

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Love, Unity, and the Healing of Worship

1962 Roman Missal · 20 September 2026

The heart commanded to love

The command to love God with the whole heart stands inside a Mass that repeatedly asks God to heal the heart. The worshipper acknowledges divine justice, asks for mercy, hears the call to patience, confesses the Lord whom David himself worships, and approaches mysteries whose fruit is the cure of vice and an eternal remedy. Love is exacting: it reaches every part of the person and every neighbor. Yet the Mass does not leave the hearer alone with that demand. Its prayers ask for the freedom, purity, strength, and lasting healing that obedience requires.

The Gospel's closing question gives this movement its center. Jesus first answers what the law commands; then he asks who the Christ is. The answer "David's son" is true but incomplete when David, speaking in the Spirit, calls him Lord. The one who teaches love stands before his hearers as more than a teacher whose answer they can assess from a distance. His lordship claims their allegiance. The Epistle names one Lord within the common gifts that make the Church one; the Communion sets every earthly ruler beneath the sovereignty of God. The whole self and the whole community belong to the Lord they address.

Three readings unfold that belonging. The first follows the healing of divided desire: Augustine's account of grace, Chrysostom's exposition of the two love commands, and Thomas's Eucharistic teaching show how the commanded life is also a received gift. The second follows the gathering of a people: the divine Word and Spirit, the one body, and the common voice of supplication require humble mutual service. The third follows the worshipper's action: confession, petition, offering, reception, and continuing fidelity form one movement toward the eternal remedy. They answer different questions about the same Mass—how love becomes possible, whose common life it sustains, and how worship bears fruit after the celebration.

Appointed element	Its movement
Introit	Ps. 118:137,124; verse 1: justice confessed and mercy sought by a servant among those who walk God's law.
Collect	Freedom from diabolical contagion and a pure mind following God alone.
Epistle	Eph. 4:1–6: patient charity expresses the unity of body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and Father.
Gradual	Ps. 32:12,6: an elected people and heavens established through the divine Word and Spirit.
Alleluia	Ps. 101:2: an afflicted voice asks that prayer reach God.
Gospel	Matt. 22:34–46: the twofold love command and the question of David's Son and Lord; Credo follows.
Offertory	Adapted Dan. 9:17–19: Daniel intercedes for the sanctuary and the people bearing God's name.
Secret	The holy action is asked to free the people from past and future offenses; Trinity Preface follows.
Communion	Ps. 75:12–13: vows paid and gifts brought to the Lord who humbles princes.

Appointed element	Its movement
Postcommunion	Sacred mysteries heal vices and bring an eternal remedy.

The Sunday is of the second class in the 1962 Missal. For the universal calendar on 20 September 2026 it is the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; the ordinary commemoration of SS. Eustace and Companions is omitted. The proper consists of the three prayers and seven scriptural elements above, whose texts follow with an explanation of each element and three sustained readings.¹

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¹*Missale Romanum* (Vatican, 1962), pp. 398–400, nos. 1602–1611; general rubrics, no. 111(b), p. XVIII; September calendar, p. LI. Dated corroboration: FSSP France and ICRSP France, Ordos for 20 September 2026, checked 17 September 2026.

The appointed texts

The Latin follows the 1962 Missal, pp. 398–400, nos. 1602–1611, with stress marks removed and ligatures expanded. The three English prayers are the historical human translation published by Cumiskey in 1861, pp. 431–433. Biblical English is the American 1899 Douay–Rheims canonical study text; it does not translate the Missal’s adaptations or its added formulas. Psalm numbering follows the Missal, with common modern equivalents in parentheses. These public-domain witnesses remain distinct from project-created exposition.

Introit

Iustus es, Domine, et rectum iudicium tuum: fac cum servo tuo secundum misericordiam tuam.

Ps. Beati immaculati in via: qui ambulant in lege Domini.

V. Gloria Patri.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ¹³⁷SADE. Thou art just, O Lord: and thy judgment is right. ¹²⁴Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy: and teach me thy justifications. ¹ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Ps. 118:137, 124; verse 1 (119). The Gloria Patri remains the Missal’s cue.

Collect

Da, quaesumus, Domine, populo tuo diabolica vitare contagia: et te solum Deum pura mente sectari. Per Dominum nostrum.

Cumiskey 1861. Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, that thy people may avoid all contagion of the devil: and with a clean heart follow thee, the only true God. Thro’.

Epistle

Lectio Epistolae beati Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios.

Fratres: Obsecro vos ego vinctus in Domino, ut digne ambuletis vocatione, qua vocati estis, cum omni humilitate et mansuetudine, cum patientia, supportantes invicem in caritate, solliciti servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis. Unum corpus, et unus spiritus, sicut vocati estis in una spe vocationis vestrae. Unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma. Unus Deus, et Pater omnium, qui est super omnes, et per omnia, et in omnibus nobis. Qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ¹I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, ²With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity. ³Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴One body and one Spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism. ⁶One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.

Eph. 4:1–6. The Latin adds Fratres and the final doxology; these are absent from the canonical English above.

Gradual

Beata gens, cuius est Dominus Deus eorum: populus, quem elegit Dominus in hereditatem sibi.

V. Verbo Domini caeli firmati sunt: et spiritu oris eius omnis virtus eorum.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance. ⁶By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth:

Ps. 32:12, 6 (33), in the chant's order.

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia. V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam, et clamor meus ad te perveniat. Alleluia.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ²Hear, O Lord, my prayer: and let my cry come to thee.

Ps. 101:2 (102:1). The biblical verse does not supply the Alleluia refrain.

Gospel

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum.

In illo tempore: Accesserunt ad Iesum pharisaei: et interrogavit eum unus ex eis legis doctor, tentans eum: Magister, quod est mandatum magnum in lege? Ait illi Iesus: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et in tota anima tua, et in tota mente tua. Hoc est maximum et primum mandatum. Secundum autem simile est huic: Diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum. In his duobus mandatis universa lex pendet, et prophetae. Congregatis autem pharisaeis, interrogavit eos Iesus, dicens: Quid vobis videtur de Christo? cuius filius est? Dicunt ei: David. Ait illis: Quomodo ergo David in spiritu vocat eum Dominum, dicens: Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum? Si ergo David vocat eum Dominum, quomodo filius eius est? Et nemo poterat ei respondere verbum: neque ausus fuit quisquam ex illa die eum amplius interrogare.

Credo.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ³⁴But the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, came together: ³⁵And one of them, a doctor of the law, asking him, tempting him: ³⁶Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. ³⁸This is the greatest and the first commandment. ³⁹And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. ⁴¹And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²Saying: What think you of Christ? whose son is he? They say to him: David's. ⁴³He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: ⁴⁴The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool? ⁴⁵If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? ⁴⁶And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Matt. 22:34–46. Canonical verse 34 supplies the Sadducee setting; the Missal replaces the opening. The appointed Gospel includes the full Son-of-David dialogue. Credo is the Missal's following cue.

Offertory

Oravi Deum meum ego Daniel, dicens: Exaudi, Domine, preces servi tui: illumina faciem tuam super sanctuarium tuum: et propitius intende populum istum, super quem invocatum est nomen tuum, Deus.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ¹⁷Now therefore, O our God, hear the supplication of thy servant, and his prayers: and shew thy face upon thy sanctuary which is desolate, for thy own sake. ¹⁸Incline, O my God, thy ear, and hear: open thy eyes, and see our desolation, and the city upon which thy name is called: for it is not for our justifications that we present our prayers before thy face, but for the multitude of thy tender mercies. ¹⁹O Lord, hear: O Lord, be appeased: hearken and do: delay not for thy own sake, O my God: because thy name is invoked upon thy city, and upon thy people.

Dan. 9:17–19 supplies context. The Latin chant introduces Daniel and rearranges selected petitions; the continuous English passage is not an English liturgical Offertory.

Secret

Maiestatem tuam, Domine, suppliciter deprecamur: ut haec sancta, quae gerimus, et a praeteritis nos delictis exuant, et futuris. Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, Filium tuum: Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate.

Praefatio de Sma Trinitate.

Cummiskey 1861. We humbly beseech thy Majesty, O Lord, that the sacred mysteries we celebrate may cleanse us from all past offences, and from those we may hereafter be guilty of. Thro’.

The Trinity Preface is appointed; its full text is not among the proper texts given here. Cummiskey’s phrase on future offences can sound like advance forgiveness (see the Secret’s commentary).

Communion

Vovete et reddite Domino Deo vestro, omnes, qui in circuitu eius offertis munera: terribili, et ei qui aufert spiritum principum: terribili apud omnes reges terrae.

Douay–Rheims canonical study text. ¹²Vow ye, and pay to the Lord your God: all you that are round about him bring presents. To him that is terrible, ¹³Even to him who taketh away the spirit of princes: to the terrible with the kings of the earth.

Ps. 75:12–13 (76:11–12).

Postcommunion

Sanctificationibus tuis, omnipotens Deus, et vitia nostra curentur, et remedia nobis aeterna proveniant. Per Dominum nostrum.

Cummiskey 1861. May our vices be cured, O Almighty God! and an eternal remedy procured for us by these sacred mysteries. Thro’.

The words and actions of the Mass

Introit: justice acknowledged, mercy requested

The antiphon combines two verses of Psalm 118 that occur in the reverse order in the complete psalm. First comes acknowledgment of God’s righteousness and upright judgment, then the request that he deal with his servant according to mercy. The verse adds the blessedness of those who walk in the Lord’s law. The singer does not bargain away judgment to obtain mercy. He appeals to the just God as a servant who needs to be taught and sustained in the life God’s law describes.

The complete psalm holds promises and petitions together: devotion to God's commandments continually becomes a request for understanding, direction, and life. Augustine reads the petition at verse 124 accordingly. God's mercy makes the servant righteous; it does not reward a righteousness established without God. At verse 137, however, Augustine leaves the justice of divine judgment intact. The grief of the sinner acknowledges that judgment rather than accusing the judge. These are two aspects of conversion: the truth about wrong and the help by which a person turns from it.²

Bellarmino makes the requested teaching practical. At Psalm 118:124, God teaches by giving love as well as knowledge: a mind that can state a command is not thereby a heart that delights in fulfilling it. The Introit thus opens a question that reaches the Gospel. One may identify the greatest command and still need to be changed by the Lord who commands it.³

Collect: an undivided allegiance

The Collect asks for two connected gifts: to avoid diabolical contagion and to follow God alone with a pure mind. Its plural subject is God's people. Purity here serves an allegiance shared by persons whose lives can be corrupted; the prayer does not say that belonging to the people has already made them immune. The prayer seeks freedom to follow, not merely distance from an external danger. Its first word, *Da*, makes the whole movement a gift sought from the Lord.

Thomas's account of Ephesians 4 illuminates the social reach of this purity. Pride, anger, impatience, and disordered zeal work against peace. A mind divided by those impulses can defend religious positions while injuring the people it professes to serve. The Collect's request therefore has consequences for speech, correction, and endurance. Thomas is expounding the Epistle, not this prayer; his analysis gives concrete moral content to its plea for a purified following of God.⁴

Epistle: a calling made visible in conduct

Ephesians 4:1–6 begins with the apostle as a prisoner in the Lord. His appeal is that the hearers walk worthily of their calling, and its first specifications are humility, meekness, patience, and bearing with one another in charity. Unity has to be kept with care. The passage then names the realities already shared: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. The sequence binds conduct to gift. Christians do not manufacture the one Lord by agreeing with each other; their agreement in charity should express the calling they have received.

Chrysostom dwells on the image of a bond. Paul's chains lead to the bond of peace, which joins persons without cramping the freedom to serve. When the strong are joined to the weak, strength supports weakness rather than excluding it. Humility must also reach tone of voice and conduct toward enemies; it fails if it is offered to a favored few while others receive contempt. His interpretation gives Paul's large claims a bodily scale. A community's unity can be damaged by ordinary impatience well before it is challenged by a formal division.⁵

The chapter continues with different gifts and ministries, then truthfulness, work that allows sharing with the needy, speech that builds others up, and forgiveness. The appointed six verses are therefore not an appeal for everyone to have the same task or temperament. Their common foundation supports a differentiated body. Chrysostom's homily 11 explicitly separates gifts common to salvation from unequal

²Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*, Ps. 118, English paragraphs 123 and 136 in NPNF1, vol. 8 (under the modern heading Psalm 119); compare paragraphs 34–36. These are this English edition's paragraph numbers.

³Robert Bellarmine, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. John O'Sullivan (1866), Ps. 118, commentary on v. 124.

⁴Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam ad Ephesios*, ch. 4, lect. 1; *In omnes S. Pauli Apostoli epistolas commentaria*, vol. 2 (Leodii: Dessain, 1857), pp. 312–315.

⁵John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, hom. 9, exposition of Eph. 4:1–3, NPNF1, vol. 13.

gifts for service. What is given to one for the building of others is neither a private trophy nor a reason for another to despair.⁶

Gradual: a people that receives its existence

Psalm 32 praises the Lord whose word establishes the heavens, whose counsel stands, and whose mercy sustains those who fear him. Its chosen people is blessed because the Lord is its God and has chosen it as his inheritance. The chant places election before creation's Word and breath. Its two verses identify the people's blessedness and the power on which created reality depends. The larger psalm's warning against trust in armies and horses makes that dependence more pointed: visible strength does not secure salvation.

Bellarmino begins with the heavens as God's creation and explains Word and Spirit through inseparable Trinitarian action. Augustine gives the heavens a spiritual identification: the righteous are made firm by the Word, and their faith is strengthened by the Spirit. His reading rests the stability of holy persons on divine action rather than on their own strength. These explanations work at different levels. The created heavens remain the psalm's object of praise; Augustine's spiritual heavens show the same dependence in the life of God's people.⁷

Alleluia: the cry of affliction

The Alleluia takes the opening petition of Psalm 101. The complete psalm moves from the loneliness and frailty of an afflicted person to the restoration of Sion and the gathering of peoples to serve the Lord. The short chant gives the assembly that voice of need before the Gospel. Praise and supplication coexist: the refrain acclaims God while the verse asks to be heard.

Augustine asks who can speak the psalm's poverty. Christ assumed poverty for us, and his body includes penitent members whose sorrow can be heard in the one voice of Christ and the Church. Personal sin belongs to the members, not to their sinless Head. With this distinction the afflicted Christian can pray within Christ's body, though not every sentence describes Jesus' personal experience in the same way. Bellarmine, attending to the opening petition, emphasizes that even effective prayer needs grace. The cry is already a work of the mercy it seeks.⁸

Gospel: the law of love and David's Lord

Matthew 22 places this exchange after disputes about tribute and resurrection. A lawyer tests Jesus by asking which command is great in the law. Jesus answers with love of God in the whole heart, soul, and mind, and adds love of neighbor as oneself. The two commands sustain the law and the prophets. The second is like the first without becoming identical to it: God is loved as God, and the neighbor is loved as a fellow person whose good cannot be detached from that highest love.

Chrysostom reasons that the commands entail each other. Love of God takes form in obedience, and obedience includes care for the neighbor; hatred cannot coexist peacefully with a claim to fulfill the first command. Augustine develops the direction of love: the whole self is ordered toward God, and the neighbor is loved in relation to that same good. His account includes every human being, even an enemy, and recognizes Christ himself as neighbor through his mercy toward us. The neighbor is never a useful instrument of the believer's advancement.⁹

⁶Eph. 4:7–16, 25–32; Chrysostom, *Ephesians*, hom. 11, exposition of Eph. 4:7 and the ministries that follow.

⁷Ps. 32:1–22; Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, first exposition, paragraphs 6 and 12; Bellarmine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, commentary on vv. 6 and 12.

⁸Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 101, paragraphs 1–3; Bellarmine, *Psalms*, Ps. 101, commentary on opening v. 1, corresponding to the Missal's Ps. 101:2.

⁹Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, hom. 71, opening exposition, NPNF1, vol. 10; Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I.22.20–21 and I.30.31–33, NPNF1, vol. 2.

The lawyer's motive receives more than one explanation. Chrysostom, comparing Mark, says the answer improved him. Augustine allows either such improvement or an initial testing undertaken with caution rather than malice. Neither Father diagnoses the inward state of every hearer. Matthew describes a test; Christ's response gives the testing person the truth he needs.¹⁰

Jesus then becomes the questioner. He asks whose son the Christ is and receives the answer "David's." Psalm 109:1 supplies the difficulty: David calls him Lord and speaks of his seat at God's right hand. Chrysostom insists that Jesus does not deny Davidic descent. He exposes the inadequacy of treating the Christ as merely human. David's Lord is also David's son. The Gospel ends without the opponents answering, and with further testing silenced. The commandment cannot be detached from this revelation of its teacher: the Lord claims a whole-hearted love whose meaning he himself discloses.

Offertory: mercy for a named people

The Offertory is a liturgical adaptation of Daniel 9:17–19, not a continuous extract. It introduces Daniel by name and joins the requests for hearing, the light of God's face upon the sanctuary, and gracious attention to the people bearing his name. In the full chapter Daniel confesses the community's failure, acknowledges God's justice, appeals to mercy rather than human righteousness, and seeks restoration. Its desolate sanctuary makes the petition concrete. Sin has consequences for a people's worship and common life; mercy is sought for that wounded whole.

Jerome explains the request concerning the sanctuary as an appeal that God's promised restoration take effect. He treats the language of God's ear and eyes as bodily language for divine attention. At verse 20 he offers two accounts of Daniel's confession: Daniel speaks as one of the people, or humbly joins himself to a sinful people without himself having committed the sin in question. These possibilities differ in personal culpability while agreeing in solidarity. Intercession neither claims that all are equally guilty nor allows the righteous to become indifferent to others' need.¹¹

Secret: past wounds and future danger

The Secret addresses divine majesty in supplication and asks that the holy things being enacted free the people from offenses past and future. Cumiskey's historical English can sound as though later sins were forgiven in advance. Thomas's account of sacramental preservation draws the distinction. The Eucharist strengthens spiritual life by union with Christ and resists hostile powers through Christ's Passion. Its protection does not remove human freedom or the possibility of later sin. The petition concerns healing and preservation, not permission to act against the grace received.¹²

The phrase describing what "we enact" joins prayer to the present holy action. The people ask that participation reach their history and their future conduct. Sin is not merely an obstacle left outside the church door. It is a wound brought to divine mercy, with the desire that the action now celebrated strengthen a different manner of life.

¹⁰Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum*, II.73.141–142, NPNF1, vol. 6; Chrysostom, *Matthew*, hom. 71.

¹¹Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielelem*, book II, on Dan. 9:17,18,20; Latin in Migne, PL 25, retained transcription, paragraph containing vv. 13–21.

¹²Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 79, a. 6, corpus and ad 1; English Dominican translation in the Gutenberg Tertia electronic edition.

Communion: gifts before the sovereign Lord

Psalm 75 celebrates the judgment of God, before whom military power fails and the meek receive salvation. Its close commands vows and their payment, then gathers gift-bearers around the Lord who takes away the spirit of princes. The Communion retains both invitation and terror. The worshipper receives in the presence of one whose judgment cannot be managed by status or religious display.

Augustine distinguishes common fidelity—faith, hope, and godly living—from particular vowed commitments. He also insists that fulfillment depends on God's help. The command to pay does not make human strength self-sufficient. His next paragraph reads those around the Lord as persons who recognize truth as common and refuse to turn it into the property of a faction. Bellarmine's exposition stresses the concrete power of God over rulers' lives; Augustine applies the humbled spirit of princes to pride and turns rule inward, toward governance of one's own body. The sovereign judgment has public and personal force.¹³

Postcommunion: a cure with an eternal end

The last prayer asks that sacred mysteries cure vices and procure an eternal remedy. Its realism is striking: reception is followed by a request for healing, not a declaration that moral struggle has disappeared. Thomas explains the Eucharist through spiritual nourishment—sustaining, increasing, restoring, and delighting the life of grace—and through the Passion of the Christ present in it. He then directs its fruit toward the perfect peace and unity of glory. The prayer thus names both the present wound and the final good. A change of conduct matters because love is being healed for communion that lasts.¹⁴

God heals the heart that he commands to love

A whole heart is more than a heart stirred by a strong religious feeling. In the Gospel it names the undivided direction of a person's love, reaching thought, desire, and action. Augustine explains the command as leaving no part of the self outside its relation to God. Even love of oneself finds its proper order there. A person who loves himself as though he were his own final good misunderstands what is good for him; love becomes rightly ordered when it seeks the God in whom its good is found. The neighbor belongs within that ordering, because the good sought for oneself is also to be sought for another.¹⁵

That account exposes a difficulty. A hearer may recognize the order of love, approve it, and still discover reluctance when an actual neighbor makes a claim. The Gospel's scope exceeds the ease of liking pleasant people or enjoying worship when untroubled. The appointed prayers answer this difficulty, and the command loses nothing. The Collect asks God to free the people from corruption and give a pure following; the Secret asks the holy action to reach past offenses and future dangers; the Postcommunion asks for the cure of vices. What is demanded in the Gospel is sought as healing throughout the Mass.

Mercy teaches more than the correct answer

Augustine reads the Introit's mercy verse as a confession of dependence. The psalmist does not ask to be treated according to his own righteousness. He asks God to teach the righteousness by which God makes persons righteous. The same psalm is full of promised obedience, so its petitions cannot mean that obedience is unnecessary. Rather, the willing servant continually receives the light and strength by which he serves. Augustine's next paragraph insists that understanding must continue to be received: a former illumination does not render the present person independent of the source of light.¹⁶

¹³Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraphs 11–13; Bellarmine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, commentary on vv. 11–12 (Vulgate vv. 12–13).

¹⁴Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, aa. 1–2, corpus.

¹⁵Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I.22.20–21.

¹⁶Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 118, English paragraphs 123–124; compare 34–36.

Bellarmino draws out the difference between knowledge alone and practical love. Teaching at verse 124 includes the conviction and affection that make observance desirable. This is especially searching beside the lawyer's question. One can know that love is the greatest command and use that knowledge to gain superiority over someone else. Then the correct answer has not yet become the life it describes. God's teaching reaches further than the acquisition of a sentence: it makes that sentence a rule for the speaker's own conduct.¹⁷

In the Introit's first words mercy is no evasion. God is just, and his judgment is right. To ask for mercy is therefore to relinquish the attempt to make one's wrong right by argument. The servant's need can be admitted without despair because the judge is addressed as the giver of mercy. The accompanying verse's blessed walkers show the desired outcome. The worshipper is not praying to remain indefinitely at the point of failure; he asks to join a way of life that can be walked.

The Collect carries that movement into allegiance. A pure mind follows God alone because competing masters corrupt its direction. This does not divide human life into sacred occasions that belong to God and ordinary occasions in which another rule applies. The Gospel names the whole self; Paul's virtues name its ordinary conduct. A desire to appear devout can coexist with impatient treatment of another person, but the texts do not allow that coexistence to remain comfortable.

The neighbor tests the heart's unity

Chrysostom connects the love commands by their consequences. To love God is to attend to what God commands; the command includes the neighbor. Conversely, hatred harms the very love of God a person may profess. The neighbor is therefore not an optional second project after a sufficient amount of religious attention has been given to God. The second command reveals whether the first is being lived.¹⁸

Augustine's treatment of neighbor intensifies the test by including the enemy. An individual's worthiness of affection does not determine whether he is human or whether mercy may be owed to him. Augustine also brings Christ within the name of neighbor through the mercy Christ has shown us. The two directions belong together: Christ gives mercy, and a recipient of that mercy is called to act mercifully. Loving the neighbor in God does not turn the neighbor into a tool. It seeks his true good, including the good that selfish indulgence could deny him.¹⁹

The Epistle shows how that love becomes visible when goodwill is tested. Humility gives up the need to be superior; meekness restrains the impulse to hurt; patience bears a burden over time; charity keeps endurance directed toward the other's good. None requires delight in another person's faults. Thomas says that bearing with someone includes correction at a suitable time. The difference between patient charity and negligent agreement is the good one seeks for the other. Correction loses that purpose when it becomes revenge; patience loses it when it becomes indifference.²⁰

Healing thus becomes observable, though it is not a performance. A concrete fruit might be refusing the humiliating remark one is capable of making, telling a needed truth without contempt, or continuing a responsibility after enthusiasm has waned. These acts practise Paul's virtues, and Paul's virtues promise no immediate emotional ease. A person can act in charity while still needing healing in desire. The prayer and the practice belong to the same conversion.

¹⁷Bellarmino, *Psalms*, Ps. 118, commentary on v. 124.

¹⁸Chrysostom, *Matthew*, hom. 71, exposition of Matt. 22:37–40.

¹⁹Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I.30.31–33.

²⁰Thomas, *Super Ephesios*, ch. 4, lect. 1, Dessain vol. 2, pp. 312–315.

The Lord who gives what he asks

The second half of the Gospel shows the first to be more than advice from an impressive moral teacher. Chrysostom reads Jesus' question as a disclosure of divinity: Davidic descent is affirmed, while the reduction of Christ to a merely human descendant is overturned by David's own confession. The Lord is not absent while the hearer tries to fulfill his command. The one to whom love is owed enters the question of how love is given.²¹

The Gradual supplies a fitting image of dependence. The heavens stand by the Word, and their strength comes through the Spirit. Augustine identifies spiritual heavens in the righteous, established by that same Word rather than by themselves. The image does not make human obedience unreal. Firmness is real precisely as a received firmness. The blessed people of the first verse likewise exists by election before it can offer itself as an achievement.²²

The Alleluia allows a needy heart to speak instead of waiting until its need has vanished. Bellarmine's account of grace-enabled prayer means that the first honest cry already turns toward the physician. At the Offertory that cry expands to the sanctuary and the people marked by God's name. Daniel's plea resists a narrow project of private improvement. The heart being healed belongs to a people whose wounds it must learn to carry in intercession. The clean mind of the Collect is thus compatible with grief over a desolate sanctuary: purity need not become distance from the afflicted.²³

Thomas locates the efficacy of the Eucharist in Christ and his Passion. Spiritual nourishment is not the power of an encouraging idea alone. The sacrament sustains and increases the life of grace because Christ is its source. That teaching illuminates the Secret's request concerning the holy action and the Postcommunion's language of cure. The mysteries do what the wounded person cannot achieve by merely condemning his own wound.²⁴

Yet preservation does not abolish freedom. Thomas explicitly allows the possibility of later sin. The Secret asks for no immunity from responsibility, and reception is no guarantee that no serious refusal will follow. The Communion's demand for vows to be paid gives the healed person a task, while its feared Lord denies him mastery over judgment. Augustine's account joins the command to God's enabling help: fidelity is required, and reliance on one's unaided strength will fail.²⁵

The four senses of healed charity

Literal.

The formulary joins distinct acts of speech: the psalmist's obedience and supplication, Paul's appeal to a called community, Jesus' commands and question, Daniel's intercession, and the Church's petitions for purification. The law requires love; the prayers ask for real help. Neither command nor need disappears when they are heard together.

Allegorical.

David's Son is David's Lord, and the divine Word strengthens his people through the Spirit. Christ meets the afflicted in his body and gives sacramental life through his Passion. The healing sought by the prayers reaches its Christian center in the Lord whose command the Gospel proclaims.

Moral.

The whole person learns to direct love toward God and to seek the neighbor's good, including an enemy's.

²¹Chrysostom, *Matthew*, hom. 71, exposition of Matt. 22:41–46.

²²Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, first exposition, paragraphs 6 and 12.

²³Bellarmino, *Psalms*, Ps. 101, opening commentary; Dan. 9:17–19; Jerome, *Daniel*, II, on 9:17–18.

²⁴Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 1, corpus.

²⁵Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 6, corpus and ad 1; Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraph 11.

Humility, patient endurance, fitting correction, and fulfilled commitments give that love its daily form. Asking for grace and acting with grace are one movement, rather than competing explanations of obedience.

Anagogical.

The cure of vice tends toward the eternal remedy. Thomas's account of perfect peace and unity in glory gives the Postcommunion its full horizon: love's healing is completed in life with God and the saints. Judgment remains serious because the heart's direction matters; hope remains possible because the remedy is God's gift.²⁶

The one Lord gathers a people who bear one another

The Mass gives the assembly more than a collection of individual religious tasks. The Collect addresses the needs of God's people, Paul names one body, the Gradual sings election, Daniel intercedes for a sanctuary and a people, and the final prayers ask for healing in the plural. Even the singular voice of the Introit stands beside the blessed walkers of God's law. A person approaches God as a servant whose need is personal, yet whose good belongs within a common calling.

That calling confronts a familiar difficulty. People may prefer a community made only of those whose habits, abilities, and opinions are convenient for them. Paul's appeal begins elsewhere. The one body already owes its life to one Spirit and has been called to one hope. Patience is necessary because the members are not chosen by each other's convenience. The common gift becomes the ground of the demanding work of bearing with one another.

Unity received before it is maintained

Chrysostom's exposition of Ephesians 4:3 gives the Spirit an active role in joining those divided by age, wealth, sex, and manner of life. Spiritual kinship is stronger than those differences. His image of fire joining separate pieces into one blaze gives unity warmth and movement: charity binds because persons are being drawn into a shared life. But discord can obstruct that life. The diligence Paul commands is not needless effort after a gift has been given; it is the care appropriate to a gift that persons can injure.²⁷

The next homily widens the body across place and time. The faithful now living, those who have lived, and those who will live belong to the one body; Chrysostom includes those who pleased God before Christ's coming through their relation to him. The congregation is therefore not the whole measure of the Church. Its present quarrels are set within a communion that exceeds its local memory. No member can make the body equivalent to the people he happens to recognize.²⁸

Chrysostom also offers several ways to understand the one spirit, including the received Spirit and the concord or zeal of those joined together. His explanations are related, not interchangeable definitions. The divine giver is thus distinct from the common disposition of his people, and a group's intense shared enthusiasm does not by itself prove that its purpose is holy.

Thomas makes the difference explicit in his account of spiritual unity. People can unite in evil; the unity sought by the apostle is ordered to a good end. Pride, anger, impatience, and misplaced zeal damage it, while charity seeks correction at the fitting time. Thus peace is neither the silence of people afraid to speak nor cooperation in something wrong. It is common life under a good that all are called to receive.²⁹

²⁶Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 2, corpus.

²⁷Chrysostom, *Ephesians*, hom. 9, exposition of Eph. 4:3.

²⁸Chrysostom, *Ephesians*, hom. 10, opening exposition of Eph. 4:4–5.

²⁹Thomas, *Super Ephesios*, ch. 4, lect. 1, Dessain vol. 2, pp. 312–315.

One people under one Lord

Thomas compares the Church's unity to that of a city: one ruler, one law, common signs, and a common end. The apostle's Lord, faith, baptism, and Father supply the corresponding order. Faith can name what is believed as well as the habit of believing; baptism is a common sacramental sign whose validity does not depend on a minister's personal holiness. A person's confidence in belonging therefore rests on more than admiration for a particular leader. The shared gifts have an objective source beyond the qualities of the people who administer or receive them.³⁰

The Gospel identifies that ruler more fully. David's son does not stand only within an earthly genealogy; David himself calls him Lord. Chrysostom's argument leaves the descent intact while opening the hearer to Christ's divine dignity. The Church's one Lord therefore exceeds every teacher, officeholder, and circle of admirers. The community cannot possess him as a badge distinguishing its members from people it despises. His first command requires whole-hearted love of God, and its like requires love of the neighbor. Lordship governs the use of religious knowledge as well as the content of that knowledge.³¹

The Gradual strengthens the claim that the people is received. Augustine understands the blessed nation as belonging to the heavenly city, chosen by God's gift rather than constituting itself by a superior claim. The Lord's possession of it means his care for it. Bellarmine directs its faith, hope, and charity toward the final vision of God. Election is therefore a source of dependence and hope, not a mandate for a modern state's self-exaltation. The psalm's creation praise also places every human society beneath the God whose Word establishes the heavens.³²

The Collect's request for a pure following belongs here. Allegiance to God alone frees common life from the competing claims of vanity, domination, and faction. The opening servant of the Introit can confess God's just judgment without claiming exemption for his own group. The people that asks for mercy stands under the same law of love it announces to others. Its unity is strengthened by truthful confession, because self-defense at another's expense keeps division alive.

A common voice that includes the afflicted

The Alleluia's singular cry can sound small beside Paul's great list of common gifts. Augustine joins them through the relation of Head and members. Christ took our poverty, and the poor and penitent belong to his body. Consequently the voice of one sufferer can be heard within Christ's common voice without losing its actual suffering. The distress of one generation and then another reaches the same Head. He does not have to commit each member's sin in order to bear the member in his body.³³

This account changes the practical meaning of praying together. The confident member cannot decide that the afflicted member's cry is an interruption of the community's praise. The Alleluia itself holds praise and petition together. Nor does the afflicted person have to turn his need into a general statement before he may belong. The one body can speak in the first person because its members' needs are carried within a common life. Solidarity here is deeper than sympathetic observation from outside.

Daniel's Offertory gives that common voice a named object: the sanctuary and the people over whom God's name has been invoked. His prayer is neither merely a private crisis nor an accusation directed at everyone else. Jerome's two accounts of Daniel's confession preserve the difference between personal guilt and humble identification with the guilty. Both oppose the fantasy that a person's holiness would make intercession unnecessary. One can seek mercy for a community without asserting an equal share in every wrong committed within it.³⁴

³⁰Thomas, *Super Ephesios*, ch. 4, lect. 2, Dessain vol. 2, pp. 315–317.

³¹Chrysostom, *Matthew*, hom. 71, exposition of Matt. 22:37–46.

³²Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, first exposition, paragraph 12; Bellarmine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, commentary on vv. 6 and 12.

³³Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 101, paragraphs 1–3.

³⁴Jerome, *Daniel*, II, on Dan. 9:17–20; the chant adapts Dan. 9:17–19.

The Secret and Postcommunion continue this plural prayer. The holy action is asked to free us from offenses; the mysteries are asked to cure our vices. A member cannot receive the common good while treating the other's need for healing as evidence that the other does not belong. Paul's forbearance becomes sacramentally searching: the assembly asks together for the cure that each member needs in a different way.

Common truth and different gifts

The Communion gathers gift-bearers around the Lord. Augustine asks what it means to stand around a center that is common to all. Truth is not someone's private possession, to be used to draw hearers into a faction. Those who recognize its common source offer in humility. Augustine's image does not make all opinions equally true. It concerns the ownership a proud person falsely claims over truth and the people whom truth should serve.³⁵

The next verse humbles princes. Augustine reads their spirit as pride and turns the demand for rule toward governance of one's own body. Bellarmine retains the concrete subjection of kings' lives to God. Neither local influence nor earthly sovereignty is the final measure of worth. The community's center belongs to the Lord, who judges its most powerful members as surely as its weakest.

Within that common subjection, different ministries remain real. Chrysostom argues that baptism, salvation through faith, the Spirit, and the Father are shared, while distinct gifts are given for the building of the Church. A larger responsibility therefore adds work and accountability; it is not evidence that another member has received a lesser kind of salvation. Envy mistakes a ministry for a private advantage, and arrogance mistakes a gift for self-created superiority. Both misunderstand why the gift was given.³⁶

The four senses of a gathered people

Literal.

Israel's elected people, the afflicted psalmist, Daniel's community, Paul's addressees, and Jesus' interlocutors have distinct settings. Their words include communal calling, real supplication, creation praise, and concrete commands. The liturgical assembly receives these different voices; their historical speakers are not identical.

Allegorical.

The Church is the body of David's Lord, established through Word and Spirit, praying with its Head, and nourished by his mysteries. The heavenly city supplies the common destination toward which election and calling are ordered.

Moral.

Shared baptism and hope require humble service across differences. Correction serves charity, patience refuses contempt, and knowledge is offered as a common good. Different tasks remain, but neither envy nor self-exaltation may define the relations among those who perform them.

Anagogical.

The one hope tends toward a shared inheritance and perfected peace. Bellarmine's movement from faith, hope, and charity to vision, and Thomas's account of sacramental unity perfected in glory, give the gathered people an end beyond every temporary alliance or ruler. The Postcommunion asks that present healing bear precisely that lasting fruit.³⁷

³⁵ Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraph 12.

³⁶ Chrysostom, *Ephesians*, hom. 11, exposition of Eph. 4:7–12.

³⁷ Bellarmine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, commentary on v. 12; Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 2, corpus.

Mercy makes worship fruitful in a faithful life

The person who enters confessing God's justice is later commanded to pay what has been vowed. Between those moments the Mass asks for purification, proclaims love and lordship, intercedes for a people, and enacts mysteries that heal. This movement places religious speech under the claim of fidelity. What is acknowledged, requested, and offered must reach conduct. At the same time, the final prayer asks for a remedy: a faithful life is the fruit of mercy, never a substitute offered in order to make mercy unnecessary.

Augustine's exposition of Psalm 75 supplies a demanding account of that movement. Confession establishes peace with God when the sinner ceases defending what God condemns. The renewed person who remembers the mercy already received does not treat renewal as a forgotten event. Vows then require payment, and payment requires God's help. Jerome's reading of Daniel adds intercession and perseverance in prayer; Thomas explains why the holy action has power to nourish the life it calls forth. Together they show how worship can become continuing fidelity.³⁸

Confession releases the defense of self

To acknowledge God's judgment is not merely to accept a general proposition that wrongdoing exists. Augustine's account of confession brings it home to the speaker. Peace with God begins when the person agrees with God's judgment against his own sin. This is not hatred of the person God created. It is refusal to identify that person so completely with his wrong that every criticism of the wrong must be treated as an attack on his existence. Mercy can then be sought as rescue rather than as vindication.³⁹

The Introit puts that truth at the threshold. The servant acknowledges justice and then asks for mercy. He neither conceals the fault nor imagines that his fault gives him a claim to hopelessness. The Collect takes the next step by asking for release from corruption and a pure following of God alone. Repentance changes allegiance. Religious observance cannot become a protected compartment in which one praises God while leaving a cherished injustice untouched.

Paul's prisoner voice tests the sincerity of that change. Worthy walking takes the unglamorous forms of humility, meekness, patience, and mutual endurance. A person may prefer a conspicuous religious offering to the quiet task of bearing another's inconvenience. The Epistle makes the latter part of the former's truth. A gift laid before God does not authorize contempt for the person beside the giver. The shared Lord and baptism name a relation that persists beyond the moment of offering.

The Gradual places the giver within a prior gift. The people is chosen, the heavens are established by the Word, and their strength is the Spirit's work. Praise therefore begins in reception. Bellarmine explains that work through inseparable Trinitarian action; the worshipper's offering therefore does not initiate divine generosity. Augustine's spiritual heavens likewise stand through the Word. The offering returns a received life to its source.⁴⁰

The Lord addresses the giver

The Alleluia asks that prayer reach God before the Gospel is heard. That order gives listening a posture: the hearer is a suppliant before becoming an examiner of the words spoken. In the Gospel the lawyer asks the right kind of question about the law, yet the answer reaches the person who asks it. Chrysostom's account of his improvement offers the possibility that questioning can become conversion. Augustine's alternative account permits an initial testing that was cautious rather than malicious. Either way, truth is offered for reception rather than merely for victory in discussion.⁴¹

³⁸Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraphs 3 and 9–11; Jerome, *Daniel*, II, on 9:17–21; Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, aa. 1–2,6.

³⁹Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraph 3.

⁴⁰Bellarmino, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, commentary on vv. 6 and 12; Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 32, first exposition, paragraph 6.

⁴¹Chrysostom, *Matthew*, hom. 71; Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum*, II.73.141–142.

Jesus' own question deepens that reception. Knowing which command is greatest does not yet exhaust the hearer's encounter with him. David's son is also David's Lord. The person who speaks about God is now addressed by the one to whom allegiance is owed. Chrysostom's Christological reasoning preserves both the human descent and the divine dignity: the problem lies in making the descent the entire answer. An offering made to this Lord cannot be a payment that leaves the giver otherwise self-owned.

The two love commands give that belonging its moral form. Worship is directed to God with the whole self, and the neighbor is loved as oneself. A strong act of devotion that leaves the neighbor deliberately excluded contradicts the command it honors. Conversely, service of the neighbor does not make the identity of the Lord irrelevant. The Gospel holds both together: who he is and what he asks determine the fidelity of the giver.

Daniel brings the people's wound before God

The Offertory turns from listening to intercession. Daniel's prayer asks for divine attention to sanctuary and people. The name of God upon them becomes the ground of appeal, while the full chapter rejects reliance on their own righteousness. The worshipper's approach thus includes a common wound. The act of offering is not an escape into a private account of innocence.

Jerome explains the sanctuary petition through promised restoration. Daniel seeks the fulfillment of God's word in the actual desolation before him. Divine faithfulness makes prayer possible, but it does not make prayer superfluous. The promise becomes the reason to ask. Jerome's treatment of God's eyes and ears similarly brings the language to its effect: the request is that God attend to the people's need, not that a bodily deficiency in God be repaired.⁴²

At verse 20 Jerome offers the alternatives of personal confession as one of the people and humble identification with their guilt. Both make Daniel's solidarity active. He speaks for the people before God; he does not merely deliver a verdict upon them from a safe distance. At verse 21 Jerome interprets the mention of evening sacrifice through prayer persevering from morning to evening. The appeal continues; the holy person's attention is not exhausted by one eloquent sentence.⁴³

That endurance has a moral analogue in the Epistle. To carry another in prayer while refusing every cost of patient charity would divide intercession from the good it seeks. Asking mercy for someone with whom one must also speak truthfully, then seeking a fitting time and manner for that speech, is one concrete form of intercession joined to patient charity. Thomas's account of charitable correction allows both endurance and action. Prayer does not have to become an alternative to a necessary conversation, and the conversation does not have to become an exercise in punishment.⁴⁴

The holy action heals the one who offers

The Secret refuses to leave the meaning of offering at the level of sincere intention. It asks that the sacred things enacted free the people from offenses past and future. Thomas locates sacramental efficacy in Christ present and in his Passion, and explains its mode through nourishment. Food does more than remind a hungry person that eating would be desirable; it sustains life. So the sacramental action gives grace and strengthens the charity whose practice the Gospel commands.⁴⁵

The analogy also explains why preservation and subsequent freedom can coexist. Nourishment strengthens a living person without turning him into someone incapable of later harming himself. Thomas explicitly retains free will; the future-directed petition is therefore no advance absolution.

⁴²Jerome, *Daniel*, II, on Dan. 9:17–18.

⁴³Jerome, *Daniel*, II, on Dan. 9:20–21.

⁴⁴Thomas, *Super Ephesios*, ch. 4, lect. 1.

⁴⁵Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 1, corpus.

The faithful ask to be guarded and strengthened, and their later choices remain consequential. The holy action reaches the future by giving life to be lived, not by making future conduct irrelevant.⁴⁶

Augustine's discussion of remembrance in Psalm 75 gives continuity to that life. He relates baptismal renewal and the daily sacrificial remembrance of Christ to the need not to forget who has healed us. Repetition in worship can therefore sustain a real history of grace. It need not mean that an earlier gift was unreal, nor that gratitude may replace conversion. Remembering a mercy means allowing it to govern the life that follows.⁴⁷

Vows are paid in ordinary fidelity

At Communion the command to vow and pay brings speech to its test. Augustine distinguishes obligations common to Christians from particular vows freely undertaken. Ordinary fidelity is not reserved to people with a special religious commitment: refusal of hatred, pride, and dishonesty belongs to all. Particular commitments add their own demands, and the mere excellence of an undertaking does not excuse conduct that contradicts charity. His comparison of a humble married person and a proud consecrated virgin makes the point sharply: the higher profession does not make pride holy.⁴⁸

Augustine's distinction imposes no new private vow on every hearer. The present question may be how to honor an existing responsibility, speak honestly, carry out a promised service, or stop using another's fault as permission for one's own. A more dramatic promise can sometimes distract from the duty already at hand. Augustine's warning concerns both making and fulfilling commitments; his encouragement rests on the help of the Lord to whom the commitment is made.

Before the feared sovereign of the final chant, this fidelity is more than an agreeable self-image. Bellarmine reads God's power over rulers concretely; Augustine finds pride stripped of its false sovereignty and urges mastery over one's own bodily conduct. Gifts do not purchase exemption from judgment. Those around the Lord offer in humility because the truth and the Lord at their center are common, not possessions their influence can control.⁴⁹

The four senses of faithful offering

Literal.

Confession, supplication, commands, vows, and prayers for healing retain their distinct purposes. In the Mass's actual sequence they accompany an approach to God, hearing, intercession, a holy action, reception, and a request for its lasting fruit. Daniel's sanctuary and the psalm's divine judgment give the sequence more than a private emotional meaning.

Allegorical.

David's Lord is the saving Christ in whom the people approaches the Father. His Passion gives the mysteries their efficacy; his body carries the afflicted in a common voice. The Christian offering depends upon this prior divine gift.

Moral.

Worship bears fruit when confession becomes renunciation of self-justification, intercession becomes patient care, and promised fidelity becomes conduct. Particular vows retain their seriousness, while the common law of love remains binding on every state of life. Divine help enables the response rather than excusing its absence.

⁴⁶Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 6, corpus and ad 1.

⁴⁷Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraphs 9–10.

⁴⁸Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraph 11.

⁴⁹Bellarmino, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, commentary on vv. 11–12; Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps. 75, paragraphs 12–13.

Anagogical.

The Lord before whom princes lose their power grants a remedy whose end is eternal. Thomas directs present sacramental nourishment toward perfect peace with the saints. The Postcommunion's final request therefore reaches beyond a better week to the completion of a life in faithful communion with God.⁵⁰

One charity, three questions

The three readings agree that Christ's lordship gives love its object and measure, that grace enables obedience, and that the believer's good belongs within a people called to eternal life. Their differences concern where that common truth becomes most searching. The healing of the heart asks how a person who knows the command can become able to live it. The gathering of a people asks why those who receive the same gifts must bear one another across real differences. Faithful offering asks what becomes of prayer and reception when the worshipper returns to ordinary responsibilities.

The same proper consequently carries a different weight in each. The Introit exposes dependence on mercy, places a singular servant among blessed walkers, and begins the abandonment of self-defense. The Gospel heals the separation of love from obedience, places the body under its one Lord, and addresses the giver whose offering cannot reserve the rest of life. The Communion makes healing accountable, gathers humble gift-bearers around a common center, and demands that commitments be fulfilled. The Postcommunion joins all three: vices are cured in persons, the prayer is made together, and the desired fruit lasts beyond the action just celebrated.

The witnesses also differ in ways that enrich those questions. Bellarmine's created heavens and Augustine's spiritual heavens give different levels of meaning to the Gradual. Chrysostom's Spirit-given union and Thomas's ordered city emphasize vitality and structure. Jerome's alternatives concerning Daniel's confession preserve the difference between personal fault and representative solidarity. Bellarmine's Lord over mortal kings and Augustine's Lord over pride make judgment both public and inward. These are not rival accounts of three different Masses. They show how the one formulary reaches the heart, the common body, and the life offered through worship.

The last word belongs to the petition for an eternal remedy. The petition treats love's present work as neither impossible nor already finished. A people that asks to be healed can practice patient charity without pretending that its members have no wounds. A person who confesses the Lord can offer a faithful life without claiming that fidelity is self-created. The Mass commands, gives, judges, and heals within one approach to God.

Scriptural Date and Location

Each passage this Mass reads or sings from Scripture, once, in canonical order; beneath each, its traditional frame and the modern critical limit warranted by the stated sources. The Collect, Secret and Postcommunion are composed liturgical prayers and carry no biblical date. Alternatives and unresolved states remain explicit.

Proper	Citation	Location	Date
Gradual	Ps. 32:6, 12 (modern 33)	No place named in the appointed verses	Traditional attribution – disputed: David (reign in the usual chronology), B.C. 1055–1015. Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.

⁵⁰Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 79, a. 2, corpus.

Proper	Citation	Location	Date
The appointed verses join two of the psalm's movements: the blessedness of the people the Lord chose for his inheritance (v. 12) and the heavens established by his word and spirit (v. 6). The Douay–Rheims heading reads “A psalm for David”, an attribution without a named occasion or place of writing, first audience or stage in the attributed author's life. Corbett's “usual chronology” supplies David's regnal frame for that attribution, not the poem's composition date. The NABRE introduction supplies the broad limit shown for the Psalter, not a precise date for this poem, and denies that individual psalms can be dated with certainty.			
Communion	Ps. 75:12–13 (modern 76)	Judea and Sion, named earlier in the psalm as the place of God's dwelling and victory (vv. 2–3)	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
The superscription ascribes the psalm to Asaph, “a canticle to the Assyrians” (v. 1), without attaching a date or era. In the complete psalm God breaks the weapons of war in Sion and rises to judgment “to save all the meek of the earth” (vv. 4, 10); the appointed conclusion commands vows and their payment and gathers gift-bearers before the Lord who humbles the spirit of princes. Neither title nor verses fixes an occasion, first audience, stage in the attributed author's life or place of composition. The Date column therefore carries only the Psalter-wide modern limit; this individual psalm is not securely dated.			
Alleluia	Ps. 101:2 (modern 102)	Sion named in the psalm's turn from lament to hope (vv. 14, 17)	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
The superscription describes the poor man's anxious prayer and supplication before the Lord (v. 1): an afflicted speaker, no author, no traditional date, first audience or authorial life-stage. The appointed verse is the psalm's opening cry for a hearing; the complete poem moves from that frailty to the rebuilding of Sion and the gathering of peoples to serve the Lord. Sion is the object of the psalm's hope, not an established place of writing, and the general Psalter boundary does not date any particular restoration.			
Introit	Ps. 118:1, 124, 137 (modern 119)	No place named	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
An alphabetical psalm in praise of the law, with no named author and no traditional date or setting. The antiphon places the confession of God's just judgment before the petition for mercy (vv. 137, 124), reversing their order in the complete psalm, and the verse sung with it is the psalm's opening beatitude over those who walk in the law of the Lord (v. 1). No particular crisis, first audience or writing-place is established by the appointed verses, nor can an authorial life-stage be established where no author is named. The date shown is only the Psalter-wide modern limit; this individual psalm is not securely dated.			
Offertory	Dan. 9:17–19, adapted	Daniel at the court of Babylon, in the first year of Darius the Mede (9:1); prayer for the desolate sanctuary of Jerusalem (9:17)	Historical setting: “seventy years” (duration). Composition: B.C. 570–536.
Traditional attribution: the prophet Daniel, in the Exile, recording his own prayer (“I, Daniel”, 9:2) when he understood from Jeremias that the seventy years of desolation were ending. The 1908 <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> article that admits 570–536 B.C. as the book's date grounds the traditional position in details it says only “a resident in Babylon” could supply, written by Daniel, “owing to his position at the court of Babylon”, “for the comfort of the Jews of his time and of subsequent ages”. Gigot also reports the critical attribution to an unknown later author rather than Daniel; his account describes scholarship of 1908, not a fresh survey of present opinion, and it establishes no numerical modern critical date for that alternative. The “seventy years” carried in the Date column is the duration of the servitude within the prayer's setting (Jer. 25:11–12), not a composition date. The chant selects and rearranges Daniel's petitions; its liturgical form has its own history, distinct from the composition of the chapter.			
Gospel	Matt. 22:34–46	Written, in the received account, in Judea before Matthew's departure from Jerusalem, for the Jews who had believed; the encounter narrated in the Temple at Jerusalem (21:23)	Event – Narrated event date unresolved. 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. Composition (Catholic critical chronology, for comparison): The Greek Gospel of Matthew in the NABRE introduction, post-A.D. 70 date.
<i>Narrated event: the last of the Lord's controversies in the Temple (21:23–22:46), shortly before the Passion forecast at 26:1–2. No numerical narrated-event date for these verses is established here.</i>			

Proper	Citation	Location	Date
Traditional attribution: St Matthew the Apostle, whom the Missal’s heading names (<i>secundum Matthaeum</i>). The received frame comes from the early writers as the 1911 <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> article reports them: the ecclesiastical writers agree that Matthew wrote for the Jews, and Jerome summarizes the tradition that he published his Gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew tongue, chiefly for those among the Jews who had believed in Jesus. The Date column keeps the article’s disputed alternatives, which are not of equal standing. About A.D. 38–45 rests on early writers counting eight years (Eusebius in his Chronicle, Theophylact, Euthymius Zigabenus) or fifteen years (Nicephorus Callistus) from the Ascension. About A.D. 40–42 follows the tradition that the apostles separated twelve years after the Ascension, a tradition the article itself calls “admittedly not too reliable”. The years A.D. 40–45 report the article’s survey of Catholic critics of its own day, who in general favoured that range. About A.D. 60–68 is the conditional alternative that results if, following Eusebius, the definitive departure of the apostles is fixed later. About A.D. 64–67 rests on a text of Irenaeus—Matthew writing while Peter and Paul were evangelizing and founding the Church of Rome—whose difficulties of interpretation, the article says, prevent any positive conclusion. About A.D. 50 is Durand’s date in the 1912 article on the New Testament, given for the Aramaic original alone; he holds that nothing definite is known of when it was rendered into Greek. These alternatives concern composition, while the Temple locates the narrated controversy; no numerical date for that event is established here. A separately generated comparison records the NABRE’s post-A.D. 70 boundary for the Greek Gospel, probably at least a decade later. It supplies no precise endpoint and remains distinct from the default traditional alternatives.			
Epistle	Eph. 4:1–6	Paul, “a prisoner in the Lord” (4:1), writing in captivity; to the saints at Ephesus (1:1)	Composition – disputed: A.D. 58–63; A.D. 61.

Traditional attribution: St Paul, in one of the letters of his captivity. The 1909 *Catholic Encyclopedia* article assigns the captivity letters to the period A.D. 58–63 shown in the Date column, judging that they follow the Epistle to the Romans and precede the first persecution, and it leaves the place—Caesarea or Rome—“a much mooted question”, while remarking that the liberty and activity the letters display suit the Roman captivity better. The encyclopedia’s 1911 chronology of St Paul assigns Ephesians, with Philemon, Colossians and Philipians, the single year shown. The first hearers are the church addressed in the received text of 1:1, gentiles once “afar off” and now “made nigh” (2:11–18). The same 1909 article reports that most liberal critics since Schleiermacher have denied the letter to Paul, a position for which it gives no numerical date; no additional modern critical date is established here. It also holds the words “at Ephesus” in 1:1 to be no part of the primitive text and reads the letter as a circular to churches Paul had not visited, probably in Asia Minor. The address above is the received biblical text, not a settled identification of the original recipients.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

This study concerns the universal 1962 Roman Missal formulary for the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost on 20 September 2026. It includes all ten proper elements and identifies the Credo and Trinity Preface appointments; it does not reproduce the complete Ordinary, expanded prayer conclusions, or Preface. No particular local calendar has been specified. The dated French institutional Ordos corroborate the universal occurrence without supplying an unidentified parish’s local overlay.

The Latin is a normalized transcription of the Vatican 1962 typical edition, checked during research against its facsimile and compared with Pustet’s 1862 public-domain antecedent. Stress marks and typographical ligatures are normalized; the target’s wording and printed extent control. Cummiskey’s anonymous 1861 human English supplies the three orations, including its historical phrasing concerning future offenses. The scriptural English is the registered American 1899 Douay–Rheims canonical study text, not a complete English version of the adapted liturgical Latin. Its retained transcription was read; no new collation of the 1899 print is claimed. These inherited texts remain public domain under the recorded source dispositions; the complete modern facsimiles and website presentations are not relicensed by this work.

The biblical contexts examined are Matthew 22, Ephesians 4, Daniel 9, and Psalms 32, 75, 101, and 118, with Matthew 21:23 and 26:1–2 locating the Gospel scene. Psalm citations use the Missal’s numbering; common modern equivalents are given with the texts. The Date cells in *Scriptural Date and Location* are generated from research/chronology.toml, preserving alternatives and unresolved states. The admitted evidence establishes no numerical modern critical date for Daniel or Ephesians and no numerical narrated-event date for the Gospel. A separately attributed comparison gives the NABRE’s post-A.D. 70

boundary for the Greek Gospel, without a precise endpoint or any union with the default traditional alternatives. The reception is bounded to the exact loci cited below. Chrysostom and Augustine are principally read in historical English; the NPNF Psalms are abridged. Jerome's Latin and Bellarmine's historical English are retained transcriptions, not newly collated critical texts. Bellarmine's translator omitted philological discussion, variant readings, and original psalm prefaces. Their contributions here are paraphrases. Thomas's Ephesians commentary was researched in the retained 1857 Latin facsimile; the English *Summa* witness includes disclosed electronic-editor modifications.

The three whole-formulary readings are editorial syntheses grounded in these witnesses. No Father is credited with composing or interpreting this precise Sunday as a whole. Thomas's sacramental teaching illuminates the Secret and Postcommunion; no direct ancient exposition of their exact wording or that of the Collect was established in the bounded research. Catena-only attributions and the unverified additional leads listed in the research scope do not support this study. Biblical speakers retain their distinct settings, and personal sin is not attributed to Christ through the voice of his members.

The source research received an independent workflow review before authoring. This document is a study aid, not an official liturgical book, critical edition, or ecclesiastically approved commentary. Text verification, search limits, and exact source dependencies are recorded in `propers/verified.md` and `research/scope.md`; the interpretation evidence map is `research/interpretations.md`. Completed production and artifact reviews are recorded separately in `research/production-review.md`.

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2. *The Roman Missal Translated into the English Language for the Use of the Laity* (Philadelphia: Eugene Cummiskey, 1861), pp. 431–433, three orations for the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; facsimile, PDF pp. 440–442. Anonymous human translation; underlying historical text public domain.
3. *Douay–Rheims Bible*, American 1899 edition, registered eBible transcription: Matt. 21:23; 22; 26:1–2; Eph. 1:1; 2:11–18; 4; Dan. 9; Pss. 32,75,101,118. Exact appointed verses and canonical/liturgical distinctions accompany the texts above. Public-domain study English.
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5. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, hom. 9, exposition of Eph. 4:1–3; hom. 10, opening exposition of 4:4–5; hom. 11, exposition of common gifts and diverse ministries, NPNF1, vol. 13, retained CCEL text. Homily 9, 10, 11, comparison locators.
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7. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I.22.20–21 and I.30.31–33, NPNF1, vol. 2, retained CCEL English; book I comparison locator. *De consensu evangelistarum*, II.73.141–142, NPNF1, vol. 6, retained CCEL English; comparison locator. The latter witness's final Gospel-name discrepancy is not used to establish a harmonization.

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12. FSSP France, Ordo du mois, September 2026, entry for 20 September; ICRSP France, Ordo, entry for 20 September 2026. Entries checked during research on 17 September 2026; institutional corroboration of universal occurrence, not a specified local Ordo.
13. Chronology witnesses, retained New Advent article texts in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*: F. E. Gigot, “Book of Daniel”, vol. 4 (1908), “Authorship and date of composition”; P. Ladeuze, “Epistle to the Ephesians”, vol. 5 (1909), “To whom addressed”, “Date and place of composition” and “Authenticity”; F. Prat, “St. Paul”, vol. 11 (1911), “Chronology”, final table; E. Jacquier, “Gospel of St. Matthew”, vol. 10 (1911), “Destination” and “Date and place of composition”; A. Durand, “The New Testament”, vol. 14 (1912), “Origin”, paragraph on Matthew’s Aramaic original; John Corbett, “King David”, vol. 4 (1908), opening paragraph, the “usual chronology” of his reign.
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