

The Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Dominica XXVI “per annum”

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The two sons and the way of the Lord:
a study of the proper in three interpretations

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Which of the Two Did the Father's Will?

At the centre of this Sunday's Mass stands a question that Jesus puts to the chief priests and the ancients of the people in the temple, and that they answer against themselves. "A certain man had two sons: and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to day in my vineyard. And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering said: I go, Sir. And he went not. Which of the two did the father's will?" They say, "The first." Then comes the sentence the question was built to carry: "Amen I say to you that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice: and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him: but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him" (Mt 21:28–32).

Scripture is quoted throughout in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, a public-domain study translation made from the Latin Vulgate. It is not the text proclaimed at Mass: the English heard in the celebration is that of the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, which alone is the approved wording. Psalms are numbered as the Lectionary numbers them, with the Vulgate number, which the Douay–Rheims and the Latin books use, in parentheses.

The first reading has already put the same question in the language of a prophet. The exiles of Ezekiel's day complain, "The way of the Lord is not right", and the Lord answers with two cases: the just man who turns away from his justice and commits iniquity dies in it, and the wicked man who "turneth himself away from his wickedness . . . shall save his soul alive" (Ezek 18:25–28). The psalm asks to be shown the Lord's ways and begs him to remember his compassion and not the sins of youth. Paul asks the Philippians to be of one mind and to "esteem others better than themselves"; in the longer form of the reading he sets before them Christ, who "emptied himself" and "humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross", and whom God exalted. Before the Gospel the assembly sings the Good Shepherd's word, "My sheep hear my voice". The Missal's own texts, which serve this Sunday in all three years of the Lectionary's cycle, set a confession, three prayers and a pair of Communion antiphons around the readings. The Entrance Antiphon, made from the prayer of Azarias in the furnace, confesses that all God has brought upon his people he did in true judgment, because they sinned. The Collect finds God's almighty power shown above all in sparing and in mercy. The Prayer over the Offerings asks that the offering be accepted and open the spring of every blessing, and the Prayer after Communion that the heavenly mystery repair mind and body. At Communion the Missal offers either the psalmist's plea that God remember the word in which he gave hope, or John's sentence, "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

The *Ordo lectionum Missae* marks what it singles out in each reading by the title it sets over it. Over the first reading stands *Cum averterit se impius ab impietate sua, animam suam vivificabit*, a condensed form of Ezekiel 18:27; over the Gospel, *Paenitentia motus abiit. Publicani et meretrices praecedunt vos in regnum Dei*, drawn from Matthew 21:29 and 31; over the second reading, *Sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Iesu*, from Philippians 2:5. The introduction to the *Ordo* explains that the relation between the readings of one Mass is shown by the choice of these titles, and that in Ordinary Time the Old Testament reading is chosen for its relation to the Gospel while the Apostle and the Gospel are each read in their own course (*Praenotanda* 105–107). The two titles that belong together both fall on repentance: the wicked man who turns and lives, and the son who was moved by repentance and went. The letter to the Philippians is read over four Sundays of Year A, and this is the second.

The Sunday's question is therefore what God judges when he judges a man: the first word or the last deed, the record behind him or the way he is found walking; and, bound up with it, who the two sons are. The Fathers and Doctors who expounded these passages answer along three lines, and each line, carried through every text of the Mass, yields an interpretation of the whole. The first hears in the parable and the prophecy one law of judgment: God judges each person where he is found, so that no sinner may despair of turning and no just man may rest on his past. The second follows Jerome, Chrysostom and Aquinas in reading the

two sons as two peoples, the nations who refused and afterwards believed and the people who promised at Sinai and did not go; it keeps the parable's own addressees, the chief priests and ancients who would not believe John, and it meets Hilary of Poitiers, who reads the sons the other way round. The third begins from the second reading. Christ is the Son who obeyed the Father unto death, and the disciple's humility and charity take their pattern and their power from him; where the shorter form is read, only Paul's appeal and the name of Christ's mind remain of it. None of the witnesses behind these interpretations expounds this Mass as a whole. Each interpretation gives every appointed element a place and closes with four senses of its own, literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical.

The appointed elements at a glance

Element	Text and reference	What it says
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Omnia, quae fecisti nobis, Domine</i> ; Dan 3:31, 29, 30, 43, 42, a composite adaptation of the prayer of Azarias	All that the Lord has done to his people he did in true judgment, because they sinned against him and did not obey his commands; he is asked to give glory to his name and to deal with them according to the abundance of his mercy.
Collect	<i>Deus, qui omnipotentiam tuam</i>	God shows his omnipotence above all in sparing and in mercy; his grace is asked for those who run toward his promises, that they may share the goods of heaven.
First Reading	Ezek 18:25–28	To the complaint that the Lord's way is not right, the Lord answers that the just man who turns to iniquity dies and the wicked man who turns to judgment and justice lives.
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 25 (24):4–5, 6–7, 8–9; response from v. 6a	A prayer to be shown God's ways and taught his paths; a plea that he remember his compassion and forget the sins of youth; the Lord, sweet and righteous, gives a law to sinners in the way and teaches the meek.
Second Reading, longer form	Phil 2:1–11	One mind, humility, each esteeming the others better; the mind of Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, obeyed unto the death of the cross, and was given the name above all names.
Second Reading, shorter form	Phil 2:1–5	The same appeal, ending with the call to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus.
Alleluia verse	Jn 10:27, with a speaker formula added	"My sheep hear my voice. And I know them: and they follow me."
Gospel	Mt 21:28–32	The son who refused and afterwards went, and the son who promised and did not; the publicans and harlots who believed John go before those who did not afterwards repent.
Prayer over the Offerings	<i>Concede nobis, misericors Deus</i>	A petition for the offering's acceptance, and for the opening through it of the fountain from which every blessing flows.
Communion Antiphon, first option	<i>Memento verbi tui servo tuo, Domine</i> ; cf. Ps 119 (118):49–50, an adaptation	The servant asks God to remember the word in which he gave him hope, his comfort in his lowliness.
Communion Antiphon, second option	<i>In hoc cognovimus caritatem Dei</i> ; 1 Jn 3:16	God's charity is known in this, that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Sit nobis, Domine, reparatio mentis et corporis</i>	A petition that the mystery received from heaven repair mind and body; it joins the proclaiming of the Lord's death and the sharing of his sufferings to a share in his glory as fellow heirs.

The two forms of the second reading are alternatives, and so are the two Communion antiphons: the Missal prints the second under *Vel*, and one of them is used. Every other element is required. The formulary has no Sequence, Offertory antiphon, proper Preface, prayer over the people or solemn blessing, and the Lectionary gives no shorter form of the Gospel.

The Appointed Texts

The Missal's texts for this Sunday are those of *Dominica XXVI "per annum"* in the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (2002), which the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, renders for the dioceses of the United States; the readings, psalm and Alleluia verse are those of no. 136 of the *Lectionary for Mass*, which follows the *Ordo lectionum Missae* of 1981. The Latin of the Missal, the approved English of the Missal and the approved English of the Lectionary are all under copyright, and none of them is reproduced here. Each biblical element is given at its canonical verses in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, which translates the Clementine Vulgate and numbers the psalms and the prayer of Azarias as the Vulgate does. That English is a study text and is not the wording proclaimed at Mass. Words printed in brackets and italics belong to the verse but not to the appointed text. Each oration is identified by the opening words of its Latin and described, and no English is supplied for it; the two antiphons that adapt Scripture are described, and the verses they draw on are printed beside them as their sources and not as their words.

Entrance Antiphon

Omnia, quae fecisti nobis, Domine. The Missal cites Daniel 3:31, 29, 30, 43, 42 and prints no *Cf.*

A confession addressed to the Lord in the first person plural: everything he has done to his people he did in true judgment, because they sinned against him and did not obey his commands; he is asked to give glory to his name and to deal with them according to the abundance of his mercy. The antiphon adapts five verses of the prayer of Azarias, which the Vulgate and the Douay–Rheims number within Daniel 3, and it quotes none of them. It condenses the two parallel clauses of v. 31 into one and adds *Domine*; it gives the confession of vv. 29–30 in other words (*peccavimus tibi, mandatis tuis non oboedivimus*, where the Clementine Vulgate reads *peccavimus . . . recedentes a te* and *praecepta tua non audivimus*); from v. 43 it takes only the plea for glory to God's name, and from v. 42 only the plea for mercy, without its first clause and without *iuxta mansuetudinem tuam*. No English is printed for the antiphon. The verses it draws on follow in canonical order.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), DAN 3:29–31, 42–43, THE ANTIPHON'S SOURCE

²⁹For we have sinned, and committed iniquity, departing from thee: and we have trespassed in all things: ³⁰And we have not hearkened to thy commandments, nor have we observed nor done as thou hadst commanded us, that it might go well with us. ³¹Wherefore, all that thou hast brought upon us, and every thing that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment:

⁴²Put us not to confusion, but deal with us according to thy meekness, and according to the multitude of thy mercies. ⁴³And deliver us, according to thy wonderful works, and give glory to thy name, O Lord:

Collect

Deus, qui omnipotentiam tuam. Long conclusion.

The address places the chief showing of God's omnipotence in his sparing and his mercy. The petition asks that his grace be multiplied upon the assembly, so that those who run toward what he has promised may come to share the goods of heaven. No English is printed.

First Reading

Ezekiel 18:25–28. Lectionary no. 136.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), EZEK 18:25–28

²⁵And you have said: The way of the Lord is not right. Hear ye, therefore, O house of Israel: Is it my way that is not right, and are not rather your ways perverse? ²⁶For when the just turneth himself away from his justice, and committeth iniquity, he shall die therein: in the injustice that he hath wrought he shall die. ²⁷And when the wicked turneth himself away from his wickedness, which he hath wrought, and doeth judgment, and justice: he shall save his soul alive. ²⁸Because he considereth and turneth away himself from all his iniquities which he hath wrought, he shall surely live, and not die.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 25 (24):4–5, 6–7, 8–9; the response is taken from v. 6a. Lectionary no. 136.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 24:6, FIRST HALF, AS THE RESPONSE

Remember, O Lord, thy bowels of compassion[; *and thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world*].

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 24:4–9

⁴[*Let all them be confounded that act unjust things without cause.*] Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me, and teach me thy paths. ⁵Direct me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art God my Saviour; and on thee have I waited all the day long.¹

⁶Remember, O Lord, thy bowels of compassion; and thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world. ⁷The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember. According to thy mercy remember thou me: for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

⁸The Lord is sweet and righteous: therefore he will give a law to sinners in the way. ⁹He will guide the mild in judgment: he will teach the meek his ways.

The Vulgate's v. 4 has a first clause, on the confusion of those who act unjustly, which the Hebrew numbering places at the end of v. 3; the Lectionary's v. 4 begins with "Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me".

Second Reading, Longer Form

Philippians 2:1–11. Lectionary no. 136, the longer form.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PHIL 2:1–11

¹If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of charity, if any society of the spirit, if any bowels of commiseration: ²Fulfil ye my joy, that you be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. ³Let nothing be done through contention: neither by vain glory. But in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves: ⁴Each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's. ⁵For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who being in the form of God, thought it

¹The bishops' conference's page of readings for the day cites v. 5 whole but prints no line answering to its last clause, on waiting for the Lord all the day long; whether the printed Lectionary includes it is not known.

not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. ⁸He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. ⁹For which cause, God also hath exalted him and hath given him a name which is above all names: ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

Second Reading, Shorter Form

Philippians 2:1–5. Lectionary no. 136, the shorter form.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PHIL 2:1–5

¹If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of charity, if any society of the spirit, if any bowels of commiseration: ²Fulfil ye my joy, that you be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. ³Let nothing be done through contention: neither by vain glory. But in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves: ⁴Each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's. ⁵For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

The shorter form ends where the hymn of vv. 6–11 begins.

Alleluia Verse

John 10:27. Lectionary no. 136. The Lectionary adds a speaker formula, *dicat Dominus* in the Latin *Ordo*, which the verse itself does not have, and prints no *Cf.*

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), JN 10:27

My sheep hear my voice. And I know them: and they follow me.

No English is printed for the added formula.

Gospel

Matthew 21:28–32. Lectionary no. 136. The Latin *Ordo* opens the reading with an incipit naming the chief priests and elders of the people, whom the narrative introduces at 21:23; the incipit is not printed here as Scripture.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), MT 21:28–32

²⁸But what think you? A certain man had two sons: and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to day in my vineyard. ²⁹And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. ³⁰And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering said: I go, Sir. And he went not. ³¹Which of the two did the father's will? They say to him: The first. Jesus saith to them: Amen I say to you that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. ³²For John came to you in the way of justice: and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him: but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.

Prayer over the Offerings

Concede nobis, misericors Deus. Short conclusion.

The merciful God is asked to find the assembly's offering acceptable, and through it to open to them the fountain of every blessing, *fons omnis benedictionis*. No English is printed.

Communion Antiphon, First Option

Memento verbi tui servo tuo, Domine. The Missal cites *Cf.* Psalm 118:49–50, which is Psalm 119:49–50 in the Hebrew numbering.

The servant asks God to remember the word by which he gave him hope, and says that this has been his comfort in his lowliness. The antiphon reads *Memento* where the Clementine Vulgate reads *Memor esto*, adds *Domine*, and ends before the last clause of v. 50, which is printed in brackets below. No English is printed for the antiphon.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 118:49–50, THE ANTIPHON'S SOURCE

⁴⁹Be thou mindful of thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast given me hope. ⁵⁰This hath comforted me in my humiliation[: *because thy word hath enlivened me*].

Communion Antiphon, Second Option

In hoc cognovimus caritatem Dei. 1 John 3:16, printed under *Vel* and without *Cf.* The Missal's Latin agrees with the Clementine Vulgate word for word.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), 1 JN 3:16

In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Prayer after Communion

Sit nobis, Domine, reparatio mentis et corporis. Concludes *Qui vivit et regnat*.

The heavenly mystery is asked to be the restoring of mind and body, so that those who share the Lord's sufferings in proclaiming his death may be his fellow heirs in glory. No English is printed.

Each Element in Its Setting

The texts of this Mass come from two books with separate histories. The antiphons and orations belong to the Missal's Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time and are prayed with the readings of all three years; the readings, psalm and acclamation belong to the Lectionary's Year A. Each element has its own literary setting and textual facts, and the witnesses who expounded it read it in that setting.

The confession from the furnace

The Entrance Antiphon, *Omnia, quae fecisti nobis, Domine*, is drawn from the prayer that Azarias, one of the three young men thrown into Nabuchodonosor's furnace for refusing to adore the golden statue, prays "in the midst of the fire" (Dan 3:25). The prayer belongs to the part of Daniel 3 that the Greek Bible and the Vulgate carry and the Hebrew does not. Jerome marks the place in his commentary: *Hucusque Hebraei legunt*, the Hebrews read thus far; what follows, to the end of the song of the three young men, *in Hebraico*

non habentur, they do not have in the Hebrew (*In Daniele*, on 3:23, PL 25, 509). The prayer opens by blessing God as just in all he has done, his “ways right, and all thy judgments true” (3:27), confesses that the people “have sinned, and committed iniquity” and “have not hearkened to thy commandments” (3:29–30), pleads for God’s name and covenant (3:34–36), and, with no holocaust or sacrifice left, asks that “in a contrite heart and humble spirit” the people be accepted as though they were holocausts of rams and bullocks (3:39–40).

The antiphon takes five of these verses, in the order 31, 29, 30, 43 and 42, and makes one short confession and one plea out of them. Its words are not the Vulgate’s, as the account of the appointed text shows, and Ildefonso Schuster observed of the same chant that the verses are Daniel’s “but the actual words of the text are not quoted” (*The Sacramentary*, vol. 3, p. 174). The speaker is striking. Azarias and his companions are in the furnace because they refused to sin, yet they say “we have sinned”. Jerome saw the point at once: *Et certe tres pueri non peccaverant*, and certainly the three young men had not sinned; they speak *ex persona populi*, in the person of the people, as Paul speaks of evil he does not will in Romans 7. On the opening verse he draws the lesson for any hearer: *Quando diversis premimur angustis, ex toto cordis hoc loquamur affectu, et quidquid nobis acciderit, iuste nos sustinere fateamur*, when we are pressed by distresses, let us say this with the whole heart, and confess that whatever has befallen us we bear justly (*In Daniele*, PL 25, 509).

The Collect: power shown in sparing

The Collect, *Deus, qui omnipotentiam tuam*, closes the Introductory Rites after the Gloria. Its address makes a claim about God that would sound strange if it were not so familiar: that he shows his almighty power above all in sparing and in mercy. The prayer is old. Its Latin stands word for word in the Gregorian Sacramentary in the form edited by H. A. Wilson as the *Hadrianum* (1915, p. 172), and, with one possible variant, in the Old Gelasian Sacramentary. Thomas Aquinas cited it as what *de Deo dicitur*, is said of God, and set it among the objections in his article on God’s omnipotence (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 25, a. 3). His reply gives three reasons why the prayer is right. *Dei omnipotentia ostenditur maxime in parcendo et miserando, quia per hoc ostenditur Deum habere summam potestatem, quod libere peccata dimittit*: God’s omnipotence is shown most in sparing and showing mercy, because it shows that he has the highest power that he freely forgives sins. Or else because, *parcendo hominibus et miserando*, by sparing men and showing them mercy, *perducit eos ad participationem infiniti boni, qui est ultimus effectus divinae virtutis*, he leads them to a share in the infinite good, which is the last effect of the divine power. Or because the effect of divine mercy is the foundation of all God’s works, since nothing is owed to anyone except on the ground of what God first gave unowed (ad 3). In another place Aquinas adds that mercy is, taken in itself, the greatest of the virtues, because it pours itself out on others and relieves their defects, and that belongs to the superior; *unde et misereri ponitur proprium Deo, et in hoc maxime dicitur eius omnipotentia manifestari*, and so to have mercy is set down as proper to God, and his omnipotence is said to be shown most in it (II-II, q. 30, a. 4).

Schuster, the Benedictine Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, called the Collect “of truly classic beauty” and took its thought further: “the rehabilitation of one who has gone astray in his sins requires, so to speak, a condescension and powerful energy on the part of God, such as the creation of the world itself never once called for”, for the abyss between God and evil is deeper than that between him and nothing, and God “bridges over this abyss when in his infinite mercy he descends into it to draw forth the sinner” (*The Sacramentary*, vol. 3, pp. 121–122). The petition that follows asks for grace upon those who run, *currentes*, toward God’s promises.

Ezekiel 18: the exiles' proverb and the Lord's way

The first reading is taken from a chapter that answers a proverb. Ezekiel, a priest among the captives “by the river Chobar” (Ezek 1:1–3), confronts a saying repeated “in the land of Israel”: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge” (18:2). The disaster that had fallen on the people was, on this view, the bill for their ancestors' sins, and nothing they did could change it. The Lord's answer is that “all souls are mine” and “the soul that sinneth, the same shall die” (18:4, 20). The chapter works this out in a series of cases: a just father, a violent son, a grandson who sees his father's sins and does not imitate them (18:5–18); then the wicked man who does penance and lives, of whom God says, “I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done” (18:21–22), and the just man who turns to iniquity, of whom “all his justices which he hath done, shall not be remembered” (18:24). Between the two cases stands the question on which the chapter turns: “Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live?” (18:23).

The appointed verses begin with the people's objection, as the Lord reports it. *Non est aequa via Domini*, the Vulgate has it: the Lord's way is not level, not fair. The Lord turns the charge back on them, “are not rather your ways perverse?”, and restates the two cases (18:26–28). The same complaint returns at v. 29, just beyond the appointment, and the chapter ends with the call that gives the whole its purpose: “Be converted, and do penance . . . make to yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit: and why will you die, O house of Israel? . . . return ye and live” (18:30–32). The chapter carries no date of its own; in the book it falls between the oracle dated to the sixth year of the captivity (8:1) and the one dated to the seventh (20:1). The *Ordo* prefixes the prophetic formula *Haec dicit Dominus* to v. 25, which in the text begins by reporting the people's complaint: *Et dixistis*, “And you have said”.

Psalm 25 (24): the prayer of one who asks the way

The psalm is an alphabetic prayer in the Hebrew, and the Vulgate and the Douay–Rheims head it “Unto the end, a psalm for David”. Its speaker is beset by enemies and burdened by old sins, and he asks for three things: to be shown the Lord's ways, to be remembered according to mercy, and to be taught. The appointed strophes gather the first two requests and the confidence behind them: “Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me, and teach me thy paths” (v. 4); “Remember, O Lord, thy bowels of compassion . . . The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember” (vv. 6–7); “The Lord is sweet and righteous: therefore he will give a law to sinners in the way. He will guide the mild in judgment: he will teach the meek his ways” (vv. 8–9). The word “way” recurs through the psalm, at vv. 4, 8, 9, 10 and 12, and the verse after the appointment sums it up: “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth” (v. 10). The response is the first half of v. 6 alone. Two textual details bear on what is sung. The Vulgate's v. 4 opens with a clause on the confusion of those who act unjustly, which the Lectionary's numbering places in v. 3; and the last clause of v. 5, “on thee have I waited all the day long”, may stand outside the strophe as the United States Lectionary prints it.

Philippians 2: an appeal and a hymn

The second reading begins with a “therefore” (*ergo*) that the *Ordo*'s opening words omit. It joins the appeal to what precedes: Paul has just asked the Philippians to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind labouring together for the faith of the gospel”, undaunted by adversaries, since to them “it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him” (1:27–30). The appeal of 2:1–4 is for one mind and one charity, for nothing done “through contention” or “vain glory”, and for each to “esteem others better than themselves” and look to “those that are other men's”. Verse 5 names its ground: “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”. The longer form continues with the hymn of vv. 6–11: Christ, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God”, but emptied himself, took the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, “even to the death of the cross”; therefore

God exalted him and gave him the name above all names, at which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. The chapter goes on at once to draw the consequence, “with fear and trembling work out your salvation”, “without murmurings”, in the midst of “a crooked and perverse generation” (2:12–15).

The Lectionary offers the two forms for a pastoral reason: the introduction to the *Ordo* leaves the choice to the hearers’ capacity to listen with profit to a longer or a shorter reading (*Praenotanda* 80). The choice is material. The shorter form keeps the appeal and names the mind of Christ, which is exactly what the *Ordo*’s title for the reading, *Sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Iesu*, singles out; the account of what that mind did belongs to the longer form alone.

The Alleluia verse: the sheep who hear

The acclamation sings a verse of the Good Shepherd discourse as John places it at the feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem, in winter, in Solomon’s porch (Jn 10:22–23). Those who gathered round Jesus asked him to say plainly whether he was the Christ. He answered, “I speak to you, and you believe not”, and, “you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep” (10:25–26). The appointed verse follows: “My sheep hear my voice. And I know them: and they follow me.” The next verses promise eternal life and say that none can snatch the sheep from his hand or his Father’s (10:28–30). The Lectionary adds a speaker formula to the verse, and the *Ordo*’s Latin has *dicit Dominus*. Verse 26, which the acclamation does not sing, has a history of its own in the Fathers.

Matthew 21: a question about John

The Gospel stands between two other answers to the same challenge. When Jesus was teaching in the temple, “the chief priests and ancients of the people” asked him by what authority he acted (Mt 21:23). He asked them in turn whether John’s baptism was from heaven or from men, and they would not say: from heaven, and they would be asked why they had not believed him; from men, and they feared the people, who held John for a prophet (21:24–27). The parable of the two sons follows at once, and its application returns to John: “John came to you in the way of justice: and you did not believe him” (21:32). The parable of the wicked husbandmen comes next (21:33–46), and at its end the chief priests and Pharisees “knew that he spoke of them” (21:45). The parable’s first hearers are therefore the men who would not answer the question about John, and it is spoken to draw their answer from their own mouths.

The two sons are drawn with a few strokes. The first says “I will not”, and “afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went”; the second says “I go, Sir”, with a title of respect, and does not go. When Jesus applies the story he uses the words of the first son for his hearers, and in the negative: they “did not even afterwards repent” (21:32). The Latin makes the echo plain, *postea . . . poenitentia motus* of the son and *nec poenitentiam habuistis postea* of the chief priests. The *Ordo* sets both halves of the saying over the reading, the son’s repentance and the publicans’ precedence, and prints the latter in the present tense, *praecedunt*, where the Clementine Vulgate has the future *praecedent*.

The order of the sons and the answer of v. 31 are not the same in every witness to the text. The Lectionary’s text, as the bishops’ conference prints it for the day, has the father go first to the son who refuses and afterwards goes and then to the one who assents and does not go, and has the hearers answer by naming the first; the *Nova Vulgata* (*Primus*), the Clementine and the Douay–Rheims agree. So, according to the apparatus of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Greek New Testament, do the twenty-eighth Nestle–Aland edition, the Robinson–Pierpont text and the SBL edition itself. The same apparatus reports that Westcott and Hort print the sons the other way round, the first promising and not going and the second refusing and repenting, and with Tregelles give the answer “the latter”. The Latin Fathers knew a divided text as well. Jerome quotes the hearers’ answer as *Novissimus*, the last, and then says, *Sciendum est in veris exemplaribus non haberi novissimum, sed primum*, that the true copies read not “the last” but “the first”, *ut proprio iudicio condemnentur*, so that they are condemned by their own judgment. He explains either

reading: if *novissimus* is read, the Jews understood the truth *sed tergiversari, et nolle dicere quod sentiunt*, but evaded it and would not say what they thought, as they would not say that John's baptism was from heaven (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, 156). His editor Vallarsi notes that Rabanus Maurus read *in veteribus*, "in the old copies", for *in veris*. Hilary of Poitiers worked with a text that has the Lectionary's order of the sons but in which the Pharisees answer by naming the younger, and his Maurist editor notes that this answer was the current reading in Hilary's and Jerome's time (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* 21, PL 9, 1039–1041). Hilary's identification of the two sons rests on that answer.

The Prayer over the Offerings

The Prayer over the Offerings, *Concede nobis, misericors Deus*, asks the merciful God that the assembly's offering be acceptable and that through it *fons omnis benedictionis*, the fountain of every blessing, be opened to them. It ends with the short conclusion. Its plea for acceptance has a counterpart in the prayer from which the Entrance Antiphon comes, where Azarias, with no holocaust or sacrifice left to offer, asks that "in a contrite heart and humble spirit" the people themselves be accepted, "so let our sacrifice be made in thy sight this day, that it may please thee" (Dan 3:38–40).

The two Communion antiphons

The first antiphon, *Memento verbi tui servo tuo, Domine*, is marked *Cf.* and adapts two verses of the long alphabetic psalm on God's law, at the strophe of the letter Zain. In the psalm the servant asks God to be mindful of the word "in which thou hast given me hope", and says that this comforted him "in my humiliation: because thy word hath enlivened me" (Ps 118:49–50); the next verse sets him beside the proud who "did iniquitously altogether" (118:51). The antiphon ends before the last clause of v. 50. Its *Memento* is not the Clementine's *Memor esto* but an older Latin psalter reading: Hilary heads his exposition of the strophe *Memento verbi tui servo tuo, in quo mihi spem dedisti*, in the antiphon's word order, and Augustine's lemma has *Memento* too (*Tractatus super Psalmos*, CSEL 22, p. 418; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, s. 15.1).

The second antiphon, printed under *Vel*, is 1 John 3:16 as the Clementine has it: "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." In the letter the verse stands between the warning against Cain, who "killed his brother", and the test of charity that follows it: "He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need and shall shut up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:12, 17–18). The Missal's rubric for Ordinary Time prefers, between two Communion antiphons, the one that agrees with the Gospel of the Mass; neither antiphon of this pair is drawn from a Gospel, and the books do not say whether either agrees with this one.

The Prayer after Communion

The Prayer after Communion, *Sit nobis, Domine, reparatio mentis et corporis*, asks that the heavenly mystery be the restoring of mind and body. Its first clause is old: it stands in the Hadrianum, in the Old Gelasian and in the Verona collection of Mass prayers, where it ends differently, *ut cuius exsequimur actionem sentiamus effectum*, that we may feel the effect of the action we perform. The present ending, which joins the proclaiming of the Lord's death and the sharing of his sufferings to a share in his glory as fellow heirs, stands in none of the three. Its words *coheredes* and *compatimur* stand together in Romans 8:17, "heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him", and *mortem . . . annuntiando* recalls 1 Corinthians 11:26, "you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come". The prayer closes with *Qui vivit et regnat*, because its last clause speaks of the Son.

Three families of words

Three families of words run through these texts, in the Latin of the Clementine Vulgate and in the Douay–Rheims. The first is the Lord’s way: *via Domini* in Ezekiel’s complaint (18:25, 29), *vias tuas* and *vias suas* in the psalm (24:4, 9), and, in the prayer from which the Entrance Antiphon comes, *viae tuae rectae* (Dan 3:27). The second is remembering and not remembering: God will not remember the penitent’s iniquities nor the lapsed man’s justices (Ezek 18:22, 24); the psalmist asks God to remember his compassion and not the sins of youth (Ps 24:6–7); the servant asks him to remember his word (Ps 118:49). The third is humility: *in humilitate* in Paul’s appeal and *humiliavit semetipsum* in the hymn (Phil 2:3, 8), the *mites* whom the Lord teaches (Ps 24:9), the servant’s comfort *in humilitate mea* (Ps 118:50), and the *spiritu humilitatis* of Azarias’s prayer (Dan 3:39). One witness joins two of these texts himself. Expounding the Communion psalm’s *Memento*, Augustine asks whether God can forget, and answers from Scripture’s own way of speaking, citing among others *Omnes . . . iniquitates eius obliviscar* from Ezekiel 18:22 (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, s. 15.1).

Afterward He Repented: Each Is Judged Where He Is Found

Heard as a word about every person, the Sunday’s first reading and Gospel state one law of God’s judgment. God judges a man as he finds him when his course has been turned, and not by his first word or his former record. The wicked man who turns from his wickedness lives, and the just man who turns from his justice dies; the son who said “I will not” and afterwards went did his father’s will, and the son who said “I go, Sir” and did not go did not. Two consequences follow, and the witnesses of this interpretation press both: no one may despair of turning, and no one may rest on what he has done. Turning is urgent because it is always open, and it is never finished in this life.

Each as he is found

Jerome’s commentary on Ezekiel states the principle as the rule of the whole chapter. Of the wicked man who afterwards does penance and, turned to better things, blots out his former sins, he says that he *non iudicetur vetustate peccati: sed in meum suscipiatur gregem, innovatione virtutis*: let him not be judged by the oldness of his sin, but be received into my flock by the newness of virtue. On the just man who falls away he gives the rule both its edges: *Sicut iustum antea peccatorem non praegravant antiqua delicta: sic peccatorem qui prius iustus fuerit, non iuvant veteres iustitiae. Unusquisque enim in quo invenietur, in eo iudicabitur*. As old offences do not weigh on the just man who was once a sinner, so old justices do not help the sinner who was once just; for each will be judged in that in which he is found. To the complaint of v. 25 the Lord, as Jerome reads him, gives the reason why his way is equal: *Ecce unusquisque in suo peccato moritur, et in sua iustitia vivificatur: in utroque non praeterita, sed praesentia [iudicatur]*, each dies in his sin and is given life in his justice, and in both it is not what is past but what is present that is judged (*In Hiezechielem* VI, on 18:21–25, PL 25, 180; the bracketed word is the editor’s supplement).

The people’s complaint and the Lord’s answer thus turn on the same word. *Non est aequa via Domini*: the Lord’s way is not level, they say, because it does not keep to the past, their own or their fathers’. The Lord answers that his way is level precisely because it is the same in both directions. The wicked man’s record is not held against him once he has turned, and the just man’s record does not shelter him once he has turned away. Jerome adds a sentence, on v. 23, that governs how every severe word of the chapter is heard: *Ubicumque autem Dei videtur severa et truculenta sententia, non homines, sed peccata condemnat*, wherever God’s sentence seems severe and harsh, it condemns not men but sins (PL 25, 180). The chapter’s question, “Is it my will that a sinner should die . . . and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live?” (18:23), is the reason the door stands open at all.

Not even afterwards

The parable says the same thing as a story, and its application sharpens it. The chief priests are not blamed for having once refused John; they are blamed because, having seen the publicans and harlots believe him, they “did not even afterwards repent”. John Chrysostom makes this the point of the saying: “For an evil thing it is not at the first to choose the good, but it is a heavier charge not even to be brought round.” The first refusal is a fault; the refusal to be turned is worse. Nor does the precedence of the publicans reward their sins: “not, as continuing harlots, did they enter in, but having obeyed and believed, and having been purified and converted, so did they enter in”. From this Chrysostom draws two warnings in one sentence: “Let no man then of them that live in vice despair; let no man who lives in virtue slumber.” He gives examples of both movements: “What more blessed than Judas? but he became a traitor. What more wretched than Matthew? but he became an evangelist.” And of the God to whom the sinner returns he says, in words close to Ezekiel’s “I will not remember”: “When we have come back unto the earnest love of God, He remembers not the former things. God is not as man, for He reproaches us not with the past, neither doth He say, Why wast thou absent so long a time? when we repent” (*Homilies on Matthew* 67.3–4).

Thomas Aquinas sets this reading beside two others in his lectures on Matthew. The two sons may be two peoples; *vel duo genera hominum, iusti, et peccatores*, or two kinds of men, the just and sinners. He defines both at once: *Non dicuntur iusti quicumque, sed qui profitentur se iustos; et peccatores non quicumque, sed qui poenitentiam agunt*, not the just in general but those who profess themselves just, and not sinners in general but those who do penance. The father’s call comes by an inward inspiration that gives the light of reason, and the word “to day” has a reach the story does not spell out: *Et dicit, Hodie, quasi per totum tempus vitae tuae*, he says “today” as if to say, through the whole time of your life. The refusal *nihil aliud est quam contemnere mandata Dei*, is nothing other than contempt of God’s commands; for the first son’s going he cites Jeremiah, “after thou didst convert me, I did penance” (Jer 31:19). The comparison of the two sons is then exact: *Primus non promisit, sed fecit; secundus promisit, sed non fecit*. The second is the worse, and Aquinas says why: it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay (Eccles 5:4; 2 Pet 2:21), *est enim ibi duplex peccatum; peccatum inobedientiae, et transgressio voti*, for there is a double sin there, the sin of disobedience and the breaking of the promise. On v. 32, where the chief priests did not even afterwards repent, he names the worst case of all: *Ille enim est pessimus qui de facto suo non poenitet*, the worst is he who does not repent of what he has done (*Super Matthaeum* c. 21, Venice 1745, pp. 275–276).

Jerome knew this personal reading and did not make it his own. After giving the two peoples, he reports: *Alii vero non putant Gentilium et Iudaeorum esse parabolam, sed simpliciter peccatorum et iustorum*, others think the parable is not of Gentiles and Jews but simply of sinners and the just (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, 155–156). His own reading is that of the two peoples. For Chrysostom and Aquinas the two readings stand together: both give the peoples first and then turn the parable on persons.

Tomorrow

A promise that stays open invites delay, and Augustine meets the objection in the sinner’s own words. “God hath promised me forgiveness, whenever I reform myself I am secure; I read the divine Scripture, ‘In the day that the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, I will forget all his iniquities.’ ” Augustine grants all of it: “Thou speakest well and truly; God hath promised pardon on thy amendment, I cannot deny it; but tell me . . . who hath promised thee a to-morrow?” The man who puts off turning is like the raven: “ ‘To-morrow, To-morrow;’ is the raven’s croak. Moan plaintively as the dove, and beat thy breast” (*Sermo* 82.14). In another sermon he names the two ways in which the same promise can be misused: “these two things are the death of souls, despair, and perverse hope.” To those who despair the prophet’s word is the voice that raises them; to those who would make it an excuse, “what if before to-morrow thine own end shall be?” (*Sermo* 87.10–11). His answer to delay comes from outside Ezekiel, from the uncertainty of life, and it is exactly the other half of Aquinas’s “today”: the father’s call stands for the whole of a life, and no one knows how long the life will be.

Old sins and old justices

Jerome and Aquinas agree that God judges the state in which a person is found and that return is always open. They part on a consequence. Jerome says, without qualification, that old justices do not help the one who falls away. Aquinas, arguing from the same verse, distinguishes. Works done in charity are “deadened” by a later mortal sin, because it hinders them from bringing the man to eternal life; but they are “revived by Penance”, because they remain “abiding in the Divine acceptance”, and penance removes only the impediment on the man’s side (*Summa theologiae* III, q. 89, aa. 4–5). The difference is a development in the doctrine of merit, not a disagreement about what Ezekiel says: both hold that the lapsed man cannot plead his past, and Aquinas adds that the God who does not remember sins does not forget charity.

Aquinas appeals to the chapter once more, and he answers an objection drawn from it; the two places give the law both its halves. With Ezekiel 18:22 as his authority he holds that no sin of a wayfarer is beyond penance, “because his will is flexible to good and evil”, and that to say otherwise would be “derogatory to the power of grace” and “contrary to Divine mercy” (III, q. 86, a. 1). An objection cites Ezekiel 18:21 to argue that penance need not be prolonged, since the penitent is forgiven at once. Aquinas grants that forgiveness comes in the first instant of true penance and adds that the penitent must persevere: “True penance not only removes past sins, but also preserves man from future sins”, and so he “must persevere in his penance, lest he fall again into sin” (III, q. 84, a. 8, obj. 1 and ad 1). The door is never shut in this life, and the one who has gone through it has not finished walking.

A law given to sinners in the way

The responsorial psalm is the prayer of a man who wants to walk this way. In Augustine’s exposition it is the voice of one who cannot find the way alone: the paths he asks for are “narrow, and known to few”, and he asks to be shown them because “I cannot by myself return, unless Thou meetest the wanderer”. The sins of youth he asks God to “reserve not for vengeance, but let them be as if forgotten by Thee”. The verse that follows holds both halves of Ezekiel’s law in one sentence: “The Lord is gracious, since even sinners and the ungodly He so pitied, as to forgive all that is past; but the Lord is upright too, who after the mercy of vocation and pardon, which is of grace without merit, will require merits meet for the last judgment” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 24.4–8). Mercy comes first and forgets; uprightness comes after and requires.

Robert Bellarmine reads the same verses as a lesson in how God forgets. On v. 7: “He places forgetfulness in beautiful opposition to remembrance. Remember thy mercy, but forget my sins; for one is the cause of the other, for God then remembers his mercy when he does not wish to remember our sins any longer.” On v. 8 the law is given “to sinners in the way, to persuade them to abandon the old path, and, from being bad and wicked, to become good and just”; and on v. 9, where only the meek are taught, he insists that the proud are not shut out: “The grace of God, then, first softens and subdues the proud and the obstinate, and when thus humbled and contrite, ‘It guides them in judgment’ ” (*Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Ps 24:7–9). Ezekiel’s God, who will not remember the iniquities of the man who turns, and the psalmist’s plea, “The sins of my youth . . . do not remember”, meet in the same word. The join is the editor’s; Augustine makes a like one only for the Communion psalm.

The Missal’s texts in this reading

In this interpretation the Missal’s antiphons and prayers take their places along the line of the turning, and the placing is the editor’s, not a commentator’s. The Entrance Antiphon is the first son’s refusal confessed. Jerome’s lesson from the furnace, quoted under “Each Element in Its Setting”, that in distress we should confess with the whole heart that we bear justly whatever befalls us, and Schuster’s account of the same chant as “the sorrowful confession of guilt which leads back the sinner to the way of reconciliation”, in which “we see the hope which underlies the act of contrition, the detestation of the sin, and the implicit

purpose of amendment for the future” (*The Sacramentary*, vol. 3, p. 175), both describe the moment at which the son who said no begins to go.

The Collect names the God before whom that is possible. Aquinas’s first reason why omnipotence is shown most in sparing is that God *libere peccata dimittit*, freely forgives sins; Schuster’s is that the sinner’s restoration asks more of God than the making of the world. The petition, that those who run toward God’s promises may share the goods of heaven, describes the turning as a race rather than a single step. The acclamation hears the call that the father gave in the vineyard. Aquinas says the sheep hear Christ’s voice *credendo, et praeceptis meis obediendo*, by believing and by obeying his commands, and he joins to the verse the psalm’s warning, *Hodie si vocem eius audieritis*, “To day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Ps 94:8; *Super Ioannem* c. 10, lect. 5, p. 668). On the verse before it he adds that some of those who did not yet believe were to believe later.

The second reading, in either form, asks each to esteem others better than himself. Aquinas’s reason why a better man can do so honestly, that no one is without some defect and no one without some good, is given in his words under the third interpretation (*Super Philippenses* c. 2, lect. 1); heard in this reading, it means that no one’s state is fixed, and so no one may be despised as finished. Chrysostom closes his homily on these verses with Romans 2:13, the doers and not the hearers justified, the text he also set beside the two sons (*Homilies on Philipians* 5). In the longer form the hymn shows the Son whose obedience went all the way to the cross.

The Prayer over the Offerings asks that the offering be accepted. In the prayer from which the Entrance Antiphon comes, Azarias asks, with no sacrifice left, that the people be accepted “in a contrite heart and humble spirit” (Dan 3:39): the offering, heard so, is the turned heart. The first Communion antiphon brings back Ezekiel’s own words. Augustine, expounding the verse, reads *Memento* as the prayer’s desire for the promise, *hoc est, imple promissum servo tuo*, that is, fulfil your promise to your servant; and among Scripture’s ways of speaking of a God who forgets he cites *Omnes . . . iniquitates eius obliviscar* from Ezekiel 18:22 (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, s. 15.1, PL 37, 1540). Bellarmine, on another psalm, ties the same verse to the promise of pardon to penitents: God “frequently . . . promised pardon to those who do penance”, and “Hence David himself previously said, in Psalm 118, ‘Be thou mindful of thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast given me hope’ ” (on Ps 129:4–5). The second Communion antiphon asks for the deed. Augustine, on the same verse, will not let the perfect charity of laying down one’s life discourage the one who thinks it beyond him, and places its beginning in giving to a brother in need, as the third interpretation sets out; and to the one who claims the name without the work he says, “Thou hast the name, and hast not the deeds” (*Homilies on the First Epistle of John* 5.12). The second son had the name of an obedient son. The Prayer after Communion asks that the heavenly mystery repair mind and body: a turning that has begun still needs to be restored.

Where this interpretation strains

The parable is not spoken to the world at large. It is spoken in the temple to the chief priests and ancients of the people, about their answer to John (Mt 21:23, 32), and Jerome, Chrysostom and Aquinas all read it first of peoples. A reading of it as a law for every person keeps its moral and loses the historical charge of its first telling. Ezekiel’s horizon is narrower too. Chapter 18 answers a people’s fatalism about inherited guilt and speaks of life and death within the covenant community; Jerome’s *unusquisque in quo invenietur, in eo iudicabitur* carries it to the last judgment, and that is his extension of the oracle rather than its plain horizon. Augustine names the practical difficulty, that an open promise invites delay, and he answers it from outside the prophecy. Finally, Jerome and Aquinas do not say the same thing about the justices of the one who falls away, and the difference stands.

The four senses of this interpretation

Literal.

Ezekiel answers people who call God's way unfair: each lives or dies by the way he is found walking, and God does not will the sinner's death. Jesus tells the chief priests and ancients of a son who refused and then went and a son who promised and did not, and says that the publicans and harlots who believed John go before those who did not afterwards repent.

Allegorical.

The man with two sons is God, who calls by an inward inspiration, and his "to day" is the whole of a life (Aquinas, on Matthew); on the Alleluia verse Aquinas joins to the sheep's hearing the psalm's "To day if you shall hear his voice". Christ is then the voice that calls "today" through a whole life, and God's power, shown most in freely forgiving (Aquinas, on the Collect), receives the penitent into the flock by the newness of virtue (Jerome, on Ezekiel). Both joinings are the editor's.

Moral.

Do not despair of what you have been, and do not rest on it (Chrysostom). Turn today, since no one has promised you tomorrow (Augustine). Let the deed follow the word: the worst is the man who does not repent of what he has done (Aquinas), and, where the second Communion antiphon is chosen, a Christian name without the deeds profits nothing (Augustine).

Anagogical.

"Each will be judged in that in which he is found" (Jerome), so the penitent must persevere in his penance (Aquinas), and the Lord who forgave the past in the mercy of vocation and pardon will require at the last judgment merits meet for it (Augustine, on the psalm). Where the first Communion antiphon is chosen, the servant's prayer that God remember his word is a prayer for the promise's fulfilment (Augustine).

The Publicans Go Before You: Two Sons and Two Peoples

Jerome, John Chrysostom and Thomas Aquinas read the two sons as two peoples. In their reading the first son is the people of the nations, who refused God's call and afterwards, at the Saviour's coming, repented and worked in the vineyard; the second is the people of Israel, who answered at Sinai that they would do all that the Lord had spoken, and did not go. The parable's own application is narrower and sharper. It sets the publicans and harlots who believed John before the chief priests and ancients of the people who did not. Jerome finds the same two peoples in Ezekiel's two cases, and he hears the prophet's call to a new heart addressed *ad utrumque populum*, to both. Chrysostom hears in "go before you" a hope for those behind. Hilary of Poitiers assigns the sons the other way round, and his reading stands beside theirs.

A judgment drawn from their own mouths

The parable is spoken to men who had just declined to answer a question. Asked whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men, the chief priests and ancients said, "We know not" (Mt 21:27). Jesus then tells a story and lets them pass sentence on it. Chrysostom watches the method: "Again He convicts them by a parable, intimating both their unreasonable obstinacy, and the submissiveness of those who were utterly condemned by them." He causes "the judgment to be delivered by themselves", so that they are "self-condemned". Had he said at once that harlots go before them, "the word would have seemed to them to be offensive; but now, being uttered after their own judgment it appears to be not too hard." The charge that follows is exact. John came "unto you", not to the publicans, and came "in the way of righteousness", so that no fault could be found with the messenger; the publicans heeded him; and the chief priests did not heed him even after the publicans had done so. "To you he came, and ye accepted him not; he came not to them, and they receive him, and not even them did ye take for instructors" (*Homilies on Matthew* 67.2–3).

The saying that closes the parable is not, for Chrysostom, a closed door. “The word, ‘go before you,’ is not as though these were following, but as having a hope, if they were willing. For nothing, so much as jealousy, rouses the grosser sort.” The publicans and harlots are named so that the chief priests might be provoked to follow them (67.3). The parable’s hearers are therefore the religious leaders of Jerusalem who would not believe John, and the parable’s purpose, in Chrysostom’s reading, is still their conversion.

The nations and the people of Sinai

The three witnesses of this interpretation widen the frame from the hearers to the peoples. Chrysostom states it directly: “these two children declare what came to pass with respect to both the Gentiles and the Jews. For the former not having undertaken to obey, neither having become hearers of the law, showed forth their obedience in their works; and the latter having said, ‘All that the Lord shall speak, we will do, and will hearken,’ in their works were disobedient.” The words of the second son are the words of the people at Sinai (Exod 19:8; 24:3, 7), and Chrysostom adds Paul’s sentence so that “they might not think the law would benefit them”: “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom 2:13; *Homilies on Matthew* 67.2).

Jerome’s commentary gives the same identification with its reasons. He first calls the two sons those of Luke’s parable, the frugal son and the prodigal, *frugi et luxuriosus*. Then: *Primo dicitur Gentilium populo per naturalis legis notitiam: Vade, et operare in vinea mea*, to the first, the people of the Gentiles, it is said through its knowledge of the natural law, Go and work in my vineyard; and he gives the content of that law from Tobias, not to do to another what one would not have done to oneself. *Qui superbe respondit: Nolo. Postea vero in adventu Salvatoris, acta poenitentia, operatus est in vinea Dei, et sermonis contumaciam labore correxit*. That people answered proudly, I will not; but afterwards, at the Saviour’s coming, it did penance, worked in God’s vineyard, and corrected the defiance of its word by its labour. *Secundus autem filius, populus Iudaeorum est, qui respondit Moysi: Omnia quaecumque dixerit Dominus faciemus . . . et non ivit in vineam, quia, interfecto patrisfamilias filio, se putavit haeredem*. The second son is the people of the Jews, who answered Moses, All that the Lord shall say we will do, and did not go into the vineyard, because, having killed the householder’s son, it thought itself the heir (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, 155–156). Jerome’s last clause borrows the words of the parable that follows, where the husbandmen say of the son, “This is the heir: come, let us kill him” (Mt 21:38). On v. 31 he says that the publicans and harlots, who had refused God by their evil works, afterwards received John’s baptism of penance.

Aquinas gives the reading first among his three: *Iste homo, Deus est; duo filii sunt duo populi*, this man is God, the two sons are two peoples; and *Primus est populus gentilium, qui incepit a Noe, sicut populus Iudaeorum ab Abraham*, the first is the people of the Gentiles, which began from Noah as the people of the Jews began from Abraham. The second son professes justice, as the people said at Sinai, *Omnia quaecumque praeceperit Dominus faciemus*. Then he does what neither Jerome nor Chrysostom does here: he turns the second son on the Church. Clerics and religious, too, profess justice, and a promise made and not kept is a double sin, of disobedience and of a broken vow (*Super Matthaeum* c. 21, pp. 275–276).

The three agree on the identification and on its ground, the promise given at Sinai, set against nations that had made no such promise. They differ in what they draw from it. Jerome ties the second son to the killing of the heir; Chrysostom keeps open a hope for those who were behind; Aquinas applies the second son’s fault to the professed members of the Church.

The way the house of Israel calls unequal

Jerome reads the first reading in the same key. After stating the principle that each is judged where he is found, he offers a second understanding of Ezekiel’s two cases: *Potest et hoc intelligi: Iustus prius populus Israel, avertit se a iustitia sua, quia iustitiae reliquit auctorem, et fecit iniquitatem, Dei Filium denegando*; it can be understood thus, that the people of Israel, once just, turned from its justice, because it left the

author of justice and did iniquity in denying the Son of God. Conversely, *gentium populus non habens notitiam Dei, et impius, si se averterit ab impietate sua, quam prius operatus est in idololatria . . . ipse prius mortuus vivificabit animam suam*: the people of the nations, not knowing God and impious, if it turns from the impiety it wrought in idolatry, though once dead, will give its soul life. On the complaint of v. 29 Jerome writes a hard sentence of his own: *Usque hodie Israel blasphematur Deum, cur populum suum reliquerit, et gentium assumpserit multitudinem*, to this day Israel blasphemes God for leaving his people and taking up the multitude of the nations. What he calls just is the Lord's own sentence, *Domini autem iusta sententia*: that, the former husbandmen being lost, the Lord send others into his vineyard, as the hearers of the parable understood in Luke's form of it (Lk 20:16). The same commentary does not end there. On v. 30 he says that whether one is of the nations or of Israel, *Non est personarum acceptio apud Deum . . . sed unusquisque sua coronabitur fide*, there is no respect of persons with God, but each will be crowned by his own faith. And on the call to a new heart in v. 31, though it is said properly to Israel, *Potest autem et ad utrumque populum intelligi: ut et Israel, et gentium turba, sua vitia derelinquens, convertatur ad eum qui possit sanare contritiones suas*, it can be understood of both peoples, that Israel and the crowd of the nations alike, leaving their vices, may turn to the one who can heal their wounds. *Cor novum Israelis, est credere in eum quem prius negaverat. Cor novum gentium, est idola derelinquere*: Israel's new heart is to believe in him whom it had denied; the nations' new heart is to leave their idols (*In Hiezechielem VI*, PL 25, 181).

Augustine hears Ezekiel's complaint in another place and names no people. In his lemma of Psalm 17:27, "And with the froward Thou shalt be froward", he finds the complaint of those who say, "The way of the Lord is not right", to whom it seems froward that God makes whole those who confess their sins, and he says that God humbles those who seek to establish their own righteousness (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 17.27–28; his words are given under the third interpretation). For Augustine the complaint belongs to anyone who resents the mercy shown to the penitent; Jerome gives it to a people.

Hilary: the sons the other way round

Hilary of Poitiers read the parable of the same two groups and assigned them in the opposite order. His text, with the Lectionary's order of the sons, had the Pharisees answer by naming the younger, and he begins from a difficulty in reading the elder son as Israel and the younger as the nations. That is not the identification Jerome, Chrysostom and Aquinas give, for whom the son who refused and afterwards went is the nations, and Hilary's objection does not touch theirs. The elder son refused and repented; *Atquin Israel non poenituit, sed in Dominum manus intulit*, yet Israel did not repent but laid hands on the Lord. The younger promised and did not go; yet *gentium peccatorumque plebs id quod spopondit effecit*, the common people of the nations and of sinners did what it promised. His answer finds both sons among John's hearers. *Primus est filius, populus ex Phariseis in praesens a Deo per Ioannis prophetiam ut praeceptis suis obtemperaret admonitus*: the first son is the people of the Pharisees, warned by God at that time through John's prophecy to obey his precepts. Insolent and trusting in the law, it refused; but it is the people *qui deinceps operum miraculis post Domini resurrectionem poenitens sub apostolis credidit*, which afterwards, through the miracles of the works done after the Lord's resurrection, repented and believed under the apostles. *Filius autem minor, plebs est publicanorum et peccatorum*, the younger son is the people of publicans and sinners, who believed John but could not yet take up the work of the Gospel before the Passion. The Pharisees, however unwillingly, confess that this son obeyed, *obediens professione, licet non efficiens in tempore; quia fides sola iustificat*, obedient in his profession though not yet accomplishing it in time, because faith alone justifies. In Hilary's argument the phrase explains why the publicans count as obedient: their faith in John's preaching is reckoned as the obedience they could not yet show in the Gospel's works, which waited on the Passion. The chief priests and Pharisees are those *qui iustificati per fidem non erant, nec per poenitentiam regressi sunt ad salutem*, who were not justified by faith and did not return to salvation by penance (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* 21.11–15, PL 9, 1039–1041).

The disagreement is real, and it is textual as well as exegetical. For Jerome, Chrysostom and Aquinas the son who repented is the nations; for Hilary he is the Pharisees who believed after the resurrection. Jerome knew Hilary's answer of v. 31 and preferred the copies that read "the first". Yet Hilary and Jerome agree on what puts the publicans first, their response to John: Hilary says they believed him, Jerome that they received his baptism of penance. And Hilary's reading keeps in view a later faith among the very men who resisted, the Pharisees who repented under the apostles.

Those who are not his sheep

The Alleluia verse is preceded in John by a harder sentence: "you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep" (Jn 10:26). Augustine reads it of those Jesus addressed without distinction: "What did He mean, then, in saying to them, 'Ye are not of my sheep'? That He saw them predestined to everlasting destruction, not won to eternal life by the price of His own blood." His exhortation in the same passage, "be ye sheep. They are sheep through believing, sheep in following the Shepherd", is addressed to his own congregation, not to those of 10:26 (*Tractates on John* 48.4). On this verse Augustine leaves the men addressed no opening.

Aquinas glosses the verse in his own terms: *Vos non estis ex ovibus meis, scilicet praedestinati ad credendum, sed praesciti ad aeternum interitum*, you are not of my sheep, that is, not predestined to believe, but foreknown to eternal ruin. He then asks whether saying this drove the hearers to despair, and answers with a distinction. Common to that whole crowd was that they *non erant praeordinati a Deo ad tunc credendum*, were not preordained by God to believe then; particular to some was that they would believe later, *aliqui qui ex eis praeordinati erant ad credendum in posterum*, as three thousand believed in one day at Pentecost (Acts 2). Spoken to a crowd, the saying took away no one's hope, *quia nullus de se determinate hoc poterat suspicari*, since no one could suspect it of himself in particular; said to one determinate person, it would have (*Super Ioannem* c. 10, lect. 5, p. 668). Augustine and Aquinas both read the verse of predestination. Augustine says that those addressed were predestined to everlasting destruction; Aquinas, that they were not predestined to believe and were foreknown to eternal ruin, and that some of them were nevertheless preordained to believe later. The difference is narrower than a contradiction, and it is real: Augustine closes to those addressed the hope that Aquinas keeps open for some of them. Aquinas's hope is for persons in that crowd, not for a people as such.

Gregory the Great hears the chapter at another verse. Of the "other sheep" of 10:16 he says, *Quia vero non solum Iudaeam, sed etiam gentilitatem redimere venerat*, because the Lord had come to redeem not Judaea only but the nations too, he spoke of bringing them; and he counts himself and his hearers among them, *qui ex gentili populo venimus. Quasi enim ex duobus gregibus unum ovile efficit, quia Iudaicum et gentilem populum in sua fide coniungit*: he makes as it were one fold of two flocks, because he joins the Jewish and the Gentile people in his faith, as Paul says, "he is our peace, who hath made both one" (Eph 2:14); for *ad aeternam vitam ex utraque natione simplices eligit*, he chooses the simple from each nation for eternal life (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 14.4). Gregory's fold is made of those chosen from each people and joined in faith; he says nothing of 10:26.

How the reading is handed on

The identification of the second son with the Jewish people belongs to Jerome, Chrysostom and Aquinas as their exegesis of the parable. The Second Vatican Council's declaration *Nostra aetate* governs how such readings are taught and preached today. It teaches that "God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers" and does not repent of his gifts and calls; that what happened in the Passion "cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today"; and that the Jews "should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures" (no. 4). The texts of the Fathers stand as they are, and so do the limits they themselves carry. Matthew

names the parable's hearers as the chief priests and the ancients of the people (21:23) and the chief priests and Pharisees (21:45). Jerome's sentence on Ezekiel 18:29 stands beside his reading of 18:31 *ad utrumque populum* and his new heart for Israel. Chrysostom hears in "go before you" a hope, "if they were willing". And Aquinas turns the parable on the Church's own members, on those who profess and do not do.

The Missal's texts in this reading

In this interpretation the placing of the Missal's texts is the editor's, not a commentator's. The Entrance Antiphon is a confession spoken for a people: the three young men in the furnace, as Jerome notes in words quoted under "Each Element in Its Setting", had not sinned and speak in the person of the people. Heard beside the parable, it is the confession owed by anyone who promised and did not go, that God's judgments were true and the fault his own; as this reading's moral sense directs, it is the baptized who make it. The Collect asks that those who run toward God's promises share the goods of heaven, and in this reading the promises made to the fathers are shared by those who came late.

The responsorial psalm, in Augustine's exposition, is spoken by Christ "in the person of the Church: for what is said has reference rather to the Christian People turned unto God"; it is the prayer of one who, "dismissed by Thee from Paradise, and having taken my journey into a far country", cannot return "unless Thou meetest the wanderer" (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 24.1, 5). Jerome's first remark on the parable, that its two sons are those of Luke's, the frugal and the prodigal, sets the same far country beside this Gospel; the join between the two expositions is the editor's.

The second reading enters this interpretation only by the editor's joining. It is a letter to a church of the nations at Philippi, asked to be of one mind, each esteeming the others better than himself, as the first and the second son alike are asked to work in one vineyard. In the longer form it ends with the day when "every knee should bow" and "every tongue should confess". The Prayer over the Offerings asks that the offering open the fountain of every blessing, and here the blessing promised through the fathers reaches all.

Of the two Communion antiphons, the first is heard through Hilary's exposition of the verse. *Omnis dei sermo, qui scripturis diuinis continetur, in spem bonorum caelestium uocat*, every word of God contained in the divine Scriptures calls to the hope of heavenly goods; and hope *non inanem esse oportet neque uerbis tantummodo praedicari, sed rebus ipsis doceri*, must not be empty nor proclaimed in words only, but shown in the things themselves (*Tractatus super Psalmos* 118, Zain 1, CSEL 22, p. 418). Hope shown in words only is the second son's "I go, Sir"; the join to the parable is the editor's. The second antiphon names the love that makes one fold. Gregory, on the shepherd who lays down his life, has him show his love for the Father by dying for the sheep, in a sentence given under the third interpretation, and goes on at once to the other sheep and the one fold (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 14.4); he says it of John 10, and its use for the antiphon from John's letter is the editor's. The Prayer after Communion asks that the communicants be fellow heirs of Christ's glory, and it names its heirs by a condition, sharing his sufferings, the condition Romans 8:17 sets. In this reading the heirs are those of either people who share them, as Gregory's one fold is made of those chosen from each; the join is the editor's.

Where this interpretation strains

Hilary's contrary identification and the divided text of v. 31 show that the allegory of the peoples is a reading of the parable, held by the three witnesses who give it, and not its plain sense. The literal addressees are the chief priests and ancients, and the chief priests and Pharisees, not a people as such; Jerome's harshest sentence belongs to him, and his own commentary and Chrysostom's set a hope beside it. Augustine, who reads Ezekiel's complaint without naming any people, is on John 10:26 the contrary position to the hope this reading holds out for the second son. The second reading contributes to the interpretation only through the editor's joining.

The four senses of this interpretation

Literal.

In the temple Jesus tells the chief priests and ancients, who would not say whether John's baptism was from heaven, that the publicans and harlots who believed John go before them into the kingdom of God. Ezekiel answers the house of Israel that the Lord's way is right and theirs perverse.

Allegorical.

The first son is the people of the nations, who refused and afterwards believed, and the second the people who promised at Sinai and did not go (Jerome, Chrysostom, Aquinas); Hilary assigns them the other way, the first to the Pharisees who believed after the resurrection and the second to the publicans who believed John. The psalm is prayed by "the Christian People turned unto God" (Augustine), and that this people is the Church of the nations is the editor's gloss.

Moral.

The baptized can become the second son: Aquinas applies the parable to clerics and religious who profess and do not do. Those long inside the vineyard are not to resent those who come in late, and must themselves go. The call to a new heart can be understood of both peoples, each leaving its vices and turning to the one who can heal them (Jerome, on Ezekiel 18:31).

Anagogical.

One fold and one shepherd, made of those chosen from each people and joined in faith, whom the shepherd chooses for eternal life (Gregory); and, where the longer form is read, every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

The Mind That Was in Christ Jesus: The Son Who Obeyed unto Death

Read from the second reading, the formulary turns on Christ's humble obedience, which is both the pattern and the power of Christian humility and charity. He who was in the form of God emptied himself, obeyed the Father as a Son unto death on a cross, and was exalted; the disciple is to have the same mind, counting others better than himself, obeying against his own will, and laying down his life for the brethren. The Collect's claim that God shows his power most in sparing and in mercy then names the same movement from God's side: Aquinas says that by sparing and mercy God leads men to share the infinite good, and Schuster calls the sinner's restoration a condescension greater than creation. That the power of the Collect is a power that stoops is the editor's joining of the two; the stooping is Schuster's word, not Aquinas's.

Paul's appeal: one mind and lowliness

Paul's appeal begins with a "therefore" that ties it to the conflict the Philippians share with him (1:27–30), and it asks for one mind and one charity and for nothing done "through contention" or "vain glory". Chrysostom, on these verses, calls vainglory "the cause of all evil", and he will not let the command to count others better remain a phrase: it is fulfilled "if thou not only sayest it, but art fully assured of it". "Haughtiness is the first act of ingratitude, for it denies the gift of grace." He closes the homily with Paul's other sentence, "Not the hearers of a law, but the doers of a law shall be justified", and adds, "Yea, knowledge itself condemneth, when it is without action and deeds of virtue" (*Homilies on Philippians* 5).

Aquinas explains how the command can be kept without pretence. The unity Paul asks for is *interius in affectu, et exterius in effectu*, inward in affection and outward in effect, and he cites John's letter for it: *Non diligamus verbo, neque lingua, sed opere, et veritate* (1 Jn 3:18). Humility answers pride: *Sicut enim pertinet ad superbiam quod homo se extollat supra se, ita ad humilitatem quod homo se subiiciat secundum suam mensuram*, as it belongs to pride that a man raise himself above himself, so it belongs to humility

that he subject himself according to his measure. How can the better man honestly count the worse his superior? *nullus est sic bonus, quin in eo sit aliquis defectus, et nullus est sic malus, quin habeat aliquid boni*; and if another is wholly bad, *Si ergo illum non praeponas ratione suae personae, praeponas ratione imaginis divinae*, if you do not prefer him by reason of his person, prefer him by reason of the divine image (*Super Philippenses* c. 2, lect. 1, pp. 375–376). The shorter form of the reading ends here, with the call *Hoc enim sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Iesu*, “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”. Where that form is read, only the exhortation and the name of Christ’s mind remain, which is what the *Ordo* sets over the reading. Christ’s self-emptying, his obedience unto death and his exaltation, of which the witnesses below speak, belong to the longer form alone.

He emptied himself

Chrysostom begins his next homily by noticing Paul’s method: “in exhorting them to humility, he brought forward Christ”. The reason is that “Nothing rouses a great and philosophic soul to the performance of good works, so much as learning that in this it is likened to God.” He reads the hymn as an answer to the appeal before it: “It is written, ‘He emptied Himself’ in reference to the text, ‘each counting other better than himself.’ ” Christ’s self-emptying is the model of that counting, and it was free, “had He not chosen it of His own accord, and of His own free will, it would not have been an act of humility” (*Homilies on Philippians* 6–7). Aquinas says the same in a sentence: *hic hortatur ad virtutem humilitatis, exemplo Christi*, here Paul exhorts to the virtue of humility by the example of Christ.

Both insist that the one who emptied himself did not cease to be what he was. The equality with God, Chrysostom says, Christ had “not by seizure, but as his own by nature” (*Homilies on Philippians* 7); and Aquinas, on *semetipsum exinanivit*: he did not empty himself of the divinity, *quia quod erat, permansit: et quod non erat, assumpsit*, for what he was, he remained, and what he was not, he took (*Super Philippenses* c. 2, lect. 2, p. 377). The example has force because the one who gives it is God. Augustine puts that in a single sentence while expounding the washing of the feet: “so great is the beneficence of human humility, that even the Divine Majesty was pleased to commend it by His own example; for proud man would have perished eternally, had he not been found by the lowly God.” And he draws the consequence: “as he was lost by imitating the pride of the deceiver, let him now, when found, imitate the Redeemer’s humility” (*Tractates on John* 55.7).

Obedient unto death

“He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death.” Chrysostom answers those who took the obedience for a sign that the Son was less than the Father: “He became obedient as a Son to His Father; He fell not thus into a servile state, but by this very act above all others guarded his wondrous Sonship, by thus greatly honoring the Father” (*Homilies on Philippians* 7). Aquinas defines the virtue: *Modus humiliationis, et signum humilitatis est obedientia: quia proprium superbiorum est sequi propriam voluntatem*, obedience is the manner of humiliation and the sign of humility, because it is proper to the proud to follow their own will. It is set in the Passion *quia prima praevaricatio est facta per inobedientiam*, because the first transgression was made by disobedience; *obedientia dat meritum passionibus nostris*, obedience gives merit to our sufferings; and *tunc est obedientia magna, quando sequitur imperium alterius contra motum proprium*, obedience is great when it follows another’s command against one’s own inclination. Christ refused neither death nor death’s most shameful kind (*Super Philippenses* c. 2, lect. 2, p. 379).

Augustine dwells on the last words of the verse. Mercy comes first, then judgment, and the first mercy is that “The Creator of man deigned to become man”. To this he added, step by step, that he was rejected, dishonoured and put to death; “but even this was not enough, it was by the death of the cross. For when the apostle was commending to us His obedience even unto death, it was not enough for him to say, ‘He became obedient unto death;’ ... but he added, ‘even the death of the cross’ ” (*Tractates on John* 36.4).

The exaltation follows. “He was obedient to the uttermost, wherefore He received the honor which is on high”, Chrysostom says, and draws the lesson: “Let us too not suppose then that we descend from what is our due, when we humble ourselves.” He also names the failure the hymn exposes: “when we glorify Him rightly, but live not rightly, then do we especially insult Him” (*Homilies on Philippians* 7). Aquinas reads vv. 9–11 as the reward, *Hic commendat eius praemium: quod est exaltatio, et gloria*, and cites the Lord’s saying that he who humbles himself shall be exalted (Lk 14:11; 18:14; *Super Philippenses* c. 2, lect. 3, p. 380).

The son who said no and went

No witness of this interpretation joins Philippians 2 to the parable of the two sons or to Ezekiel; the join that follows is the editor’s. Set beside the hymn, the parable shows two sons who both fall short of the Son. One said yes and did not go. The other said no, and then obeyed against his own first word, which is what Aquinas calls great obedience, *contra motum proprium*; but Aquinas says it of Christ in Philippians, not of the son in the parable. The Son of the hymn is the one whose yes was done to the end, and whose obedience the first son’s belated going imitates from far off.

The first reading is heard here through Augustine’s reading of the complaint it answers. Those who say “The way of the Lord is not right” are the froward, and what seems froward to them is “that Thou wilt make them whole that confess their sins”; God humbles those who are “ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seek to establish their own” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 17.28). The Lord’s way heals the humble who confess and humbles the proud who claim their own justice. Augustine says this of the complaint, not of Paul’s hymn, and the likeness between that way and the path Christ walked in Philippians is the editor’s.

The psalm prays for the same disposition. The Lord “will guide the mild in judgment: he will teach the meek his ways”, and Augustine says who these are: “those that follow His will, and do not, in withstanding It, prefer their own”; the Lord teaches his ways “not to those that desire to run before, as if they were better able to rule themselves” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 24.9). Bellarmine adds that the proud are not excluded, since grace first humbles them and then guides them (on Ps 24:9, quoted under the first interpretation). The acclamation names the disciple’s part: “they follow me”. Aquinas counts following as the third of four things in the verse, *Tertium, quod est ex parte nostra, est imitatio ad Christum*, the third, which is on our part, is the imitation of Christ, and cites Peter: “Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps” (1 Pet 2:21; *Super Ioannem* c. 10, lect. 5, p. 668).

The life laid down, at the table

The second Communion antiphon states what this obedience means for the disciple: “he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”. Augustine calls the verse the “perfection of love”, and he will not let the perfection discourage the beginner: “Do not too soon despair of thyself. Haply, it is born and is not yet perfect; nourish it.” Its beginning is in the verse that follows, the brother in need: “If thou art not yet equal to the dying for thy brother, be thou even now equal to the giving of thy means to thy brother” (*Homilies on the First Epistle of John* 5.11–12). In his tractates on the Gospel he brings the verse to the altar. Reading the proverb about sitting at a ruler’s table, he asks, “For what is the table of the ruler, but that from which we take the body and blood of Him who laid down His life for us? And what is it to sit thereat, but to approach in humility?” To put forth the hand there, knowing that one must make the like preparation, is “that, as Christ laid down His life for us, so we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”; the martyrs did so, and are commemorated at that table so that they may pray for us (*Tractates on John* 84.1). He adds at once that no martyr’s blood is shed for the remission of sins as Christ’s was (84.2). Aquinas makes the same verse the pattern of the pastor: the good shepherd’s office is charity, and of the shepherd who bears the loss of bodily life for the flock, *Huius autem doctrinae Christus nobis exemplum praebuit*, citing 1 John 3:16 (*Super Ioannem* c. 10, lect. 3, p. 660). Gregory the

Great, on the shepherd who lays down his life, has him say *ea charitate qua pro ovibus morior quantum Patrem diligam ostendo*: by the charity with which I die for the sheep I show how much I love the Father (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 14.4). In Gregory's sentence the Son's love for the Father and his death for the sheep are one act; that this love is the obedience of Philippians 2:8 is the editor's joining.

The first Communion antiphon is the prayer of the lowly. On *in humilitate mea* Augustine says that hope *data est humilibus*, is given to the humble, and cites the Lord's saying that he who humbles himself shall be exalted. He understands the lowliness first as humiliation suffered, *qua quisque humiliatur aliqua tribulatione vel deiectione, quam meruit eius superbia*, by which someone is humbled by some tribulation or casting down that his pride deserved, and not only the humility of one who confesses his sins (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, s. 15.2, PL 37, 1541). Hilary likewise reads it as suffering endured, *cum contemnitur, cum inridetur, cum iniuriis uexatur, cum contumeliis inhonestatur*, when one is despised, mocked, harassed with injuries and dishonoured with insults, and says that the servant knows *humilitatem suam glorioso esse honoris praemio munerandam*, that his humiliation is to be rewarded with a glorious prize of honour (*Tractatus super Psalmos* 118, Zain 2, CSEL 22, p. 419). Where the longer form is read and the first antiphon is chosen, the servant's *humilitate* and the hymn's *humiliavit semetipsum* stand in the same Mass, and humiliation followed by glory is the shape of both; that is an observation about the words, and no witness makes it.

The Missal's prayers in this reading

The Collect names the power at work. Aquinas's second reason why omnipotence is shown most in sparing is that *parcendo hominibus et miserando, perducit eos ad participationem infiniti boni*, by sparing and showing mercy God leads men to share in the infinite good (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 25, a. 3, ad 3); Schuster's is that God goes down into the abyss that separates him from evil to draw the sinner out, in words quoted under "Each Element in Its Setting" (*The Sacramentary*, vol. 3, p. 121). The petition asks that those who run toward God's promises share the goods of heaven, and that is the share in the infinite good of Aquinas's reply. Joining this to the hymn's descent and exaltation is the editor's.

The Entrance Antiphon asks God to "give glory to thy name", and the Missal's *da gloriam nomini tuo* is the Clementine's at Daniel 3:43. In the longer form of the second reading God gives Jesus "a name which is above all names". The shared word is in the texts; the join is the editor's. The Prayer over the Offerings asks that the assembly's offering be accepted; in this interpretation the offering is taken into the self-offering of the Son who obeyed unto death. The Prayer after Communion asks that those who share the Lord's sufferings in proclaiming his death be his fellow heirs in glory: where the longer form is read, that is humiliation unto death and then exaltation, now asked for the communicants. The prayer's *coheredes* and *compatimur* stand together in Romans 8:17; that too is an observation about the words.

Where this interpretation strains

No witness of this interpretation joins Philippians 2 to the parable or to Ezekiel, and the second reading follows its own course through the letter. The interpretation's hold on the whole formulary therefore rests on the Collect and the Communion antiphons, where the witnesses do speak, and elsewhere on the editor's joining. Chrysostom's homilies on 2:5–11 are chiefly doctrinal, against those who made the Son less than the Father, and his moral application is brief. Christ is not only an example: Chrysostom and Aquinas both insist that the one who emptied himself kept the form of God, and a reading that made the hymn a lesson in imitation alone would misstate them. Where the shorter form is read, this interpretation keeps only Paul's appeal and the name of Christ's mind.

The four senses of this interpretation

Literal.

Paul asks the Philippians for one mind and humility, each counting the others better than himself, and sets before them the mind of Christ Jesus; in the longer form, the Christ who, being in the form of God, emptied himself, obeyed unto the death of the cross, and was given the name above all names.

Allegorical.

In the longer form, Christ is the Son who obeyed the Father and so honoured him (Chrysostom), and the lowly God who found proud man (Augustine). Where the second Communion antiphon is chosen, he is also the shepherd who lays down his life, whose body and blood are taken at the ruler's table (Augustine).

Moral.

Count others better by God's image in them (Aquinas). In the longer form, obey against your own inclination (Aquinas) and do not glorify Christ rightly and live wrongly (Chrysostom). With the second antiphon, begin to lay down your life by giving to a brother in need (Augustine).

Anagogical.

Exaltation follows humility (Hilary, on the servant's lowliness, where the first antiphon is chosen; Aquinas, on Philippians, where the longer form is read); the communicants ask to be fellow heirs in glory with him whose death they proclaim; where the longer form is read, every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus.

The Three Interpretations Compared

All three interpretations hear God's way as mercy that is also just, and all three put the deed before the word: the son who went, the people who obeyed in works, the Son who obeyed unto death. They differ in the question they put to the texts, and therefore in the verses on which they rest and in what they ask of the rest of the Mass.

Question	Afterward he repented	The publicans go before you	The mind of Christ Jesus
Who are the two sons?	Those who profess themselves just and sinners who do penance (Aquinas); the reading Jerome reports as others'.	The people of the nations and the people of Sinai (Jerome, Chrysostom, Aquinas); Hilary assigns them the other way.	Not the question asked; Christ set beside them as the Son whose yes was done is the editor's.
What is "the way of the Lord"?	A judgment of the present state, in both directions (Jerome).	God's receiving of the nations, which Israel calls unequal (Jerome); the mercy to penitents that the self-righteous resent (Augustine).	The way that heals the humble who confess and humbles the proud (Augustine); its likeness to Christ's path is the editor's.
Where does the weight fall?	Ezek 18:27–28 and Mt 21:29, the verses the <i>Ordo's</i> titles take.	Mt 21:31–32 and Ezek 18:29–31.	Phil 2:5–8.
What does the Collect say?	God freely forgives sins (Aquinas).	Those who come late share the promises (the editor's).	Sparing and mercy lead men to share the infinite good (Aquinas); a condescension greater than creation (Schuster).

Question	Afterward he repented	The publicans go before you	The mind of Christ Jesus
What do the Communion antiphons say?	First: the promise remembered, with Ezekiel 18:22 (Augustine); pardon promised to penitents (Bellarmine). Second: the name without the deeds (Augustine).	First: hope shown in things and not in words only (Hilary). Second: one fold made of two peoples (Gregory, on John 10).	First: hope given to the humble (Augustine; Hilary). Second: the life laid down, received at the ruler's table (Augustine).
Principal witnesses	Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas.	Jerome, Chrysostom, Aquinas; Hilary dissenting on the sons; Augustine the contrary position on John 10:26.	Chrysostom, Aquinas, Augustine.
Under the shorter second reading	Holds.	Holds.	Holds only in part.

The first two interpretations rest on the Lectionary's one official correlation, the first reading with the Gospel, and the *Ordo's* titles place that correlation on repentance: the wicked man who turns and lives, the son who was moved by repentance and went. The third does not rest there. It reads the formulary from the second reading and the Communion antiphons, and it reaches the correlated readings only through Augustine's reading of the complaint in Ezekiel and through the editor's own joining.

The first two are complementary rather than rival. Jerome gives both in his commentary on Ezekiel 18, the principle at vv. 21–25 and the peoples at vv. 26–31, and in his commentary on Matthew he reports the personal reading of the parable beside his own. Chrysostom and Aquinas give the peoples first and then apply the parable to persons, Chrysostom in his warning against despair and slumber, Aquinas in his just men and sinners and in his clerics and religious. The two readings answer different questions, who the sons were in the history of salvation and who they are in every life, and neither excludes the other. The second interpretation keeps what the first loses, the parable's first telling to men who would not believe John; the first keeps what the second cannot say alone, that the law of the parable binds every hearer, including those who already count themselves the first son.

The third differs from the other two in kind. It does not identify the sons at all. It asks what obedience is and where it comes from, and it finds the answer in the Son who emptied himself and was obedient unto death. Its link to the parable is the editor's, and its hold on the Mass is strongest exactly where the other two are weakest: in the second reading, which enters the second interpretation only by the editor's joining, and in the second Communion antiphon, which Augustine carries to the altar.

Three real disputes among the witnesses cross these lines. Hilary reverses the sons, making the repentant son the Pharisees who believed after the resurrection and the promising son the publicans who believed John; his reading rests on a text whose answer named the younger son, and Jerome, who knew that answer, preferred the copies that named the first. This touches the second interpretation directly and the first only at its edge. Augustine and Aquinas both read John 10:26 of predestination, but Augustine leaves those addressed no opening, while Aquinas finds among them some who were to believe later; the second interpretation's hope for those who then refused can appeal to Aquinas, for persons in that crowd, and not to Augustine. Jerome and Aquinas differ on whether the good works of one who falls away help him when he returns; that difference belongs to the first interpretation and is a development of doctrine, not a quarrel about what Ezekiel says.

The Missal's prayers are open to all three hearings because they say something prior to each. The confession of the Entrance Antiphon admits that God's judgments are true; the Collect finds his power in his mercy; the Prayer over the Offerings asks that what is offered be accepted; the Prayer after Communion asks for

the repair of mind and body and a share in Christ's glory. Whichever son the hearer finds himself to be, and whichever people, the Mass gives him the same words to pray.

Scriptural Date and Location

Each passage the Mass reads or sings from Scripture, once, in canonical order; beneath each, its attribution, its setting and the dates the shared chronology corpus holds for it. The Entrance Antiphon and the first Communion antiphon adapt Scripture and are placed at the verses they adapt; the three orations carry no biblical date.

Textual unit	Citation	Location	Date
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 25 (24):4–5, 6–7, 8–9; response v. 6a	No place named in the verses	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.

Inherited attribution: the Vulgate title *In finem. Psalmus David*, in the Douay–Rheims “Unto the end, a psalm for David” (24:1), ascribes the psalm to David; the title gives no date and does not place the psalm in his reign. An alphabetic prayer for guidance and pardon. The date shown is the Psalter's common critical bound, taken from the introduction to the Psalms in the New American Bible Revised Edition, which holds that no individual psalm can be dated securely; it is not a date for this psalm.

Communion Antiphon, first option	cf. Ps 119 (118):49–50, an adaptation	No place named in the verses	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
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The strophe of the letter Zain in the long alphabetic psalm on God's law. The psalm has no attributive title, the Vulgate printing only *Alleluia*, and no traditional date is held for it. The date is the same common critical bound, not a date for this psalm.

First Reading	Ezek 18:25–28	Among the captives “by the river Chobar”, “in the land of the Chaldeans” (1:1–3); addressed to “the house of Israel” (18:25)	Historical setting: Preferred: In the eighth year of his reign; alternatives: A.M. 3405, B.C. 597, B.C. 598. Prophecy given: “he prophesied during at least twenty-two years” (duration).
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Traditional attribution: “Ezekiel the priest the son of Buzi” (1:3). Chapter 18 carries no date formula; in the book's order it falls between the oracles dated to the sixth year of the captivity (8:1) and the seventh (20:1). The setting answers date the captivity on which the book is framed, not this oracle. The preferred label is the Douay–Rheims phrase for Joachin's surrender to Nabuchodonosor in the second captivity (4 Kgs 24:12), the year being that of Nabuchodonosor's reign; the A.M. figure is Usher's reckoning as Haydock reports it in his note on Psalm 70; and the first figure before the Christian era is the year of the surrender in the *Catholic Encyclopedia's* article on the captivities (Reid). The prophecy row gives the length of Ezekiel's ministry that the *Catholic Encyclopedia's* article on the prophet (Schets) reads from 29:17; that article dates his deportation a year earlier than the article on the captivities.

Entrance Antiphon	Dan 3:29–31, 42–43 (Vulgate), adapted	The furnace of Nabuchodonosor, “of the province of Babylon” (3:1, 20–25)	Historical setting: “seventy years” (duration). Composition: Most likely long after the Exile.
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Narrated event: the prayer of Azarias in the midst of the fire.

The Missal cites the verses in the order 31, 29, 30, 43, 42. The prayer belongs to the portion of Daniel 3 that the Greek Bible and the Vulgate carry and the Hebrew does not, as Jerome notes. The setting answer is the seventy years of service to the king of Babylon foretold by Jeremias (Jer 25:11–12), the frame of the exile in which the book places the scene. The composition answer is the judgment of the *Catholic Encyclopedia's* article on Daniel (Gigot), which ascribes chapter 3:24–90 to “some unknown Jewish author who lived long after the Exile”; the same paragraph reports that “nearly all Catholic writers” of its day referred the prayer to Daniel's time, and it calls the difficulties against so early a date “wellnigh insuperable”.

Textual unit	Citation	Location	Date
Gospel	Mt 21:28–32	In the temple at Jerusalem, to “the chief priests and ancients of the people” (21:23)	Event – No narrated-event date in the chronology corpus. Composition – disputed: c. A.D. 38–45; c. A.D. 40–42; A.D. 40–45; c. A.D. 60–68; c. A.D. 64–67; c. A.D. 50.
<i>Narrated event: a parable spoken in the temple after the question about Jesus’ authority and John’s baptism (21:23–27).</i>			
Traditional attribution: St Matthew the Apostle. No date is held for the narrated event. The Date column keeps as disputed alternatives the figures the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> reports. Its article on the Gospel (Jacquier) begins “Ancient ecclesiastical writers are at variance”, reports four figures from them and from a tradition of the apostles’ dispersal, and gives the years that “Catholic critics, in general, favour” where “opinion is rather divided”. The last figure is said in its article on the New Testament (Durand) of the original text of Matthew, which that author holds to have been Aramaic. These are dates of the book, not of the saying.			
Alleluia verse	Jn 10:27, with a speaker formula added	In Jerusalem, in the temple, “in Solomon’s porch”, at the feast of the Dedication, in winter (10:22–23)	Composition – disputed: c. A.D. 90–100; A.D. 96–100.
<i>Narrated event: Jesus’ answer to those who asked him to say plainly whether he was the Christ.</i>			
Traditional attribution: St John the Apostle. The first range is the one the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s article on the New Testament (Durand) gives for “the Johannine writings”; the second is “the general opinion” reported by its article on the Gospel (Fonck), after the admission that “we possess no certain historical information”. They date the book, not the discourse.			
Second Reading, longer form	Phil 2:1–11	From Paul “in my bands” (1:7, 13), at Rome in the sources cited; to “all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi” (1:1)	Composition – disputed: A.D. 61; A.D. 62–64.
Second Reading, shorter form	Phil 2:1–5	As for the longer form	Composition – disputed: A.D. 61; A.D. 62–64.
Traditional attribution: St Paul, writing in captivity. The first figure is the year the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s chronology of St Paul (Prat) gives the letters of the captivity, within his Roman captivity; the second is the range its article on the letter (Vander Heeren) gives for Paul “at Rome”, where it adds that critics disagree whether the letter falls early or late in the Roman stay.			
Communion Antiphon, second option	1 Jn 3:16	No place named in the letter	Composition: c. A.D. 90–100.
Traditional attribution: St John the Apostle. The range is the one the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s article on the New Testament (Durand) gives for “the Johannine writings”; its article on the Epistles of St John (Drum) finds the arguments “probable in favour of Ephesus and also for the last few years of the first century”.			

Appendix: Liturgical Resolution

Celebration. The Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, a Sunday in Ordinary Time at place 6 of the table of liturgical days; green; Gloria and Creed. The formula is PC-S52-A, the Year A target of the parent PC-S52; it has the single Sunday form. A Mass anticipated on Saturday evening uses the same formulary, and there is no Vigil form.

Books, calendar and territory. The *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, for use in the dioceses of the United States of America (2011), whose Latin base is the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (2002), as reprinted with emendations in 2008; the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, second typical edition, volume I, no. 136, which follows the *Ordo lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera (1981); the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* in the United States edition of 2011 with the emendations of 2021; the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*; and the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* for 2026. Only the national calendar is applied. No diocesan, religious, parish, titular, dedication or patronal calendar was supplied, and none is assumed.

Cycle and occurrence. Year A of the Sunday cycle runs from 30 November 2025 to 22 November 2026, and the national calendar enters 27 September 2026 as the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time with the readings of Lectionary no. 136. The weekday cycle governs no Sunday. The obligatory memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest, inscribed in the General Calendar on 27 September at place 10 of the table, is omitted this year under no. 60 of the *Universal Norms*; it is not transferred or commemorated and supplies no text to this Mass.

The Missal formulary and the three cycles. The antiphons and orations belong to the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time and are common to Years A, B and C; their text is recorded once, in the collection's record for that week. The readings, psalm and Alleluia verse are those of Year A alone. The second reading is the second of four in the Lectionary's course through Philippians in Year A, and the Gospel belongs to its semi-continuous reading of Matthew.

Branches. No selection among the following was supplied, and none is inferred. Both forms of the second reading and both Communion antiphons are studied in full; a claim resting on Philippians 2:6–11 does not hold for a celebration that uses the shorter form.

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
second-reading-long-form	Lectionary no. 136 prints Phil 2:1–11 as the longer form	appointed alternative	Second Reading	Unselected; studied in full. The choice follows the hearers' capacity to listen with profit (<i>Praenotanda</i> 80).
second-reading-short-form	Lectionary no. 136 prints Phil 2:1–5 as the shorter form	appointed alternative	Second Reading	Unselected; studied in full. It omits the hymn of vv. 6–11.
communion-antiphon-psalm	The Missal prints cf. Ps 119 (118):49–50 first	appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon	Unselected; studied in full.
communion-antiphon-epistle	The Missal prints 1 Jn 3:16 second, under <i>Vel</i>	appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon	Unselected; studied in full. Rubric 6 for Ordinary Time prefers an antiphon that agrees with the Gospel; the books do not say whether either does.
entrance-or-communion-chant-substitution	<i>General Instruction</i> 48 and 87: the Missal antiphon, a chant of the <i>Graduale Romanum</i> or <i>Graduale Simplex</i> , or another approved chant	permitted	Entrance; Communion	Unselected; the Missal antiphons are the texts studied.
psalm-or-acclamation-chant-substitution	<i>General Instruction</i> 61 and 62: a sung psalm or verse from the <i>Graduale</i> or another approved collection, or a seasonal common psalm when the psalm is sung	permitted	Responsorial Psalm; Alleluia verse	Unselected; the Lectionary's psalm and verse are the texts studied.
offertory-chant	<i>General Instruction</i> 74	permitted	Preparation of the gifts	Unselected; the Missal prints no Offertory antiphon.

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
sprinkling-rite	<i>General Instruction</i> 51 and the Order of Mass: on Sundays the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the Penitential Act	ritual substitution	Introductory Rites	Unselected; it brings its own texts.
compatible-preface-and-eucharistic-prayer	Rubric 5 for Ordinary Time; <i>General Instruction</i> 364–365	permitted	Eucharistic Prayer	Unselected; one of the eight Prefaces of the Sundays in Ordinary Time with a compatible Eucharistic Prayer, as one coupled choice.
eucharistic-prayer-iv-with-preface	<i>General Instruction</i> 365 d	conditional	Eucharistic Prayer	Unselected; Eucharistic Prayer IV keeps its own invariable Preface.
concluding-blessing-form	The Missal’s solemn blessings and prayers over the people, at the priest’s discretion	permitted	Concluding Rites	Unselected; none is appointed to this Sunday.
local-proper-calendar	<i>Universal Norms</i> 59–60 with a particular calendar	conditional	Whole Mass	Not supplied; a local celebration would need its own resolution.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

Edition and formulary. The study treats the Mass of the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, as the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, and the *Lectionary for Mass* give it for the dioceses of the United States, in the national calendar alone, for the occurrence of 27 September 2026. Identity, occurrence and branches are set out in the preceding appendix and recorded in `instance/manifest.md` and `research/context.md`.

Text control. The Missal formulary was read in the Latin of the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (2002), in a digitally typeset reproduction, and compared with the list of changes for the 2008 reprint in *Notitiae* 44 (2008), which lists none for this week, and with the *Antiphonary* excerpted from the English Missal (2010). No page of the 2008 reprint and no United States altar book was inspected, so the approved English orations were not read in any witness, and no chant book was collated. Which Latin text the Entrance Antiphon’s wording follows is not established. The Lectionary’s boundaries rest on three witnesses that agree in every figure: the national calendar for 2026, the bishops’ conference’s dated page of readings, and no. 136 of the Latin *Ordo lectionum Missae* (1981); the printed United States Lectionary was not inspected. Three questions about the text remain open: whether the United States strophe includes the last clause of Psalm 25:5; whether the United States Lectionary admits another Alleluia verse from a common set on these Sundays; and the manuscript evidence for the order of the sons and the answer of Matthew 21:29–31 beyond what the SBL apparatus reports. No manuscript was examined.

English. All Scripture is printed in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, a public-domain study translation of the Clementine Vulgate. It is not the text proclaimed in the celebration; the controlling English is that of the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, and for the antiphons and orations that of the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, neither of which is reproduced. The orations and the two antiphons that adapt Scripture are identified by Latin incipit and described; the descriptions are not translations and may not be quoted as the texts’ words. Where the Lectionary appoints part of a verse, or may do so, the rest is marked beside it. English glosses of Latin passages are the editor’s renderings of the Latin printed beside them.

Reception. Each appointed Scripture passage has at least one ancient and one medieval or later witness read at an exact locus; the witnesses are those named in the References, and the search behind them is bounded and recorded in `research/scope.md`. For the first reading and the second Communion antiphon the later witness is Aquinas’s doctrinal use of the verse, and for the Entrance Antiphon it is a liturgical commentator on the chant; three passages rest on one ancient witness each (the psalm on Augustine, the Entrance Antiphon’s verses on Jerome, the second Communion antiphon on Augustine). Chrysostom, Augustine’s sermons, his tractates on John and on the First Epistle of John, and his expositions of Psalms 17 and 24 were read in the English of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; Aquinas’s *Summa* III in the English Dominican translation; Bellarmine in O’Sullivan’s abridged English of 1866, the Latin not compared; Schuster in a text layer of the 1927 English. Jerome on Matthew, Ezekiel and Daniel, Hilary on Matthew and on Psalm 118, Augustine on Psalm 118, and Aquinas on Matthew, John and Philippians and in *Summa* I, q. 25 were read on page images of the printings named; Gregory and *Summa* II-II, q. 30 in electronic Latin texts.

No witness was collated with a modern critical edition. Not opened, among others: Origen and Rabanus Maurus on Matthew; Theodoret, Albert and Hugh of Saint-Cher on Ezekiel; Cassiodorus and Theodoret on the psalms; Ambrose on Psalm 118; Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria on John; Bede on the First Epistle of John; Rupert of Deutz and Berno of Reichenau on the Entrance Antiphon; and the commentary of *The Liturgical Year* on the Collect. Nothing is said here about who first proposed any reading, about any reading being the Fathers' common view, or about the order in time or the mutual dependence of the witnesses. No exposition of the parable of the two sons by Augustine was found in the texts of his searched, the English sermons and tractates and the Latin *Quaestiones evangeliorum*; the search was literal and does not reach his works not held. No commentary on the Prayer over the Offerings or the Prayer after Communion was found, and a search of the sacramentaries held found no earlier witness to the first prayer or to the present ending of the second, which does not show that none exists. Schuster's comments on the Collect and the Entrance Antiphon belong to Masses that differ from this formulary in their other elements, and he is cited only for those two texts.

Relations among the elements. Three relations are stated by the liturgical books: the first reading is chosen in relation to the Gospel (*Praenotanda* 106), the psalm responds to the first reading (*General Instruction* 61), and the acclamation greets the Gospel (*General Instruction* 62). The second reading and the Gospel each belong to a semi-continuous course, and the Missal's antiphons and orations serve all three years. The recurrence of the words for way, for remembering and for humility across the texts is an observation about the texts. One witness cited joins two of the Mass's texts himself: Augustine cites Ezekiel 18:22 in expounding Psalm 118:49. Every other connection drawn between one element and another is the editor's synthesis, grounded in a witness's statement about his own passage where one is cited and otherwise an editorial proposal resting on the wording of the texts. No witness cited comments on this Mass.

The Council's declaration. *Nostra aetate* 4 was read in the English of the Holy See's website; its Latin was not compared. It is cited as the Church's teaching on how the identification of the two sons with two peoples is presented, not as a judgment on the exegesis of any Father.

Chronology. The Date cells print the shared chronology corpus's answers with their relations and alternatives unchanged. The first reading's answers date the captivity and Ezekiel's ministry, not the oracle of chapter 18, and the A.M. figure is Haydock's report of Usher, whose page was not read here. The Entrance Antiphon's composition answer is one author's judgment on the Greek additions to Daniel, and his own article reports the contrary view of most Catholic writers of his day. The Psalter's common composition bound is not a date for either psalm; for Psalm 25 it was read in the current public text of the introduction it cites, not in the registered state. The Gospel's and the Johannine answers are composition dates of the books. Writing sites, first readers and narrative settings are kept apart; the source checks and their limits are recorded in *research/scope.md*.

Rights. The Douay–Rheims, the Clementine Vulgate, the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, O'Sullivan's Bellarmine, the English Dominican *Summa*, the volumes of Migne, the Vienna Hilary, the Venice and Liège printings of Aquinas, Schuster's English, Wilson's and Feltoe's editions and the *Catholic Encyclopedia* are in the public domain. Gregory's Latin is quoted in short phrases from a licensed electronic edition; the Leonine *Summa*, whose rights are unresolved, and the Corpus Thomisticum text of II-II, q. 30 are quoted in short passages. The Latin and English of the Missal, the *Ordo lectionum Missae*, the Lectionary, the *General Instruction*, the national calendar, the *Nova Vulgata*, *Nostra aetate* in English and the introduction to the Psalms of the New American Bible are protected; they are cited, and only incipits, the three titles of the *Ordo*, short phrases of the Council's declaration and a few words needed by the argument are quoted.

Records. The composition of the target is audited in *propers/verified.md*; the reception search, loci, disagreements and negative results in *research/scope.md*; and the reasoning behind the three interpretations, with the class of every cross-element link, in *research/interpretations.md*. The research records received an independent review before the study was written.

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Liturgical books, Bibles and texts

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