Ante-Nicene and Nicene and Post-Nicene collections; public Latin transcriptions of Migne for Jerome and Hilary on Matthew, Gregory’s Gospel homilies, and Ambrose and Augustine on Psalm 118; the Latin *Super Matthaëum*, *Super Romanos* and the four parts of the *Summa theologiae*; the Holy See’s texts of the Council documents and the *Catechism*; and the complete extracted Latin of the 2002 Missal for the intratextual findings.

Every “not located” statement is bounded by that list and by the access window of 25 July 2026; none is a claim about manuscripts, untranslated works, subscription scholarship, or the whole history of interpretation. Two texts could not be opened at all – Augustine’s *Ad Simplicianum* I.2 and his early *Expositio* of propositions from Romans – and are used only through his verbatim self-quotation in a work that was read.

Rights, and why this guide describes rather than quotes

Three distinct bodies of protected text bear on this Sunday, and the guide’s handling of each is deliberate.

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