

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

PC-S43-A

Textual unit	Text / citation
Introductory Rites	
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Cf. Ps. 67:6–7, 36; God gathers a household and strengthens the people</i>
Collect	<i>Protector in te sperantium; passing goods under God's direction, eternal goods not lost</i>
Liturgy of the Word	
First Reading	1 Kgs. 3:5, 7–12
Responsorial Psalm	Response Ps. 119:97a; vv. 57, 72, 76–77, 127–128, 129–130
Second Reading	Rom. 8:28–30
Gospel Acclamation	<i>Cf. Matt. 11:25</i>
Gospel	Long: Matt. 13:44–52; Short: Matt. 13:44–46
Liturgy of the Eucharist	
Prayer over Offerings	<i>Suscipe, quaesumus, Domine, munera; gifts from God's bounty, present life sanctified</i>
Communion Antiphon	A: Ps. 102:2; bless and remember; B: Matt. 5:7–8; mercy and purity of heart
Prayer after Communion	<i>Sumpsimus, Domine, divinum sacramentum; perpetual memorial of the Son's Passion, the gift of love advancing salvation</i>

Sense	Synthesis
Literal	Solomon asks for a discerning heart; the Psalm treasures God's instruction; Paul names divine purpose and conformity to the Son; Jesus compares the Kingdom to treasure, pearl, net, and a trained householder, with the final two images only in the long branch.
Allegorical	Christ is the Son to whose image the called are conformed and the revealer in whom the Kingdom is received; the Church is gathered, offered, nourished, and saved by grace, and in the long branch is instructed from Scripture's new and old treasures.
Moral	Ask for wisdom rather than advantage; value God's word beyond gain; choose the Kingdom joyfully; refuse fatalism and prosperity slogans; under the Communion alternatives, remember benefits or practice mercy and purity of heart.
Anagogical	Eternal goods, the final sorting of the long-form net, conformity to the firstborn Son, Communion B's promised vision, and salvation at work direct temporal choices toward communion with God.

Scriptural Date and Location

Canonical order governs. Each dossier first locates the text's formation and then, where distinct, its narrated event; inherited attribution and modern historical judgment are kept visible together.

Textual unit / alternative	Citation	Location	Date
First Reading	1 Kgs. 3:5, 7–12	Israel and Judah; final compilation place unknown	Final literary form commonly exilic
<i>Narrated event</i>	1 Kgs. 3:4–15	Gibeon, at the principal high place	Early reign of Solomon, conventionally c. 970 BC

Kings belongs to the Deuteronomistic History and addresses the divided kingdoms through disputed editorial stages; the final form is commonly placed in the exile. That literary horizon is distinct from the dream scene in which a young king confesses inadequacy before the people entrusted to him (First Kings introduction and 3, *NABRE*).

Entrance adaptation	<i>Cf.</i> Ps. 67:6–7, 36 (modern 68)	Israelite liturgical tradition; exact place and first audience unknown	Davidic superscription inherited; historical date unknown
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This complex processional hymn praises God as warrior, defender of the vulnerable, giver of a household, and source of strength. Its superscription belongs to the received text but does not securely date its composition; the Entrance adapts selected clauses rather than relocating the entire Psalm (Psalms introduction and Psalm 68, *NABRE*).

Communion A	Ps. 102:2 (modern 103)	Israel; exact composition place and first audience unknown	Davidic superscription inherited; historical date unknown
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The inherited superscription is not a recoverable event notice. The whole hymn summons the self to bless and remember, then unfolds divine mercy, healing, rescue, compassion, and creaturely frailty (Psalms introduction and Psalm 103, *NABRE*).

Responsorial Psalm	Ps. 119:57, 72, 76–77, 97a, 127–130	Israel's Torah and wisdom tradition; exact place unknown	Anonymous; date unknown
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The alphabetic meditation supplies no author, narrated event, or site. These separated stanzas name the Lord as portion, value instruction beyond wealth, ask covenant mercy, love the commands, and welcome the understanding their unfolding gives (Psalm 119, *NABRE*).

Communion B	Matt. 5:7–8	Greek Matthew; probably Syria, with Antioch plausible	Commonly c. AD 80–90
<i>Narrated event</i>	Matt. 5:1–12	Galilee; mountain site unrecorded	Public ministry, conventionally c. AD 28

Ancient tradition attributes the Gospel to the apostle Matthew; modern study commonly identifies an otherwise unknown Jewish Christian author writing for a mixed Jewish and Gentile community after AD 70. The final Greek Gospel's setting is distinct from the Galilean sermon it narrates (Matthew introduction and 5, *NABRE*).

Acclamation source	<i>Cf.</i> Matt. 11:25	Greek Matthew; probably Syria, with Antioch plausible	Commonly c. AD 80–90
<i>Narrated event</i>	Matt. 11:20–30	Galilee; exact place unrecorded	Public ministry, conventionally c. AD 28–29

The adaptation draws from Jesus' thanksgiving after judgment sayings concerning Galilean towns. The Gospel's traditional attribution and modern compositional judgment remain as above, while the narrated setting belongs to Jesus' ministry rather than the evangelist's later audience (Matthew introduction and 11, *NABRE*).

Gospel: long / short	Matt. 13:44–52 / 13:44–46	Greek Matthew; probably Syria, with Antioch plausible	Commonly c. AD 80–90
<i>Narrated event</i>	Matt. 13:36, 44–52	A house in the Sea-of-Galilee teaching region; town unrecorded	Galilean ministry, conventionally c. AD 28

The short branch proclaims treasure and pearl only. The long branch also proclaims the net, final sorting, the disciples' response, and the trained householder's new and old treasures. The Gospel's compositional audience must not be confused with the house and ministry region inside the narrative (Matthew introduction and 13, *NABRE*).

Second Reading	Rom. 8:28–30	Corinth in Achaia, to established house churches at Rome	c. AD 56–58
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Paul writes near the end of his eastern mission to a Roman community he did not found, comprising believers from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. These verses stand within groaning, Spirit-aided prayer, suffering, and inseparable divine love; the Lectionary reads them semi-continuously (Romans introduction and 8, *NABRE*).

The Propers: Themes and Movement

Wisdom learns what is worth choosing

This formulary does not reduce to one slogan. Its correlated strand joins Solomon's listening heart, the Psalm's valuation of divine instruction, and Jesus' treasure and pearl: wisdom learns what is worth choosing. Romans contributes a semi-continuous word about God's purpose amid suffering, not a hidden key to the parables. The proper chants and prayers gather the assembly, order passing goods, return received bounty, and ask that sacramental memory become saving love.

Hear, revalue, conform, return

- 1. Hear — Entrance; Collect; First Reading.** God gathers and strengthens a people; Solomon confesses inadequacy and asks for judgment that listens.
- 2. Revalue — Psalm; Gospel.** Instruction exceeds gold; treasure and pearl expose the Kingdom's incomparable worth and awaken joyful, decisive response.
- 3. Conform — Romans; Acclamation.** God's initiative meets a groaning people and directs them toward the Son; revelation remains gift rather than self-mastery.
- 4. Return — Offerings; Communion; final prayer.** Goods first received return to God; memory of divine benefits and of the Passion seeks fruit in mercy, purity, and salvation.

Read in four stages, the sequence keeps its ritual order in 1, 2, and 4, while 3 sets semi-continuous Romans apart. The long and short Gospels are alternatives, as are the two Communion Antiphons.

1. Gathered strength becomes a listening heart (*Entrance; Collect; First Reading*)

The Entrance does not begin with an isolated chooser. Its adapted Psalm first pictures God defending the vulnerable, making a dwelling for the forsaken, and giving strength to a people. The Collect then identifies the source of any strength or holiness and asks God to protect, govern, and guide. Choice is therefore ecclesial and dependent before it is heroic: the assembly is gathered into a household and taught to receive direction.

Solomon gives this dependence political and moral weight. He asks for a heart capable of hearing so that judgment can distinguish good from evil for an entrusted people. Benedict XVI's Angelus for this same Sunday (2011) reads that heart as a conscience attentive to truth and therefore answerable to justice and peace, especially in government. Ambrose earlier links hearing to just judgment. Neither witness makes office self-authenticating: the king's later failures keep received wisdom under the continuing need for fidelity, counsel, and correction.

The Collect's biblical grammar. Ferraro's study in *Notitiae* traces its titles of protector, ruler, and guide through the Psalms, John 15, and the Exodus tradition. He reads the prayer's passing and enduring goods in an eschatological horizon without cancelling human work or creation's value. Ferraro's article is a signed study in the Dicastery's journal, not a magisterial decree. The Collect orders created goods through communion with Christ; it does not declare them unreal or unholy.

2. Instruction schools desire for the Kingdom (*Responsorial Psalm; Gospel branches*)

The Responsorial Psalm makes the prayer for wisdom habitual. The Lord is portion; instruction is valued above silver and gold; mercy is requested; commands are loved; the unfolding word gives understanding. Ambrose's *Exposition of Psalm 118* lingers over both comparisons: the Lord as portion displaces rival mastery, and the law above gold describes a willingness to prefer God's word to gain. His Christian preaching receives an Israelite Torah psalm; it does not turn Torah into a failed foil for grace.

Treasure and pearl convert valuation into action. The first figure unexpectedly finds; the merchant deliberately searches. Both recognize a worth that reorganizes every other possession, while only the treasure scene explicitly names joy. Francis's Angelus for this Sunday (2014) preserves that difference between sudden discovery and long search and describes encounter with Christ as giving new meaning even to toil and suffering. Chrysostom likewise stresses gain rather than reluctant loss. They reorder created goods without pricing grace or condemning creation.

3. Providence gives suffering a filial form (Second Reading; Acclamation)

Romans enters from the Sunday cycle’s semi-continuous course. Its immediate context is creation’s groaning, believers’ weakness, and the Spirit’s aid in prayer; its continuation names affliction, persecution, hunger, peril, and death. The promised good is therefore neither uninterrupted comfort nor an assurance that faithful people will prosper. Paul defines the movement by conformity to the Son, the firstborn within a communion of siblings.

Chrysostom reads adversity as material God can turn toward good without calling adversity good in itself. Aquinas similarly distinguishes an evil suffered from the virtues and final good that providence can draw through it. The Council’s *Gaudium et spes* 22 places Christian suffering within conformity to the incarnate and risen Christ, where life and death receive paschal meaning. The *Catechism* (nn. 311–312) supplies the necessary moral boundary: God is not the cause of moral evil, and the good drawn from evil never converts evil into good.

Hope within suffering

The reading gives hope that divine love can work within suffering toward communion with Christ. It does not tell a harmed person that abuse or injustice was secretly good, require passivity, or displace safety, lament, medicine, reporting, restitution, or justice. The acclamation adds teachable humility from Matthew 11; it is a distinct adaptation, not Paul’s definition of predestination.

4. Received gifts return as memory, mercy, and memorial (Prayer over Offerings; Communion A/B; Prayer after Communion)

The Prayer over the Offerings completes the parables’ value movement without turning sacrifice into purchase. The gifts presented already come from divine bounty; the petition asks that the mysteries sanctify present conduct. What is possessed is received, offered, and transformed. This prayer belongs to the common Week XVII formulary, which Years A, B, and C share.

Communion A commands the soul to bless and remember divine benefits. Communion B instead joins mercy and purity of heart, keeping their distinct promises of mercy and vision. The final prayer gathers either path into the perpetual memorial of the Son’s Passion and asks that the gift of love advance salvation. Memory is therefore active gratitude, and reception seeks moral and ecclesial fruit; the two alternatives are exclusive, and neither bears that fruit apart from grace-enabled response.

Dimension	Appointed anchors	Movement	Limit
Discernment	Entrance; Collect; 1 Kgs. 3	Gathered strength becomes a hearing heart ordered toward justice.	Office and intelligence do not guarantee fidelity.
Value and joy	Ps. 119; Matt. 13	Instruction, treasure, and pearl disclose a good exceeding gold.	Grace is not bought; creation is not despised.
Filial purpose	Rom. 8; acclamation	Providence works amid groaning toward conformity to the Son.	Evil remains evil; no fatalism or prosperity promise.
Sacramental fruit	Offerings; Communion A/B; final prayer	Received bounty returns as offering, gratitude or mercy, and memorial.	Branches are exclusive; fruit is not mechanical.

The Propers: Detailed Commentary

Solomon asks to hear before he judges (*First Reading; Collect*)

The lectionary preserves Solomon’s confession of youth and inexperience, the people entrusted to him, the request for a discerning heart, and God’s approval. Verse 6, which the cut omits, is not part of the proclaimed text. The request is public in consequence even though received in a dream: wisdom is sought for just governance, not private distinction.

Ambrose cites the requested prudent heart in *On the Duties of the Clergy* II.8, 44–49 as a heart able to hear and judge justly, then develops the later judgment between two mothers. He illuminates the union of prudence and justice; the appointed pericope itself, not Ambrose, supplies the contrast with riches and longevity.

Benedict XVI’s Angelus on this exact Sunday in 2011 moves from Solomon’s hearing heart to conscience: listening to truth enables the distinction of good and evil and places governing responsibility under justice and peace. Conscience is Benedict’s word for that heart, not an alternate translation of 1 Kings; his address sharpens the reading’s public consequence without reducing biblical heart-language to one later technical term.

The broader canonical story tempers the scene. The king who asks well can later accumulate wealth, wives, and divided allegiance. Wisdom received is not fidelity guaranteed. The Collect’s repeated dependence—God as protector, ruler, and guide—keeps discernment from becoming self-certifying expertise.

Giuseppe Ferraro’s biblical commentary on this Collect in *Notitiae* traces protector to Vulgate Psalm 17, dependence to the vine discourse of John 15, ruler and guide to biblical governance and Exodus, and the passing/enduring contrast to 1 Corinthians 7. Ferraro explicitly refuses the inference that detachment cancels work within the world: created undertakings receive durable value in communion with Christ. The article is a signed study in the Dicastery’s journal, not a magisterial ruling.

Peter Comestor’s medieval *Historia scholastica* retells the dream while preserving the distinction between Solomon’s request and God’s additional gifts. It witnesses to the episode’s long pedagogical life but is not an independent source for the ancient event. Later historical and devotional commentators likewise admire the request while the canonical sequel controls idealization.

Movement	Meaning	Limit
Confess inadequacy	Office does not create the wisdom it requires.	Humility does not excuse refusal to learn or decide.
Ask for a hearing heart	Discernment serves justice for a concrete people.	It is not intuition exempt from evidence, counsel, or law.
Receive gift	God approves a request ordered beyond advantage.	Gift does not make later choices infallible.

Gathered strength and gifts returned (*Entrance; Prayer over Offerings*)

The Entrance adapts clauses from Psalm 67 rather than proclaiming a continuous span. The whole processional hymn praises God’s coming, defense of the vulnerable, gift of a household, and strength for the people. Augustine treats divine presence, gathering, and strength as gifts rather than human possession (*Exposition on Psalm 68*, 6, 8, 40); Bellarmine later receives the same movement within ecclesial praise.

The Prayer over the Offerings asks God to receive gifts that first come from divine bounty and to make the mysteries sanctify present conduct. The ritual movement is reception, return, and transformation: the assembly does not purchase grace with its own property. This shared Week XVII prayer may illuminate the Gospel’s relinquishment. There is no Missal Offertory antiphon, and the actual music used remains unknown.

Instruction, treasure, and pearl (*Responsorial Psalm; Gospel branches*)

Psalm 119 repeatedly turns value into prayer: the Lord is the singer's portion; instruction exceeds gold and silver; commands are loved above fine gold; their unfolding gives light. The refrain's love of the law is not abstract admiration but a sustained appetite formed by meditation, mercy, and obedience.

Ambrose's *Exposition of Psalm 118* VIII, 2–4 asks how rare it is to say that the Lord is one's portion without reserving mastery to wealth or appetite. In IX, 21–22 he treats the law above gold and silver as preference proved in action and relates the words of God's mouth to words of eternal life. Augustine keeps the appointed loci's portion, love of law, covenant mercy, wonder, and understanding together; Bellarmine likewise connects valuation and the request for light. None of them expounds the later selection as a unit; its separated stanzas answer to verse 97a, and the Psalm's Israelite Torah meditation remains the literal context for their Christian reading.

The two parables intensify valuation. One person encounters treasure and acts in joy; the merchant searches and recognizes one pearl of great price. Chrysostom's *Homily 47 on Matthew* emphasizes the Kingdom's hidden worth and the single-minded response it evokes. The differences remain: discovery and search, field and market, treasure and pearl are not one psychology.

Francis's Angelus for this exact Sunday in 2014 also preserves the difference between unexpected discovery and sustained search, then reads encounter with Christ as reorienting an entire life and giving meaning even to toil, suffering, and death. His 2020 Angelus holds grace and human willingness together: the Kingdom is not achieved by price, yet grace calls for an active welcome. These are contemporary homilies on this Sunday's readings.

Joy does not purchase the Kingdom. In both images the incomparable discovery reorganizes possession; the price imagery cannot make salvation a commodity. Nor can "selling all" be abstracted into irresponsible disposal of dependents' goods or contempt for material creation. The Psalm itself values instruction through a material comparison without calling gold evil.

The long branch: net, judgment, and a scribe with both treasures (*long Gospel*)

Only the long form proceeds to the net gathering every kind, the shore-side sorting, the angels' final separation, and the householder's new and old treasure. The net gives eschatological seriousness to value: present gathering does not erase final judgment. It is not a mandate for disciples to conduct the angelic sorting now.

Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* X treats the trained scribe and the relation of new and old learning. Augustine's *Sermon 24* likewise insists that the instructed teacher brings both forth rather than discarding one.

Aquinas's own *Super Matthaem* XIII, lect. 4 arranges the closing parables as dimensions of Gospel teaching: abundance in the treasure, beauty or charity in the pearl, and universal reach in the net, whose shore-side sorting qualifies the present gathering. At verse 52 he turns Jesus' question about understanding toward teaching office: the instructed scribe draws new and old from sacred doctrine's treasury and, as Christ's notary, writes the commands first in his own heart and then in others. Aquinas's *Catena aurea* places Chrysostom's fearful net after treasure and pearl so that hearers do not rely on preaching or bare faith without a corresponding life. These are medieval syntheses; the *Catena* compiles patristic extracts, and Aquinas is their compiler, not their author. Matthew's own image calls both stores treasure.

The short form ends before all of this. A celebration choosing Matthew 13:44–46 does not proclaim net, angels, furnace, understanding, or the scribe. These belong to the long form, an authorized alternative, and preaching claims must follow the branch actually proclaimed.

Called toward the Son amid groaning (*Second Reading*)

Romans 8:28 is often detached from its argumentative world. Immediately before, creation and believers groan and the Spirit aids weak prayer; immediately after, Paul names affliction, persecution, hunger, peril, and the love from which none can separate the baptized. The "all things" claim is therefore consolation within suffering, not denial of it.

Chrysostom's *Homily 15 on Romans* interprets God's action as turning even adversity toward the good of those who love him. He does not call the adversity good in itself. The chain of foreknowledge, predestination, call, justification, and glorification is centered on conformity to the Son, who is firstborn among many brothers and sisters. It supports

confidence in divine initiative, not fatalism about individual events or a prosperity guarantee.

Aquinas first distinguishes the good of the whole from the good of the person who suffers, then reads Romans 8:28 as the Spirit's particular ordering for those who love God: affliction can exercise humility, patience, wisdom, and benevolence without becoming good in itself. At verses 29–30 he treats conformity to the Son as the end or effect of predestination, not a foreseen merit that causes it, and unfolds the chain from eternal preparation into calling and justification (*Super Romanos* VIII, lect. 6).

The Second Vatican Council places this conformity in a paschal horizon: Christ makes the human vocation clear, and the person patterned on the dying Christ advances toward resurrection in hope (*Gaudium et spes*, 22). The *Catechism* supplies an equally important boundary at nn. 311–312: creaturely freedom can produce moral evil, God is not its direct or indirect cause, and the good providence draws from evil never makes evil itself good. Together these sources define both the confidence and the refusal required by Romans 8.

Haydock's later compilation makes complementary moves. At verse 28, "purpose" is God's will rather than a human plan. At verse 29, conformity includes suffering with Christ, following his teaching, and imitating his life; the notes join special grace to free cooperation and warn against prying into secret election. At verse 30 they name faith, hope, love, and penance in justification and do not infer final perseverance from every justified state. Divine initiative therefore does not erase agency or authorize assigning a living person a certain final status.

The reading is semi-continuous. Its "purpose" belongs to Paul's argument, not to Solomon's administrative vocation or the merchant's search. Read side by side, the readings can ask what sort of good governs discernment, but Matthew's treasure does not decode Paul's predestination.

Trust that does not bless evil

The reading does not tell a harmed person that abuse, catastrophe, or injustice was secretly good, nor that protest or protection resists Providence. Christian hope says God can work within what creatures do wickedly and conform sufferers to Christ without blessing evil. Immediate safety, lament, justice, medicine, and communal aid remain compatible with trust.

Revelation received by the humble (*Acclamation*)

The acclamation adapts rather than reproduces Jesus' thanksgiving in Matthew 11:25. Chrysostom's *Homily 38* says the contrast does not condemn genuine learning; it exposes self-sufficient resistance and praises those who receive revelation without pretension. Aquinas likewise distinguishes the proud posture from teachable littleness. That humility fits Solomon's request but is not identical with royal discernment, and Matthew 11 belongs to a different scene from Matthew 13.

Two Communion paths and one final petition (*Communion A; Communion B; Prayer after Communion*)

Communion A takes one verse from Psalm 102 under the Latin numbering: the soul commands itself to bless and not forget divine benefits. Augustine's exposition of Psalm 103 (English page numbering) makes the command self-address and unfolds memory through mercy, healing, rescue, compassion, and creaturely frailty. Bellarmine likewise treats the opening summons as deliberate gratitude. At Communion that canonical memory resists entitlement and amnesia, but neither commentary proves an original Eucharistic referent.

Communion B joins two adjacent beatitudes without making them one merit formula. Augustine distinguishes merciful action and its promised mercy from the purified heart and its promised vision; Chrysostom emphasizes generosity and an interior freedom from corrupt desire, while Aquinas later keeps the promised ends distinct. None comments on this later antiphon. At the Eucharist the pair places reception under a demanding horizon: the communicant asks to become merciful and undivided, not merely to possess a sacred object.

The alternatives are exclusive, and either can illuminate the final prayer's confession of the perpetual memorial of the Son's Passion and its petition that divine love advance salvation. Its fruit is gift calling for lived response, neither mechanical nor self-achieved.

The Appointed Texts: Rights-Limited Study Sheet

Text boundary

The controlling U.S. Missal and Lectionary English is protected and is not reproduced. The complete ordered inventory below gives lawful Latin incipits for the orations and antiphons, public-domain scriptural loci, and concise descriptions sufficient to identify every branch; the descriptions are a study aid, not a substitute for the approved liturgical books.

Textual unit	Text / citation
Introductory Rites	
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Cf.</i> Ps. 67:6–7, 36 (modern 68); <i>Deus in loco sancto suo</i> ; God gives the forsaken a dwelling and strengthens his people.
Collect	<i>Protector in te sperantium, Deus</i> ; God is asked to protect, govern, and guide his people so that passing goods are used without losing those that endure.
Liturgy of the Word	
First Reading	1 Kgs. 3:5, 7–12; Solomon asks for a listening heart capable of discerning good and evil for the people entrusted to him.
Responsorial Psalm	Ps. 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–130, with response from v. 97a; divine instruction is preferred to wealth and asked to give understanding.
Second Reading	Rom. 8:28–30; within suffering and Spirit-aided prayer, divine purpose tends toward conformity to the Son.
Gospel Acclamation	<i>Cf.</i> Matt. 11:25; the Father reveals the mysteries of the Kingdom to the little ones.
Gospel	Long branch: Matt. 13:44–52, treasure, pearl, net, sorting, and the instructed householder. Short branch: Matt. 13:44–46, treasure and pearl only.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	
Prayer over Offerings	<i>Suscipe, quaesumus, Domine, munera</i> ; gifts received from divine bounty are returned, with a petition that the mysteries sanctify present life.
Communion Antiphon A	Ps. 102:2 (modern 103); the soul blesses the Lord and refuses to forget his benefits.
Communion Antiphon B	Matt. 5:7–8; the merciful and the clean of heart are named with their distinct promises.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Sumpsimus, Domine, divinum sacramentum</i> ; the sacrament is confessed as the perpetual memorial of the Son's Passion and its saving fruit is sought.

Source-Grounded Synthesis Across the Propers

A liturgy of received judgment

Across the appointed sequence, judgment begins as a gift before it becomes an act. God gathers and strengthens a household in the Entrance; the Collect asks to be governed and guided; Solomon confesses that office has not supplied the heart his office requires. Ambrose and Benedict XVI receive that heart as listening ordered toward justice, while Solomon's later history prevents the gift from becoming a claim of personal infallibility. The Psalm then makes discernment habitual by ranking divine instruction above wealth and asking that the unfolding word give understanding. The texts, and Ambrose's and Benedict XVI's readings of them, hold dependence, hearing, valuation, and action together.

Worth disclosed in different modes

The Lectionary officially correlates the First Reading and Gospel, but their forms remain different. Solomon chooses while asking in darkness; the finder and merchant choose after worth has been disclosed. One refuses royal advantages and receives wisdom gratuitously; the others sell all they possess. Chrysostom's emphasis on gain and Francis's distinction between sudden finding and sustained searching protect the parables from becoming celebrations of privation. Psalm 119 supplies the assembly's answer: divine instruction is not one commodity among others. None of these texts prices grace, condemns created goods, or releases a hearer from duties owed to others.

Providence without the moral laundering of evil

Romans remains a semi-continuous strand. Its immediate frame is creation's groaning, weakness in prayer, suffering, and the inseparability of divine love. Chrysostom and Aquinas explain how providence can bring good through adversity without naming adversity good in itself; *Gaudium et spes* 22 locates conformity within Christ's paschal mystery; the *Catechism* expressly denies that God causes moral evil. The Sunday therefore supports hope amid suffering but not fatalism, prosperity teaching, passivity before abuse, or the displacement of safety, medicine, reporting, restitution, and justice.

The branch-sensitive eucharistic conclusion

The offerings prayer returns gifts already received from divine bounty, so the Eucharistic movement is not a purchase parallel to the merchant's. At Communion the actual celebration follows one of two paths: remembered benefits from Psalm 102, or mercy and purity of heart from Matthew 5. The final prayer can gather either path because it names the sacrament as the perpetual memorial of the Passion and asks that divine love advance salvation. Taken whole, the sequence is therefore received gift becoming discerning, grateful, merciful life. The long Gospel adds final sorting and the householder's new and old treasures; the short Gospel does not, and the whole differs with the form proclaimed.

Movement	Primary anchors	Reception	Limit
Gathered dependence	Entrance; Collect; 1 Kgs. 3	Ambrose; Benedict XVI; Ferraro	Gifted wisdom remains answerable to truth, counsel, law, and fidelity.
Reordered worth	Ps. 119; Matt. 13	Ambrose; Chrysostom; Francis	Grace is not bought and creation is not despised.
Filial providence	Rom. 8; Matt. 11 acclamation	Chrysostom; Aquinas; Vatican II	Evil remains evil; protection and justice remain duties.
Memorial bearing fruit	Offerings; Communion A/B; final prayer	Augustine; Bellarmine; beatitude reception	Alternatives are exclusive and sacramental fruit is not mechanical.

The Propers: Notable and Quotable

- **Matthew 13:45–46, both Gospel branches** — Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Hester's language of a pearl "of great price" redirects the Gospel image toward the child understood as her costly and only treasure amid Puritan shame and exclusion. The chapter marks the purchase logic; the novel's moral world is Hawthorne's own, not an interpretation of Matthew.
- **Matthew 13:45–46, both Gospel branches** — *The Pearl of Great Price*. Franklin D. Richards's 1851 compilation and its later institutional reception turn the Gospel phrase into the title of a scriptural anthology. An official study manual explains the title dependence. The dependence is one of title, and it settles nothing about the collection's religious claims.
- **Romans 8:28, independent Second Reading** — Margaret Murray Robertson, *Christie Redfern's Troubles* (1866). A chapter titled "The Secret of Peace" places the verse inside a dispute over trust, passivity, suffering, and who may rightly claim the promise. Narrative argument, not an isolated citation, supplies the transformation; the novel receives the promise and holds no doctrinal authority.

The Propers: Interpretive Possibilities

These exploratory proposals arose in an AI-assisted editorial process. They are attributed to none of the cited authorities and claim no historical compositional intent. Each states its anchors and limits.

A listening treasury. (*Coll.; First Reading; Responsorial Psalm; long Gospel*) Solomon's listening heart, the Psalm's word and understanding, and the long-form scribe's new and old treasures can be heard with the Collect's petition for guidance. Ambrose and Benedict XVI illuminate the listening heart, while Origen illuminates the scribe; no checked witness supplies the complete chain. The conjunction encourages teachability and responsible handing-on rather than information hoarding. The scribe is long-form only, and no compositional intent is claimed.

Value conversion is not purchase of grace. (*Coll.; Responsorial Psalm; Gosp.; Prayer over Offerings*) The Psalm values instruction above gold, the parables picture decisive disposal, the Collect distinguishes passing from lasting goods, and the offering prayer returns gifts first received. Ambrose, Chrysostom, Francis, and Ferraro illuminate individual movements; no checked source joins all four texts. Together they invite examination of money, time, attention, and allegiance as gifts ordered toward the Kingdom. Grace is not merchandise, possession is not intrinsically evil, and duties to others remain.

The authorized branches teach different endings. (*Gospel branches; First Reading*) The short form closes with value, joy, and disposal; the long form adds net, judgment, understanding, and the scribe, which can be heard beside Solomon's discernment. Patristic commentaries follow the Gospel sequence, while this contrast arises from the modern Lectionary's alternative endings. Attending to the enacted ending helps preacher and reader respect what was actually proclaimed. The short form is authorized and complete, not deficient; long-only material may never be smuggled into its literal account.

Providence transforms persons without making harm morally good. (*Second Reading; Prayer after Communion*) Romans' purpose and conformity to the Son can be heard with the perpetual memorial of the Passion and the prayer that divine love advance salvation. Chrysostom and Aquinas address Providence amid adversity; the liturgical prayer supplies the Passion memorial. Their conjunction supports resilient hope, truthful lament, and action shaped toward Christ rather than denial of injury. The proposal never sanctifies abuse or displaces safeguarding, treatment, reporting, restitution, or justice.

House, siblings, and net form an ecclesial test. (*Entrance; Second Reading; long Gospel; Communion B*) A united dwelling, the firstborn among many siblings, a net of every kind, and mercy with purity form a proposed sequence of gathering, formation, and judgment. Existing reception illuminates these images separately, and no checked witness joins all four. Its fruit is hospitality joined to integrity and humble accountability. The net and Communion B are unresolved branch-dependent anchors; final separation belongs to God.

Memory loosens possession. (*Communion A; Prayer over Offerings; Gosp.; Prayer after Communion*) The summons not to forget benefits, the return of received bounty, the Gospel's selling, and the Passion memorial suggest a movement from gratitude through stewardship toward self-gift. The checked witnesses illuminate the separate motions without establishing this single liturgical chain. Its fruit is grateful use rather than anxious possession or forgetful consumption. Communion A remains unresolved, and the proposal condemns neither property, contracts, saving, nor provision for dependents.

Appendix: Liturgical Resolution

Liturgical Instance

Field	Resolved liturgical instance
Celebration	Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Sunday rank; green.
Parent and formula	PC-S43; PC-S43-A; canonical Year A target; dated U.S. occurrence 2026-07-26.
Books	U.S. <i>Roman Missal, Third Edition</i> (implemented 2011), Week XVII owner; U.S. <i>Lectionary for Mass</i> , Second Typical Edition, Volume I, no. 109.
Calendar scope	General Roman Calendar as implemented for the United States; national scope.
Occurrence	The universal memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne is omitted without commemoration or transfer; unknown local proper solemnities remain outside this national resolution.
Form and ritual context	Postconciliar Roman Rite, ordinary Sunday Mass; Gloria and Creed; the permitted sprinkling rite may replace the Penitential Act.
Coverage and cycles	Week XVII owner with Year A Lectionary formula; Sunday Year A; following ferial week uses independent Weekday Cycle II.
Treated branches	Sprinkling; Entrance, Offertory, and Communion chant selections; long or short Gospel; compatible Preface and Eucharistic Prayer paths; and two Communion Antiphons.

Branch Resolution

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
sunday-sprinkling	Roman Missal Appendix II and GIRM 51	Ritual substitution	Replaces the Penitential Act and its Kyrie relation as the rite directs	Unresolved
entrance-chant-selection	GIRM 48 and U.S. norms	Locally selected	Entrance music and use of printed antiphon	Unresolved
long-gospel	Lectionary 109	Appointed alternative	Matt. 13:44–52, including net, sorting, and new-and-old scribe	Documented, not selected
short-gospel	Lectionary 109	Appointed alternative	Matt. 13:44–46; vv. 47–52 omitted from proclamation	Documented, not selected
compatible-preface-and-eucharistic-prayer	Missal Ordinary Time rubric 5 and GIRM 365–367	Permitted	Sunday-in-Ordinary-Time Preface unless the selected authorized non-IV Eucharistic Prayer carries its own Preface; no proper insert	Unresolved
eucharistic-prayer-iv-with-preface	Missal Ordinary Time rubric 5 and GIRM 365(d)	Permitted	Eucharistic Prayer IV with its inseparable Preface; excluded from a proper-Preface pairing; no proper insert	Unresolved
communion-antiphon-psalm-102	Week XVII formulary	Appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon A	Documented, not selected
communion-antiphon-matthew-5	Week XVII formulary	Appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon B	Documented, not selected
communion-chant-selection	GIRM 87 and U.S. norms	Locally selected	Communion music and use of either printed antiphon	Unresolved
offertory-chant-selection	GIRM 74 and approved local practice	Locally selected	Offertory music	Unresolved; no Missal Offertory exists

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

This study treats formula PC-S43-A in the U.S. implementation current through 2026-07-21; unknown local proper solemnities remain outside its national scope. Protected English liturgical texts are paraphrased, with only citations and short Latin incipits reproduced. Direct 2008 page images, named U.S. altar-book collation, work-specific rights review, liturgical-text permission, and independent guide review remain outstanding. Branch evidence and collation are recorded in `instance/manifest.md` and `propers/verified.md`; source judgments, reception searches, negative results, and editorial proposals remain in `research/scope.md`.

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Liturgical and scriptural sources

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- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *2026 Liturgical Calendar* and Lectionary 109 occurrence page, checked 2026-07-20; boundaries, alternatives, color, date, and occurrence only, under the source site’s terms.
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- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nn. 46–90 and 352–367; *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, nn. 65–69, 78–91, and 93–110; structural and relationship controls, cited bibliographically without a new Holy See link.
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Literary and institutional afterlives

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