

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year C

PC-S44-C

Textual unit	Text / citation
Introductory Rites	
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Cf. Ps. 67:6–7, 36 (modern 68); Deus in loco sancto suo.</i>
Collect	<i>Adesto, Domine, famulis tuis; divine help is sought for those who glory in God as creator and guide.</i>
Liturgy of the Word	
First Reading	Eccl. 1:2; 2:21–23.
Responsorial Psalm	Ps. 90:3–4, 5–6, 12–13, 14, 17; response from Ps. 95:8.
Second Reading	Col. 3:1–5, 9–11.
Gospel Acclamation	Matt. 5:3.
Gospel	Luke 12:13–21.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	
Prayer over Offerings	<i>Sanctifica, quaesumus, Domine Deus, haec munera.</i>
Communion Antiphon A	Wis. 16:20.
Communion Antiphon B	John 6:35.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Quos caelesti recreas munere.</i>

Sense	Synthesis
Literal	Toil cannot secure its fruit or its possessor; the rich man's stored abundance cannot preserve his life.
Allegorical	Those raised with Christ receive their life from him, not from accumulated goods; Communion directs desire toward the giver.
Moral	Numbered days, poverty of spirit, and the putting away of greed train a responsible freedom for stewardship and mercy.
Anagogical	The hidden life will appear with Christ in glory, while goods stored only for oneself end at death.

Scriptural Date and Location

Textual unit / alternative	Citation	Location	Date
First Reading	Eccl. 1:2; 2:21–23	Probably Judea, commonly Jerusalem; exact place unknown	Late Persian or early Hellenistic period, often placed in the third century BC
The book frames Qoheleth as a Davidic royal wisdom speaker. Its unnamed author, exact date, and place remain debated. The discontinuous selection joins the programmatic “vanity” saying to toil, anxiety, and property left to another; Hebrew <i>hevel</i> can suggest breath, transience, or enigma, not simple nihilism.			
Responsorial Psalm	Ps. 90:3–6, 12–14, 17; response Ps. 95:8	Israel/Judah; exact setting unknown	Undated; received heading associates Moses
The psalm moves from dust, passing time, and grass to numbered days, mercy, and the work of human hands. The heading is inherited attribution, not proof of individual Mosaic composition. The appointed response is drawn from another psalm.			
Second Reading	Col. 3:1–5, 9–11	Addressed to the church at Colossae in Asia Minor	Traditionally a Pauline imprisonment, about AD 60–62; authorship and circumstances debated
The canonical letter names Paul and Timothy and presents a prison setting. The appointed cut is discontinuous: it moves from life hidden with Christ and the mortification of greed to the old and new person and unity in Christ.			
Acclamation	Matt. 5:3	Galilee in the narrated discourse; composition setting uncertain	Canonical Greek Matthew commonly dated late first century
The beatitude supplies an authorized liturgical lens of poverty of spirit; it is not part of Luke’s narrated inheritance dispute.			
Gospel	Luke 12:13–21	Journey-to-Jerusalem teaching scene; exact narrated location unstated	Canonical Greek Luke commonly dated about AD 80–90; exact place unknown
An inheritance request prompts Jesus to refuse the requested adjudication and warn the crowd about greed through the rich-fool parable. The narrative does not establish either brother’s civil merits.			
Communion A	Wis. 16:20	Alexandrian Jewish setting commonly proposed	Late Hellenistic period, before the first century AD
The verse recalls divinely given food in Israel’s wilderness history; here it functions as a Missal antiphon, not a Lectionary reading.			
Communion B	John 6:35	Capernaum in the narrated discourse	Canonical John commonly placed late first century
Jesus identifies himself as the bread of life. This alternative remains distinct from the Wisdom antiphon.			

The Propers: Themes and Movement

1. The limit that exposes desire

Qoheleth and the Gospel are intentionally correlated: property passes to another, anxious labor cannot master the night, and stored abundance cannot answer death. Neither text condemns work or created goods. They expose the false claim that possession can make life self-secure.

2. Wisdom for numbered days

Psalm 90 turns mortality into petition. The assembly asks not for the abolition of work but for wisdom, mercy, and divine establishment of its hands' work. The inter-psalm response from Psalm 95 adds urgency to hear now.

3. A life reoriented in Christ

Colossians is a semi-continuous apostolic strand, read in course. Yet its language creates a strong textual overlay: greed is idolatry, the old person is put away, and life is hidden with Christ.

4. Gift, offering, and communion

The shared prayers situate human action inside divine creation, guidance, sanctification, and heavenly gift. Either Communion antiphon leads away from self-enclosed accumulation: one through divinely given food, the other through Christ the bread of life.

The movement is therefore not from labor to passivity, nor from property to its indiscriminate rejection. It is from the illusion of ownership as ultimate security to work and stewardship received under God.

Augustine reads the psalm's return to dust, numbered days, mercy, and work of hands as a Christian school of humility and hope. Chrysostom reads Colossians' "above" as life with Christ rather than spatial escapism, and presses the old/new-person contrast into transformed conduct. Augustine's Gospel sermon and Ambrose's treatment of withheld grain make greed socially visible, while their added reconstructions are their own, not Luke's.

The acclamation's poverty of spirit concerns humble dependence; it neither erases the material and economic force of the Gospel warning nor romanticizes involuntary poverty. Francis's 2019 Angelus makes the enduring pastoral application concrete in inheritance conflict, enslavement to possessions, sharing, and the legacy a life leaves.

Prudent provision, agriculture, saving, retirement planning, ownership, and care for dependents are not condemned as such. The controlling question is whether goods serve responsible love or become the imagined ground of life and the rival of God.

The Propers: Detailed Commentary

Qoheleth and the Psalm

The first reading's *hevel* is programmatic, but the selected case is precise: wisdom and skill do not let the laborer govern the successor, and anxiety reaches into the night. Luke will repeat both the transfer problem and the fatal night. Psalm 90 does not answer by declaring work useless. It moves from creaturely brevity to a wise heart and ends by asking God twice to establish human work. Augustine's exposition follows the psalm's received Christian horizon from dust and passing generations toward mercy and work established in God. His numerical and Christological readings are his own, not lexical definitions of the Hebrew psalm.

Colossians

Chrysostom's Homilies 7–8 directly cover the appointed chapter. He insists that seeking above is grounded in union with the risen Christ, not flight from embodied responsibility. The verbs also have a temporal shape: the faithful have put on the new person and are being renewed. Greed is not merely one social vice among others in the list; the letter calls it idolatry because desire can give created goods the allegiance due to God. The cut omits vv. 6–8, whose wrath, anger, malice, slander, and shameful speech belong to the immediate context even though they are not proclaimed.

Acclamation and Gospel

Luke first distinguishes two audiences: Jesus answers the petitioner by refusing the requested judicial role, then warns the crowd. Augustine's Sermon 57 (Benedictine 107), §§2–6, preserves that movement from disputed inheritance to greed, barns, and death. His statement that the petitioner had a good civil case is a homiletic reconstruction, not a fact supplied by Luke. Ambrose, *On Duties* III.6.41–44, relocates the larger barns into a famine-and-grain argument. Basil's *I Will Pull Down My Barns* makes the stored surplus a claim of the hungry and unclothed. Both press the parable powerfully into social argument; neither is the narrated circumstance of Luke's landowner. Francis's Angelus of 4 August 2019 returns to the scene's pastoral sequence: family division, wealth's false promise of security, enslavement to possessions, and the contrary practice of sharing.

The shared formulary in Year C

The Missal texts are those of the Week XVIII formulary, which Years A, B, and C share. In Year C the formulary's received sequence places these readings between an Entrance antiphon, Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, one of two Communion-antiphon alternatives, and the Prayer after Communion. Set beside the Gospel, the prayers' grammar of divine guidance, sanctification, gift, and aid resists the rich man's self-enclosed grammar of "my" goods and "my" barns. The formulary is appointed for the week in every year, not for Luke's parable alone. No evidence establishes which Communion antiphon or chant was enacted in a generic recurring Year C occurrence.

The Appointed Texts: Rights-Limited Study Sheet

Text boundary

The approved U.S. Lectionary and ICEL Missal English are protected and are not reproduced. The Douay–Rheims (Challoner) is used only as the public-domain study translation and is not the text proclaimed at Mass.

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21–23

The appointed cut is deliberately discontinuous. Its opening superlative announces *hevel*: something breath-like, transient, and resistant to being mastered. It then resumes inside Qoheleth’s experiment with toil. A worker may combine wisdom, knowledge, skill, and sleepless care, yet cannot control the character of the successor who receives the fruit. The point is not that work has no proximate good, but that achievement cannot become a permanent possession or answer the problem of death.

Psalms 90

Human life returns to dust and passes like grass. The image moves within a prayer addressed to the God who outlasts the generations: mortality becomes a request for a wise heart, returning mercy, morning gladness, and stability for the work of human hands. The last petition therefore prevents the first reading from being heard as a command to abandon work. The official occurrence page prints a response whose words derive from Ps. 95:8 while marking it “(1)” beneath Psalm 90; the response is not Ps. 90:1.

Colossians 3:1–5, 9–11

Those raised with Christ seek what is above because their life is hidden with Christ and will be manifested with him. The cut then names disordered desires, including greed as idolatry, before omitting vv. 6–8 and resuming with the putting away of falsehood. The old person is stripped off and the new is being renewed according to the creator’s image; ethnic, ritual, cultural, and social distinctions cannot become rival grounds of belonging where Christ is all and in all.

Matthew 5:3 and Luke 12:13–21

The acclamation blesses poverty of spirit and promises the Kingdom. In the Gospel, a request that Jesus arbitrate an inheritance dispute is neither decided nor endorsed. Jesus turns from the petitioner to the crowd, warns against every form of greed, and distinguishes life from abundance. The parable then exposes a prosperous man’s inward monologue: land, produce, barns, goods, and years all become possessives, but no neighbor or giver enters his reckoning. God’s address interrupts that closed account with death and the question of who will receive the stores. The final contrast is between treasuring for oneself and being rich toward God, not between negligence and planning.

Missal formulary

The Entrance, three orations, and two Communion-antiphon alternatives belong to the shared Week XVIII formulary. Their protected English is not reconstructed; their Latin incipits and scriptural loci, printed on page one, identify them.

Comparative Reception and Theological Dossier

The question beneath the readings

Year C does not ask whether work, property, planning, or enjoyment are evil. It asks what they can bear. Qoheleth tests labor against succession and death; the psalm asks for wisdom and established work; Luke tests abundance against the same night; Colossians locates life in the risen Christ. Those distinctions are the measure of every later reading.

Hevel: not nothingness, but the failure of mastery

The first reading joins Ecclesiastes 1:2 to 2:21–23. That discontinuity creates a thesis-and-case relation: the superlative *hevel* saying is followed by a worker who has used wisdom, knowledge, and skill yet must leave the result to someone who did not labor for it. Anxiety reaches into the night. The problem is not simply that the successor might be foolish; the worker cannot make achievement a permanent possession or control what happens after death.

“Vanity” has a long Christian afterlife, but it can mislead if heard only as moral disgust or ontological worthlessness. Breath, vapor, transience, and enigma better expose the limit at issue. Qoheleth elsewhere recognizes received enjoyment as gift; this cut therefore does not condemn work or created pleasure absolutely. It condemns their conscription as guarantees against mortality.

The discontinuous lection also creates a risk: the refrain can swallow the specific labor argument. The lection holds both: everything cannot be mastered, and here the concrete proof is work transferred beyond the worker’s control.

Psalm 90: numbering days without despising work

Psalm 90 answers neither with accumulation nor abandonment. Human beings return to dust; generations pass before God like a watch in the night; life resembles grass. Yet the prayer asks for a wise heart, returning mercy, morning satisfaction, gladness proportioned to affliction, divine favor, and twice for the work of human hands to be established.

Augustine receives the psalm within Christian hope, reading mortality, conversion, mercy, and established work through an ecclesial and Christological horizon. His numerical constructions are his own, not definitions of the psalm’s Hebrew. The most important liturgical effect is simpler: mortality does not make work worthless. It makes wisdom, mercy, and divine establishment necessary.

The official occurrence page marks the response “(1)” beneath Psalm 90, but the response words come from Psalm 95:8, not Psalm 90:1. Their imperative “today” intensifies the numbered-days petition. The printed U.S. Lectionary, a protected book, has not been collated at typography level, so whether it carries the same marker is unverified.

The rich fool: grammar, audience, and social absence

Luke distinguishes an inheritance petitioner, Jesus’ answer to him, the crowd addressed by the warning, and the parable’s landowner. Jesus neither decides nor narrates the merits of the brothers’ civil dispute. The crowd receives the warning because greed exceeds one lawsuit. The parable then makes abundance grammatical: the man speaks to himself, asks what he will do, and repeats “my” barns, grain, goods, and soul. Land has produced plentifully, but giver, worker, neighbor, poor person, and heir are absent from his deliberation.

God's address reverses the imagined timetable. "Many years" becomes "this night"; the soul commanded to rest becomes a life demanded; the goods possessed become goods transferred to an unnamed other. The parable does not condemn barns as buildings or prudence as a virtue. It exposes a plan closed to relation, accountability, mortality, and God.

Augustine's sermon preserves the movement from inheritance to greed and death but adds a judgment about the petitioner's civil case that Luke does not supply. Ambrose relocates the barns into a famine and grain-withholding argument. Basil's homily makes surplus morally answerable to the hungry and unclothed. These social readings disclose a genuine implication of self-enclosed abundance, but their reconstructed settings are theirs, not Luke's unnamed harvest.

Francis's 2019 *Angelus* offers a modern pastoral reception with unusually close attention to the text's sequence: inheritance quarrels, accumulated goods, imagined years, the interruption of "this night," enslavement to possessions, and sharing. He explicitly says material goods are goods and necessary means, while denying them the capacity to ground life.

Colossians: greed as idolatry and the renewed social person

Colossians is not the product of official Old Testament–Gospel correlation. Its semi-continuous course nevertheless creates a powerful canonical overlay. Those raised with Christ seek things above because their life is hidden with him and will appear with him. The lection then names greed as idolatry and moves, after omitted verses, to stripping off the old person, renewal in the creator's image, and a humanity in which Christ is all and in all.

Chrysostom refuses a spatial escapism: "above" directs life toward Christ and therefore changes conduct. The immediate omitted verses name anger, malice, slander, and abusive speech; unproclaimed, they still belong to the passage's context. Greed is idolatry not because matter is evil but because desire grants a created good the allegiance and security owed to God.

The renewed person is also social. Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and free cannot serve as rival grounds of worth in the new humanity. This answers the rich man's isolated possessive grammar more deeply than a private counsel to feel detached.

Poverty of spirit, sharing, and the danger of romanticizing need

The Gospel acclamation gives an authorized liturgical lens: poverty of spirit and the kingdom. It is not reducible to involuntary material deprivation, and it blesses no condition that denies food, housing, wages, or protection. Nor does "spiritual" poverty erase the Gospel's material warning. The beatitude names humble receptivity before God; Luke tests whether actual goods are enclosed within the self.

The two Communion alternatives sharpen this relation differently. Wisdom's heavenly food makes nourishment gift; John's bread of life makes the giver personally central. Against the barns, either ending makes food receptive and relational. Yet the two are alternatives, and neither proves an economic policy from the Missal.

Changed-register reception: image and music

Rembrandt's 1627 *Parable of the Rich Man* abandons field and barn for a nocturnal interior where a solitary figure examines coins by artificial light. The changed setting interprets the parable through bookkeeping, attention, and isolation. The interior is Rembrandt's, not a record of first-century storage.

Charles Ives's *Psalm 90* carries the psalm into modern concert and choral practice, juxtaposing human

frailty, divine eternity, and the establishment of work through musical recurrence and massed sound. Again the change of register matters: a score can make temporal contrast audible but cannot adjudicate the psalm's authorship or Hebrew semantics.

The 2014 *Homiletic Directory* supplies an official reception of another kind. It identifies the rich fool within Luke's Year C mercy-and-warning course, explains why Old Testament and Gospel are correlated, and preserves the apostolic reading's independent semi-continuous path. That structural discipline is itself a correction to homilies that force every reading into a single historical theme.

Tension	Resolution	Distortion
Work and death	Work is real good received under mortality and divine judgment.	Nihilism, idleness, or treating productivity as immortality.
Property and gift	Goods can serve honest life, dependents, solidarity, and the poor.	Absolute condemnation of ownership or self-enclosed accumulation.
Hidden life and public duty	Union with Christ renews desire, speech, and social belonging.	Escapism or a merely private "spiritual" detachment.
Poverty and Eucharistic reception	The creature receives life and food from a giver and is turned toward communion.	Romanticizing involuntary poverty or collapsing sacrament into economics.

Source-Grounded Synthesis Across the Propers

Property, night, and death

The official Old Testament–Gospel correlation is unusually close: labor passes its result to another, anxiety persists into night, an inheritance dispute exposes division, and the rich man’s imagined future ends that night. The Gospel sharpens the first reading: the successor is not only uncontrollable but unnamed, while the owner himself becomes accountable before he can consume what he has stored. Psalm 90 mediates by teaching the assembly to number its days rather than asking stored goods to lengthen them.

Mortality without futility

The Psalm refuses both self-sufficiency and despair. Human beings return to dust, yet mercy is sought and work may be established by God. This is the decisive distinction between the readings: work is not rejected, but received under creaturely limits and divine judgment. In this Year C occurrence, the shared formulary’s language of guidance, sanctification, heavenly gift, and continuing aid reinforces that distinction. The formulary serves all three years, not these readings alone.

The independent apostolic course

Colossians remains semi-continuous. Its overlap is nevertheless textually strong: greed becomes idolatry, earthly fixation yields to life hidden with Christ, and the possessive self of the parable is answered by a renewed humanity in which Christ is all and in all. The union is liturgical and canonical.

Rich toward God

The Gospel’s closing contrast does not supply an accounting formula. “Rich toward God” is defined narratively by its opposite: a life reduced to self-address, abundance, storage, and postponed enjoyment. Read with the acclamation and either Communion alternative, the contrast can be heard as receptive poverty, sharing rather than enclosure, and life received as gift. It does not authorize contempt for creation, romanticize involuntary poverty, or excuse neglect of dependents.

The Propers: Notable and Quotable

- The 2014 *Homiletic Directory* 145–149 identifies the rich fool with this Sunday and explains the Old Testament–Gospel harmony while preserving the Apostle’s semi-continuous course.
- Francis’s Angelus of 4 August 2019 redirects the inheritance dispute toward wealth’s power to enslave and the obligation to share.
- Basil’s homily *I Will Pull Down My Barns*, especially §7 (PG 31, 276B–277A), an ancient sermon on this very passage, turns surplus into a question of stewardship toward the poor; that question is Basil’s, not Luke’s narrated circumstance.
- Rembrandt’s 1627 *Parable of the Rich Man* relocates the barns into a nocturnal scene of solitary money-accounting (Gemäldegalerie Berlin, inv. 828 D).
- Charles Ives’s *Psalm 90* (1923–24) gives musical afterlife to the psalm’s petition to number our days; score and recordings are not reproduced.

The Propers: Interpretive Possibilities

Editorial status

The following proposals are original editorial syntheses. They claim neither historical selection intent nor attribution to the cited witnesses.

The two works of hands

Psalm 90 asks God to establish human work, while the Gospel depicts barns enlarged as a closed circuit of self-address. The contrast may distinguish work offered to divine judgment from work imagined as its own final warrant. It fails if used to label ordinary planning or productive labor sinful.

Hidden life and visible storage

Colossians locates life “hidden with Christ,” while the rich man makes security increasingly visible and countable. The conjunction can expose the difference between sacramental identity and inventory-based identity; it does not make material transparency or accounting suspect.

Another receives

Qoheleth’s unnamed successor, Luke’s disputing brothers, and Colossians’ renewed humanity together invite a stewardship reading of inheritance. The proposal remains exploratory: neither reading supplies a civil inheritance rule.

Food that cannot be hoarded

The barns store food, while either Communion alternative presents food as divine gift or Christ himself. The sacramental movement may turn possession toward reception and communion. It must not collapse Eucharistic theology into an economic metaphor.

Appendix: Liturgical Resolution

Field	Resolved liturgical instance
Celebration	Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C; ‘PC-S44-C’.
Books	Roman Missal, Third Edition for the United States; U.S. Lectionary no. 114.
Owner	Week XVIII shared formulary owner.
Occurrence	Recurring Year C formula; 3 August 2025 is the checked official occurrence witness.
Structure	Sunday in Ordinary Time, green; no proper-calendar overlay resolved.

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
sunday-sprinkling	Sunday permission	permitted	Opening rite	Unresolved.
communion-antiphon-wisdom	Missal alternative	appointed alternative	Communion antiphon	Unresolved.
communion-antiphon-john	Missal alternative	appointed alternative	Communion antiphon	Unresolved.
chant-selections	GIRM and approved repertory	locally selected	Entrance, offertory, Communion music	No enacted selection documented.
preface-ep	Missal/GIRM compatibility	permitted	Preface and Eucharistic Prayer	No enacted selection documented.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

This source-first guide treats the recurring U.S. Year C formula, not a parish record or local Ordo. The Missal owner controls reusable formulary evidence; the leaf audit controls Lectionary composition and branches. Protected ICEL, CCD, and modern Bible texts are not reproduced. The public-domain Douay–Rheims appointed-text sheet is a study translation only. The official occurrence page’s Psalm-response marker is preserved as a discrepancy pending named altar-book typography-level collation. Jerome and an uncertain Ambrose psalm locator were excluded rather than promoted.

References

- U.S. Lectionary no. 114, official USCCB occurrence page, 3 August 2025.
- *Missale Romanum* (2002), Week XVIII, printed pp. 467–468; official 2008 variation-list control.
- Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm 90*, §§4–17; *Sermon 57* (Benedictine 107), §§2–6.
- John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians* 7–8.
- Ambrose, *On Duties* III.6.41–44.
- Basil, *I Will Pull Down My Barns*, §7 (PG 31, 276B–277A).
- Francis, Angelus, 4 August 2019.
- Dicastery for Divine Worship, *Homiletic Directory* 145–149.
- Rembrandt, *Parable of the Rich Man*, 1627, Gemäldegalerie Berlin, inv. 828 D.
- Charles Ives, *Psalm 90* (1923–24).

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