

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

The Gift We Share

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The first workers have received everything promised to them. What wounds them is the sight of someone else receiving it too. Their complaint brings a difficult question into the center of this Sunday: can we rejoice in a goodness that refuses to become our private advantage? The landowner's generosity exposes the difference between loving a gift and loving the superiority we think it gives us.

Isaiah calls the sinner to return to a God whose mercy exceeds the sinner's own thoughts. The psalm praises divine greatness together with divine nearness. Paul desires to be with Christ, yet recognizes that his continued labor will benefit others. The Gospel brings these questions to a point in a vineyard: work is real, the promise is kept, and the master's goodness is larger than the workers' calculation. The Mass's prayers ask for love to become obedience and for sacramental participation to bear fruit in conduct.

Three readings of the whole formulary develop that movement. Augustine's account of divine cultivation asks what God gives and what his gift makes possible in us. Chrysostom's account of the working day asks how those called early or late should respond now. Gregory the Great's account of the one vineyard asks how many generations belong to a people no generation owns. They agree that receiving God's goodness demands fruitful charity. They differ in their first identification of the vineyard, the meaning of its hours, and the explanation of the payment sequence. Each has something the others do not bring into equal focus.

The Sunday from entrance to dismissal

Element	Appointment
Entrance	<i>Salus populi ego sum</i> ; the Lord's saving help in distress.
Collect	<i>Deus, qui sacrae legis</i> ; the law of love and life with God.
First reading	Isaiah 55:6–9.
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 145:2–3, 8–9, 17–18; response from 18a.
Second reading	Philippians 1:20c–24, 27a.
Gospel acclamation	Cf. Acts 16:14b; an adapted request for receptive hearing.
Gospel	Matthew 20:1–16a.
Prayer over the Offerings	<i>Munera, quaesumus, Domine.</i>
Communion	Psalm 119:4–5 or John 10:14.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Quos tuis, Domine.</i>

Contents

Study texts and liturgical locators	2
Hearing the appointed texts in their setting	4
God gives himself and cultivates his people	8

It is still time to enter, and the work is mercy	10
One vineyard older and larger than ourselves	13
What changes when the readings are heard together	16
Scriptural Date and Location	17
Appendix: Scope and Qualifications	19
References	19

Study texts and liturgical locators

The Scripture below is the public-domain Douay–Rheims Challoner study translation, as transmitted in the registered Gutenberg delivery. It is **not the approved English proclaimed at Mass**; the U.S. Lectionary controls that text. The spelling and wording are those of the historical witness. Verse numbers mark the biblical sources. The three readings follow today’s appointed cuts; contextual Scripture is identified separately.

Entrance and Collect

Entrance: *Salus populi ego sum*. Roman Missal, Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time; ICEL Antiphony, printed p. 79. The composed antiphon is not reproduced. Psalm 37:39–40 (Douay–Rheims 36:39–40) is its identified underlying scriptural basis, not the full antiphon’s text.

Collect: *Deus, qui sacrae legis*. Roman Missal, same Sunday, Collect. The complete prayer is not reproduced; it names a law of love, asks for obedience, and looks to an eternal end.

Isaiah 55:6–9

⁶ Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found: call upon him, while he is near.

⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God: for he is bountiful to forgive.

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.

Psalms 145:2–3, 8–9, 17–18

Douay–Rheims Psalm 144. The appointed response is drawn from 18a; its approved liturgical wording is not reproduced. The three strophes follow.

² Every day will I bless thee: and I will praise thy name for ever; yea, for ever and ever.

³ Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: and of his greatness there is no end.

⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful: patient and plenteous in mercy.

⁹ The Lord is sweet to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

¹⁷ The Lord is just in all his ways: and holy in all his works.

¹⁸ The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him: to all that call upon him in truth.

Philippians 1:20c–24, 27a

The opening is an excerpt within verse 20; verses 25–26 and the continuation of 27 are omitted. The terminal colon in the historical wording of 27a marks the cut before its unappointed continuation.

²⁰ [...] shall Christ be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ: and to die is gain.

²² And if to live in the flesh: this is to me the fruit of labour. And what I shall choose I know not.

²³ But I am straitened between two: having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better.

²⁴ But to abide still in the flesh is needful for you.

²⁷ Only let your conversation be worthy of the gospel of Christ:

Gospel acclamation: Cf. Acts 16:14b

The appointed acclamation is an adaptation addressed to the Lord and is not reproduced. Its underlying narrative, Acts 16:14, follows solely as contextual Scripture:

¹⁴ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, did hear: whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul.

Matthew 20:1–16a

The appointed reading stops after the first–last reversal; the many-called, few-chosen clause that follows in the historical witness lies outside it.

¹ The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

² And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

³ And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the marketplace idle.

⁴ And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just.

⁵ And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner.

⁶ But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle?

⁷ They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go ye also into my vineyard.

⁸ And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first.

⁹ When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

¹⁰ But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: And they also received every man a penny.

¹¹ And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house,

¹² Saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats.

¹³ But he answering said to one of them: friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny?

¹⁴ Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee.

¹⁵ Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good?

¹⁶ So shall the last be first and the first last.

Prayer over the Offerings

Munera, quaesumus, Domine. Roman Missal, Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Prayer over the Offerings. The complete prayer is not reproduced. It relates the people's offerings and faith to sacramental participation.

Communion: Psalm 119:4–5, or John 10:14

First alternative: Psalm 119:4–5 (Douay–Rheims 118). Historical Scripture study text:

⁴ Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently.

⁵ O! that my ways may be directed to keep thy justifications.

Or, second alternative: John 10:14. Historical Scripture study text:

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me.

Prayer after Communion

Quos tuis, Domine. Roman Missal, Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Prayer after Communion. The complete prayer is not reproduced. It asks continuing help so that redemption bears fruit in sacramental life and conduct.

Hearing the appointed texts in their setting

The Entrance: help within affliction

The Entrance begins with the Lord's relation to his people. Distress is neither hidden nor treated as proof that divine care has failed. The promise of saving help places the assembly before a faithful Lord before it has heard the vineyard's disputes about recompense. The movement is from need toward trust, not from achievement toward a claim to superior treatment. The composed antiphon's identified biblical basis is Psalm 37:39–40; the whole antiphon is not a verbatim extract of those verses.

Psalm 37 begins by forbidding agitation over the prosperity of evildoers. Its conclusion therefore answers a problem larger than a passing emergency: how to remain faithful when visible success seems to contradict God's justice. Augustine, explaining the psalm's final verses, joins help in tribulation to patient endurance and the final separation of good and evil. His hearer must correct the eye that misjudges providence rather than judge God crooked because the wicked flourish. Help does not mean that the righteous never undergo

affliction. This prepares a searching comparison with the Gospel's evil eye: in both settings another person's apparent advantage can distort our judgment of God.¹

The Collect: what the workers are learning to love

The Collect's ordering principle is the love of God and neighbor. Its petition places obedient living on the way to eternal life. This supplies a measure of fruitful labor that the vineyard's dissatisfied workers have difficulty applying: another person's good cannot be an injury to charity merely because it is not an exclusive good. Keeping the commandments concerns the kind of person one becomes before God and with others, as well as outward compliance.

The prayer also asks for what it commands. That structure matters when the first Communion alternative returns to the desire for directed ways. A command identifies the good; a petition acknowledges dependence upon God in doing it. The assembly does not begin by asserting that it has mastered the law of love. It begins by receiving that law as the form of the life it needs. Paul's willingness to remain for the benefit of others will give this twofold love a concrete human shape. Aquinas explains that willingness through charity's love of both God and neighbor, rather than through a rivalry between spiritual desire and practical duty.²

Isaiah: God's distance is the height of mercy

Isaiah 55 opens with an invitation to receive water, wine, and nourishment without the purchase that ordinarily secures them. Listening, covenant, and the gathering of nations precede the verses heard today. The command to seek the Lord thus belongs to a generous invitation. It is not an instruction to locate an unwilling deity. Yet seeking includes an actual turning: the wicked person must relinquish both a way of life and the thoughts that sustain it. Abundant pardon is promised in the same movement as repentance.

The contrast between God's thoughts and human thoughts immediately follows that promise. Aquinas makes the connection precise. At 55:8 he contrasts the human intention to avenge an injury with God's will to show mercy. Divine height is therefore more than a warning that human beings cannot understand everything. It rebukes the retaliatory imagination that measures forgiveness by its own reluctance to forgive. His commentary places the chapter within return from Babylon and also develops its reception as a gift of divine wisdom. The Sunday verses themselves keep the practical summons close: seek, abandon, return.³

Jerome similarly refuses to make seeking a geographical journey. In his exposition of 55:6–7, the opportunity belongs to the present embodied life and requires departure from former conduct and thoughts. At 55:8–9 he insists that salvation promised to Jewish or Gentile sinners need not seem incredible: God's counsel has a stability human plans lack. This brings another shade of meaning to divine transcendence. God is not simply a larger version of our unstable willingness to pardon. The promise can be trusted because his fidelity is his own.⁴

Irenaeus uses 55:8 in a different dispute. He opposes the projection of creaturely passions and divided mental processes into God. His doctrinal use protects the distinction between Creator and creature; Aquinas's continuous exposition emphasizes the mercy named in this passage. These are complementary questions, not two interchangeable explanations. Divine transcendence includes more than forgiveness, while the

¹Augustine, *Exposition of Psalm 36*, third exposition, §§14–16; English NPNF I.8, Psalm 37, "On the Third Part of the Psalm." Bellarmine, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Psalm 36 on vv. 30–40, treats the final verses briefly as a recapitulation.

²Aquinas, *Super Epistolam ad Philippenses* 1, lecture 3, in *In omnes D. Pauli Apostoli epistolas commentaria*, II (Liège: Dessain, 1857), pp. 371–372. This illuminates the Collect.

³Aquinas, *Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram*, chapter 55, *Opera omnia*, XIV (Parma: Fiacadori, 1863), pp. 556–557.

⁴Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, XV, on Isaiah 55:6–9; Latin DCO *Pars 4*, pp. 27–30. The modern digital witness has no established historical printing; the argument is paraphrased.

particular prophetic context prevents transcendence from becoming an excuse to ignore the invitation to return.⁵

The Psalm: great, good, and near

The three selected strophes of Psalm 145 move from daily and enduring praise, through mercy toward all God's works, to the Lord's righteousness and nearness to truthful prayer. Greatness and nearness are not competing attributes. The God whose greatness cannot be exhausted is also the God who hears. The response from verse 18a gives the assembly a brief answer to Isaiah's summons: calling upon the Lord is possible because he is near.

Augustine reads mercy expansively. Forgiveness, the Spirit who justifies, charity enabling good works, and eternal life belong to God's merciful giving. Mercy is not merely the cancellation of a past fault, leaving the future to unaided effort. His exposition of truthful invocation adds a searching test: does the petitioner desire God himself, or only some benefit God can supply? A person may loudly invoke God's name while wanting something else more than God. Truthful prayer seeks the giver.⁶

Bellarmino's later exposition develops truthful invocation through faith, hope, charity, desire, and attention. He also reads patience as an invitation to repentance, not approval of continuing sin. The two witnesses therefore make the psalm's reassurance exacting without making it less reassuring. The Lord who is near is not manipulated by a formula; the caller is drawn into a truthful relation with him. The ending of the full psalm also preserves judgment alongside mercy. The selected strophes do not turn divine goodness into indifference to the life of those who praise him.⁷

Paul: the good of being with Christ and the good of serving

Philippians 1 places Paul's desire within imprisonment, disputed motives among preachers, and confidence that Christ will be magnified. The appointed selection begins late in verse 20, with Christ magnified in Paul's body, whether through life or death. His alternatives are consequently governed by Christ. Life means fruitful work; departure means being with Christ. Neither is reduced to mere survival or extinction.

Chrysostom is astonished that Paul can desire the greater rest and still willingly remain in hardship. He develops the cost through images of a laden trader delaying safe harbor, an athlete continuing the contest, and a soldier remaining in battle. Paul has not discovered that being with Christ is less desirable. He recognizes a good for his neighbors that makes remaining an act of love for Christ. The apostle's wish for others' progress is the reason for the delay, not evidence that his desire for Christ was insincere.⁸

Aquinas distinguishes the attraction toward God from charity's concern for the neighbor, then explains how friendship can prefer God's honor even to one's own enjoyment. This is a precise answer to the apparent opposition. Paul's love of God includes love of those whom his work helps. Verse 27a then brings the hearers into the same field: their conduct must correspond to the Gospel. The later clauses about common steadfastness, read in context by both commentators, explain the communal character of that conduct, although they are not part of today's selection. Paul's desire is neither contempt for embodied life nor a warrant to hasten death; the passage explicitly identifies continued embodied service as fruitful.⁹

⁵Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II.13.3–4, Roberts–Rambaut translation in ANF 1 (Buffalo, 1887), pp. 373–374; paraphrase supported by the retained OCR witness, not an image-collated quotation.

⁶Augustine, *Exposition of Psalm 144*, §§7, 15–18; NPNF I.8, Psalm 145.

⁷Bellarmino, *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. John O'Sullivan (1866), Psalm 144 on vv. 8–9, 17–21; the English witness is an abridged translation.

⁸Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians* 3, exposition of 1:20–21, and 4, opening exposition of 1:22–26; NPNF I.13. Verses 25–26 are context beyond the appointed cut.

⁹Aquinas, *Super Philippenses* 1, lectures 3–4, Dessain II, pp. 371–373.

The acclamation: an opened heart attends

The acclamation adapts Acts 16:14b. Acts narrates the Lord opening Lydia's heart to attend to Paul's message; the liturgical text turns that event into the assembly's request for receptive hearing. The narrative's subject and the acclamation's direct address are therefore distinct. Acts 16:14 is the acclamation's narrative source, not the acclamation itself.

Chrysostom holds together what Acts holds together: the Lord's action and Lydia's attention. Her response becomes concrete in baptism and hospitality. An opened heart is not an inert heart. Augustine, citing the same verse in *On the Predestination of the Saints*, argues that the very beginning of faith is a divine gift, as prayer for opened hearts acknowledges. His concern is the origin of faith; Chrysostom emphasizes the hearer's willing response. In both accounts, hearing needs grace and bears fruit in action.¹⁰

The Gospel: a kept promise and an unwelcome equality

Matthew places the vineyard after the rich man's departure and Peter's question about what those who have left everything will receive. Jesus promises reward and announces the first-last reversal before the story begins. The landowner then repeatedly goes out, extending an invitation to work. The early workers have an explicit agreement; later groups are summoned in trust. Evening reveals a generosity none of the first workers expected.

Their complaint does not allege that they received less than the agreement. It alleges that the latecomers have been made equal to them. The landowner answers on both grounds: he has kept his promise, and his freedom to give does not become injustice because another envies the gift. Augustine presses this distinction in Sermon 87: failing to pay what is owed would be fraud; paying the agreement and giving generously to another is not. The early workers' greater expectation arose when they saw what someone else received.¹¹

The difficulty deepens when the story is read as the kingdom. Does it predict envy among saints? Chrysostom explicitly denies this. Saints who give themselves for sinners now will rejoice in their salvation then. The narrative complaint magnifies the unexpected greatness of the gift; every feature is not a separate prediction. Gregory also denies heavenly murmuring, but assigns the complaint a different meaning: the ancient fathers' long waiting before Christ opened paradise. Augustine answers the payment-order question through common resurrection and unequal waiting times.

Today's Gospel ends at Matthew 20:16a. The traditional Douay–Rheims text and these patristic lemmata continue with the many-called, few-chosen clause. That clause belongs to their textual horizon, but it is not an additional sentence appointed today. Matthew's following narrative includes the Passion prediction and another dispute over precedence, answered through service. That context confirms the gravity of the question of rank without changing the appointed boundary.

Offerings, Communion, and the life that follows

The Prayer over the Offerings joins the people's gifts and confessed faith to sacramental participation. The preceding Word has addressed listeners; the Eucharistic movement now concerns receiving what faith confesses. The relation to the vineyard is theological: God's gift does not terminate in a satisfying explanation of generosity. It gathers recipients into the mystery of Christ's self-giving. No Father among the sources checked comments on this particular prayer; Augustine's Eucharistic teaching illuminates its place in the whole Mass.

¹⁰Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts* 35, opening and recapitulation on 16:13–15, NPNF I.11; Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* I.41, NPNF I.5.

¹¹Augustine, Sermon 87, §4; NPNF I.6, New Testament Sermon 37.

The first Communion option, Psalm 119:4–5, joins the command to observe God’s precepts with the desire for ways made firm in that observance. Augustine hears dependence in the grammatical movement from command to wish: God must be asked for the ability to do what he commands. In the fuller Latin exposition, the speaker is a member of Christ or the whole body. Hearing is to become doing. Bellarmine likewise rejects confidence in unaided strength at verses 5–7. This is obedience prayed for by those receiving God’s gift, not a claim to have earned the gift by flawless obedience.¹²

If John 10:14 is chosen instead, Christ’s knowledge of his sheep and their knowledge of him stand within the discourse of the Shepherd who gives his life. Augustine explains how Christ enters hearts through the preaching of Christ. The preacher is not the purchaser of the flock: Christ bought it with his Blood. At the Eucharistic table, receiving his Body and Blood summons members to give themselves for their brethren. The sacramental connection is explicit in Augustine’s argument; it does not rest merely on the presence of shepherd imagery.¹³

The Prayer after Communion asks for continuing help so that redemption bears fruit in sacramental life and conduct. It gives the whole movement an unfinished moral horizon: reception has occurred, but the life corresponding to it still lies before the assembly. The opening confidence in divine help returns as dependence after the gift. The final petition does not send the workers away to establish their independence; it sends recipients toward the charity that the Collect named at the beginning.

God gives himself and cultivates his people

The giver does not become richer

Augustine begins Sermon 87 with a reversal more fundamental than the reversal of first and last. We cultivate God in worship, he says, but God also cultivates us. These two activities are unequal. Our worship does not improve God or add to his wealth. His cultivation improves us. Augustine pictures the divine word ploughing the heart, uprooting evil seed, planting commandments, and awaiting the fruit of piety. The fruit makes us happier rather than making God richer.¹⁴

That account changes the worker’s relation to labor. If worship were a contribution to God’s resources, seniority might look like a bargaining position against a needy employer. But the landowner of this spiritual vineyard supplies the very good for which the work is done. The commandments are not a fee collected from strangers while God remains indifferent to their flourishing. They are planted in hearts so that the persons receiving them may become fruitful. Gratitude is therefore not a pleasant emotion added after obedience. It recognizes the truth about who cultivates whom.

The Entrance’s promise of help in affliction establishes this dependence at the beginning. The Collect gives it a shape: the cultivated life loves God and neighbor and moves toward eternal life. These are not separate gifts arranged in a list. Augustine’s exposition of Psalm 145 joins pardon, the justifying Spirit, charity that enables good works, and eternal life within the one divine mercy. The psalm’s praise is consequently praise for a goodness that reaches into the capacity to act. A congregation asking to love rightly is already asking to be cultivated.

¹²Augustine, *Exposition of Psalm 118*, sermon 4, §§1–3; NPNF I.8 gives an abridged parallel under Psalm 119, Aleph, §§4–6. Bellarmine, Psalm 118 on vv. 5–7.

¹³Augustine, *Tractates on John* 47.1–3, especially 47.2; NPNF I.7.

¹⁴Augustine, Sermon 87, §§1–2; NPNF New Testament Sermon 37.

Mercy remakes the measure of the reward

The landowner's reply protects the early workers from an actual wrong: their agreement is honored. Augustine then asks what the denarius signifies. It is eternal life. Its equality lies in its endlessness: one person's eternity cannot last longer than another's. He immediately preserves distinctions of glory and attainment. Equal endless life does not flatten the diverse fruits of faithfulness, chastity, martyrdom, and good works into indistinguishable lives. His claim concerns what the parable's common payment signifies, not the denial of every distinction among the saints.¹⁵

The answer is exact because the complaint is comparative. If another person receives eternal life, the first worker does not lose some portion of it. The imagined scarcity is false. The common good can be shared without being divided into diminishing shares. What needs healing is the wish that another should receive less so that one's own blessedness can function as a sign of superiority. God's gift is not too small. The recipient's way of measuring it has become too small.

Aquinas's reading of Isaiah gives that moral distortion its prophetic counterpart. Human beings can imagine justice principally through revenge; God summons the sinner into abundant mercy. The height of God's thoughts judges that retaliatory measure. Yet Isaiah's sinner must actually forsake an old way and old thoughts. Mercy does not honor the old life by leaving it unchanged. It makes return possible and gives return a trustworthy destination. Jerome's insistence on the stability of God's promise strengthens the same confidence: the sinner need not calculate whether God's willingness to pardon will prove as erratic as human intentions.¹⁶

Chrysostom's account of the complaint closes the way to a false conclusion about heaven. The saved do not continue envying one another there. The narrative makes the gift's surprising fullness visible; it is not a portrait of perfected charity secretly remaining jealous. Augustine's common denarius and Chrysostom's refusal of heavenly envy agree on the good offered to latecomers, although the latter explains the narrative device differently. The promise is communion in God's goodness, not a permanent system of resentful comparison.¹⁷

The heart receives, and the member gives

The acclamation's request for an opened heart belongs naturally beside Augustine's plough. Hearing is itself a gift. In his treatment of Lydia, Augustine reasons from the Church's prayer for such an opening to the divine origin of faith's beginning. The hearer cannot regard attention to Christ as a possession acquired entirely before grace. Chrysostom, dwelling on Lydia's attendance and hospitality, emphasizes the active response. These are distinct emphases: Augustine's question is what initiates faith; Chrysostom's is how the hearer receives and acts.

Paul then reveals what a cultivated life looks like from the inside. He desires Christ, yet recognizes the good his continued work can bring others. Chrysostom does more than praise this as admirable behavior. He shows the tension by dwelling on the real cost of delay. Paul remains amid difficult labor because the people he has served can become more fruitful. His choice makes their good part of what he wants for Christ's sake. The early vineyard workers ask why another receives so much; Paul spends himself so that another may receive more fully.¹⁸

Aquinas brings the twofold love into sharp focus. Friendship can prefer the beloved's honor to one's private enjoyment. Paul's willingness to remain is therefore not a compromise in which love of neighbor weakens love of God. It is one way love of God becomes generous. This adds a substantial account of labor to

¹⁵ Augustine, Sermon 87, §§4–6.

¹⁶ Aquinas, *Isaiah* 55, Parma XIV, pp. 556–557; Jerome, *Isaiah* XV on 55:6–9.

¹⁷ Chrysostom, *Matthew* 64.3.

¹⁸ Chrysostom, *Philippians* 4, opening exposition of 1:22–26.

Augustine's account of gift. The common denarius does not make the intervening work irrelevant. It releases work from the calculation of exclusive advantage and makes another's spiritual good a reason to continue.

The Prayer over the Offerings draws confessed faith toward sacramental participation. Augustine's exposition of John supplies the bridge from participation to self-giving: Christ alone has paid the price of the flock, but his members are called to offer their lives for one another because they receive his Body and Blood. The gift establishes a new obligation of charity. It does not leave its recipient merely an observer who admires Christ's generosity. This is why the Prayer after Communion's movement into conduct follows naturally from the mystery received. Continuing divine help sustains the response; gratitude never develops into independence from its giver.¹⁹

Each Communion alternative emphasizes a different aspect of that dependence. With Psalm 119, recipients ask for their ways to be directed in obedience. The command becomes a petition for its own fulfillment. With John 10, recipients hear the Shepherd's personal knowledge of his flock within the discourse of his self-offering. The first accent is enabled fidelity; the second is belonging to the one who gave himself. Either alternative leads from dependence on Christ toward sacramental charity.

Four senses of the gift

Literal.

Isaiah joins seeking and forsaking to abundant pardon; the psalm joins greatness to truthful invocation; Paul weighs departure against fruitful service; the landowner keeps his promise while giving freely. The Entrance promises help in distress, the Collect names twofold love, and the acclamation seeks receptive hearing. Offerings, either Communion text, and the final prayer carry faith into sacramental participation and conduct.

Allegorical.

Christ is the manifest caller and the Shepherd who enters hearts. His word cultivates the Church, and his Blood purchases and nourishes its members. The law of charity takes flesh in a body whose members receive their life from him. The divine giver is not enriched by them; they are changed by his self-gift.

Moral.

Desire the giver, receive the call, and spend what has been given in another's service. Another's restoration does not subtract from one's own good. Requested obedience and Paul's willing labor replace the effort to turn religion into a claim upon God. Charity becomes fruitful because grace reaches both the beginning and continuation of the response.

Anagogical.

The common denarius is endless life with God, equal in duration without denying different glory. The Collect's eternal end, Paul's desire for Christ, the psalm's enduring praise, and the Shepherd's pasture converge there. The final joy is shared possession of a good that no late arrival can diminish.

It is still time to enter, and the work is mercy

A late invitation asks for a real answer

Chrysostom identifies the vineyard first with God's commandments and the working time with present life. The hours represent the ages at which people approach God and undertake the good. The controlling purpose is to give courage to those converted in extreme old age: they must not suppose that their late

¹⁹Augustine, *John* 47.2.

beginning confines them to a lesser portion. This is encouragement toward earnestness. The late workers do not merely receive a consoling message while remaining where they were; they enter the vineyard.²⁰

This reading puts pressure on two very different listeners. The longtime disciple is tempted to make an early beginning a present title to honor. The latecomer is tempted to make a bad past a final verdict against hope. Neither knows the gift rightly while measuring it chiefly by elapsed time. The first must relinquish pride; the second must begin. The call is addressed to persons whose response matters, and the story's generosity makes their response more urgent rather than less necessary.

Augustine joins the same practical conclusion through a different question. If the eleventh hour receives the same denarius, why not deliberately wait for it? Because the promised reward does not promise another hour of life. Those summoned earlier did not announce that they would come later. A person called now cannot convert another person's late mercy into an entitlement to postpone conversion. Augustine then treats despair and presumptuous security as opposite ways of refusing a saving hope: one says forgiveness is impossible, the other that repentance can always be delayed.²¹

Isaiah supplies the verbs this response needs. Seeking God requires forsaking one's former way and thoughts. Jerome connects the opportunity to embodied life, while Aquinas emphasizes seeking before adversity and death. The future gift does not make the present morally empty. It makes the present the place where a return can happen. The Entrance's confidence in help during distress prevents urgency from becoming hopelessness: the hearer is summoned by a Lord who hears, not abandoned to reconstruct life alone.²²

The promise heals comparison rather than abolishing work

Chrysostom's refusal of heavenly envy is central here. He reasons from the saints' charity: those who give their lives for sinners in this life will rejoice when those sinners enjoy salvation. The Gospel complaint therefore dramatizes the greatness of the latecomer's gift. It is not an invitation to imagine resentment as an unavoidable feature of even the holiest community. Present envy can be healed because the promised communion is free of it.²³

His interpretation also distinguishes the equal wage from the closing first-last maxim. Inside the parable the early workers still receive the agreed payment; the others are unexpectedly made equal. The maxim can point beyond that equality toward an actual reversal, where someone who began well neglects virtue and someone formerly sunk in vice advances. Chrysostom permits a hint concerning Jews in this latter discussion as well as changes among believers. His primary personal-age reading is not an explicit polemic rejecting every Jewish-Gentile application. His received Gospel lemma includes the many-called clause beyond today's endpoint, so the full scope of his argument reaches beyond the end of the shorter appointed text.²⁴

The practical consequence is neither complacency nor competition. A person does not imitate Christ by becoming satisfied that someone else is doing worse. Chrysostom's sermon turns from the parable to care for conduct, almsgiving, and the choice of examples. The negligence of a rich neighbor excuses nothing. Christ and those who do good are the examples that can produce humility and diligence. This is a more demanding freedom than the relief of being ahead of somebody: it removes the convenient comparison by which neglect disguises itself as adequacy.²⁵

The Collect identifies love of God and neighbor as the work's governing form. Psalm 145 makes mercy toward all God's works an object of praise. Praising that universality while resenting a neighbor's pardon

²⁰Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 64.3–4.

²¹Augustine, Sermon 87, §§7–10.

²²Jerome, *Isaiah* XV on 55:6–7; Aquinas, *Isaiah* 55.

²³Chrysostom, *Matthew* 64.3.

²⁴Chrysostom, *Matthew* 64.3–4; today's Gospel is Matthew 20:1–16a.

²⁵Chrysostom, *Matthew* 64.5.

would divide the act of worship against itself. Augustine's exposition insists that God's patience must not become permission to remain in sin. Bellarmine likewise sees patience inviting repentance. These are grounds for a hopeful return and for refusing to obstruct another's return. Mercy is to be received and practiced, not praised abstractly while withheld personally.

Attendance becomes hospitality, and desire becomes service

The adapted acclamation locates conversion at the moment of hearing. Lydia's opened heart attends to the message, and her response becomes hospitality. Chrysostom emphasizes both sides of the event: divine help does not erase her willingness, and her willingness does not erase the Lord's action. The acclamation can therefore be heard as a request for something more searching than concentration. A hearer needs openness to the change that the Word may require.²⁶

Augustine's account of faith's beginning places a different stress on that same event. The opening for which the Church prays is God's gift; it is not a reward for an independently completed first movement of faith. Their common practical ground is that hearing bears fruit in response. Neither passage warrants treating the assembly as spectators while conversion takes place without them, and neither licenses self-congratulation for a heart allegedly opened without help.²⁷

Paul gives the positive alternative to rivalry. He desires the joy of being with Christ, yet continued life is useful to others. Chrysostom presents the willingness to postpone rest as charity for Christ's sake. A worker formed by that love does not merely refrain from complaining about a latecomer; he labors for the latecomer's good. This changes the moral question from how much advantage one can claim to whom one's life can help. Paul's closing demand for conduct worthy of the Gospel extends the same responsibility to the hearers.

The Eucharistic prayers make that response continuous with worship. In the Prayer over the Offerings, professed faith reaches sacramental participation. In the Prayer after Communion, the life corresponding to redemption remains an object of petition. The gift is real and its reception matters, but receiving does not make conduct irrelevant. Augustine's account of the Lord's table explains why: the recipient of Christ's self-giving becomes responsible for a corresponding charity toward the brethren. The sacramental gift provides a reason and strength to serve, not an exemption from service.²⁸

The Psalm Communion, if used, keeps this response in the grammar of dependence: the person who hears the command asks for steady ways in fulfilling it. Bellarmine explains this petition as a rejection of confidence in unaided power. The John Communion, if used instead, makes response personal: the sheep belong to a Shepherd whose knowledge is joined to self-giving. Conversion then means following a known Lord rather than trying to manufacture virtue in isolation. Both endings prepare the final petition for redemption to bear fruit beyond the moment of reception.

Four senses of the timely call

Literal.

The invitations come at different hours, and those called respond. Isaiah's present summons, the psalm's patient mercy, Paul's useful remaining, and Lydia's attention describe real acts in their own contexts. The Entrance promises help, the Collect names charity, and the Eucharistic prayers carry reception toward a lived response. The two Communion alternatives accent either requested obedience or relationship with the Shepherd.

²⁶Chrysostom, *Acts* 35, on 16:13–15.

²⁷Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* I.41; Chrysostom, *Matthew* 64.3.

²⁸Augustine, *John* 47.2.

Allegorical.

Christ calls people into the vineyard of his commandments during the working day of life. His word addresses the Church now, and his sacramental gift sustains its charity. The good Shepherd and the caller are not competing masters; the members receiving him are drawn into the pattern of his service.

Moral.

Begin without despair and persevere without entitlement. Augustine's warning against delay guards Chrysostom's encouragement of late converts. Exchange envy for mercy and comparative excuses for concrete almsgiving and service. The opened heart must attend, and the person receiving Communion must live what faith confesses.

Anagogical.

Full hope is offered to the latecomer, and the kingdom's joy contains no envy. Eternal communion releases the hearer from the fear that a late beginning makes genuine conversion pointless. The same hope refuses presumption: today's call is an opportunity to enter, not a guarantee that tomorrow's call will be available.

One vineyard older and larger than ourselves

The people of God exceed one generation

Gregory begins with the landowner as Creator and the vineyard as the universal Church. Its extent reaches from Abel to the last elect person at the world's end. The holy persons it brings forth are its branches. The image therefore places the present assembly within a history it did not begin and cannot own. God has continually sent workers to cultivate his people: fathers, teachers of the law, prophets, and apostles. These are not rival employers developing unrelated fields. They serve the one Lord's cultivation.²⁹

Gregory assigns the hours to successive eras: Adam to Noah, Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, Moses to Christ, and Christ to the world's end. The Gentiles' eleventh-hour arrival belongs to that historical pattern. Yet his vineyard already includes the holy fathers of Israel. The interpretation does not place all earlier people outside salvation and all later people inside it. The ancient faithful are workers in the one vineyard whose reward Christ brings. Its corporate horizon honors the saints of earlier ages while explaining the late gathering of the nations.

Augustine also reads successive historical calls, but he allocates them differently: Abel and Noah belong to the first hour, the patriarchs to the third, Moses and Aaron to the sixth, the prophets to the ninth, and Christians to the eleventh. For both, one Lord gathers his people into promised blessedness across time.³⁰

The Sunday readings acquire a corporate depth within this horizon. Isaiah's invitation to return and the psalm's praise are voices of the people already being cultivated. Paul's service and Lydia's reception belong to apostolic gathering. The Entrance addresses a people in need of saving help; the Collect asks for the charity by which its members live together. The Gospel does not authorize the present generation to possess God's goodness as though earlier and later recipients were intruders. It opens the assembly toward a communion larger than its immediate circle.

Different ways of understanding the waiting

Gregory asks the same hard question as Chrysostom: how can those receiving the kingdom murmur? He answers that no murmurer receives heaven and no heavenly saint can murmur. He then interprets the complaint through the delay experienced by the ancient fathers. Though they had lived justly, their entry

²⁹Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospels* I.19.1, PL 76, cols. 1154–1155.

³⁰Augustine, Sermon 87, §5.

awaited the Mediator who opened paradise through his death. What the story calls murmuring signifies that long postponement of the promised end.³¹

He also illustrates a late arrival rewarded swiftly through the thief who reaches paradise before Peter. The point is not that the thief's entire life was better than Peter's. Nearness to the end can make the interval between calling and entrance very short. A long history of labor does not permit someone to control the moment or fullness of another person's reception. Gregory concludes that even the last place in God's kingdom is cause for joy, which directly undercuts the desire to make salvation valuable chiefly as precedence over another.³²

Augustine answers payment order by emphasizing a common resurrection. All receive together, but the first-called have waited much longer. One who receives after a short interval can be described as receiving first relative to the length of waiting, even when the final reception occurs together. Gregory's account stresses Christ opening paradise and swift entrance; Augustine's stresses the shared resurrection and elapsed waiting. Chrysostom, by contrast, treats the complaint as narrative magnification of the latecomer's honor.

For Gregory, Christ brings the earlier faithful and the later called toward the same kingdom. Augustine supplies a parallel account of common blessedness and a further account of how that people is gathered. Neither grants the current assembly the right to treat the history before it as wasted waiting.

The workers cultivate one another

For Gregory, the ecclesial vineyard does not remove individual responsibility. He expressly allows the hours to signify the ages of one person's life. Then he asks whether the hearer has truly begun the Lord's work. A person absorbed only in private advantage has not. Labor consists in charity, devotion, and helping others toward life. Membership is thus a summons to cultivate, not simply a place from which to inspect who else has entered.³³

Augustine's Sermon 87 gives this gathering a concrete apostolic movement. The householder's going out signifies Christ becoming known. The risen Lord's mission and Pentecost make the call manifest through preaching. Augustine's final exhortation then turns hearers toward their own friends: concern for those with whom one might live eternally demands active love. His account of conversion includes former persecutors receiving Christ's Blood sacramentally. The people are gathered by a mercy able to transform opposition into membership and service.³⁴

That is a substantive addition to Gregory's historical horizon. Gregory explains the vineyard's reach and the work of drawing others toward life; Augustine shows the proclaimed Christ gathering hearers and the sacrament receiving people whose past could have been a ground for exclusion. The call does not merely replace one social group with another. It changes the persons who receive it. Paul's conversion, invoked by Augustine, and Paul's willing service in Philippians belong together: mercy received becomes labor for another's good.

The acclamation's source in Lydia makes the corporate movement visible at household scale. The Lord opens a heart, the message is attended to, and hospitality welcomes the messengers. A universal Church is gathered through particular persons and concrete acts of reception. Paul's willingness to remain supports that same gathering over time. In Aquinas's exposition, conduct worthy of the Gospel extends into concord and cooperation in the clauses following the appointed 27a. Those contextual clauses show the communal direction of the sentence without becoming additional Sunday verses.³⁵

³¹Gregory, *Gospels* I.19.4, PL 76, cols. 1156–1157.

³²Gregory, *Gospels* I.19.3–4.

³³Gregory, *Gospels* I.19.2, PL 76, col. 1155.

³⁴Augustine, Sermon 87, §§9, 14–15.

³⁵Chrysostom, *Acts* 35; Aquinas, *Super Philippenses* 1, lecture 4, Dessain II, p. 373.

Isaiah's requirement to abandon an old way challenges inherited membership as surely as it challenges a new convert. The psalm's mercy and nearness give every generation the same reason to return. The Entrance's faithful Lord remains the helper of his people through affliction; the Collect's law of love binds personal devotion to responsibility for a neighbor. These elements keep the historical reading from becoming a diagram in which the listener's only task is to locate an era. The question is whether this member is doing the vineyard's work now.

A common table and two Communion voices

The people's offerings and professed faith lead into a common sacramental participation. Augustine's *John* exposition gives that communion its costly form. The Shepherd purchased the sheep with his Blood; the preacher did not. Members who receive that gift must be prepared to give themselves for one another. The Church's unity therefore cannot be measured simply by how many people occupy the same space. It is nourished by Christ's gift and expressed through a charity that accepts another member's good as one's own concern.³⁶

If Psalm 119 is used at Communion, Augustine's fuller Latin exposition identifies the speaker as a member or the entire body of Christ. The petition for directed ways can therefore be heard as the body's prayer for faithful action, not merely a private resolution among many unrelated resolutions. Bellarmine's stress on divine assistance reinforces the dependence of each member. If John 10 is used, the good Shepherd's knowledge of his sheep gives the communion its personal center. The wider chapter's gathering into one flock is its context, while the appointed verse names mutual knowledge.

The Prayer after Communion asks that the redemption received become a lived reality in conduct. Within this historical reading, that conduct includes responsibility for those still to be called. A generation that receives the faith holds neither the beginning nor the completion of the vineyard in its own hands. Its opportunity is to be fruitful within the interval given to it: hearing the Word, serving neighbors, and helping others toward the life it hopes to share. The common end makes that labor meaningful; it does not render the workers interchangeable.

Four senses of the gathered people

Literal.

One landowner gathers several groups into one vineyard. The appointed sequence includes Israel's prophetic and psalmic witness, Paul's apostolic service, the adapted memory of Lydia's hearing, and Jesus' parable. The Entrance, Collect, offerings, either Communion text, and final prayer address the worship and conduct of a people, with distinct roles in its celebration.

Allegorical.

Gregory identifies the vineyard with the universal Church from Abel to the last elect. Christ brings the fathers and the later called toward one kingdom; Augustine's preaching and Pentecost explain the manifest gathering of the body. The Shepherd purchases and nourishes that body, whose common law is charity.

Moral.

Belonging early gives responsibility for others, not possession of their admission. Gregory's labor of bringing others toward life, Augustine's care for friends, Paul's useful remaining, and Lydia's hospitality make corporate membership active. Obedience sought at Communion becomes a life that cultivates other members rather than resenting their arrival.

Anagogical.

Earlier and later generations are ordered toward the same kingdom. Gregory's account of paradise opened

³⁶Augustine, *John* 47.2.

by Christ and Augustine's common resurrection are distinct explanations of the waiting. The Collect's eternal life, Paul's desire for Christ, enduring praise, and the Shepherd's pasture converge on the joy of a gathered people whose last arrivals are welcomed.

What changes when the readings are heard together

The three readings share a refusal to make God poorer when another receives his goodness. Their differences concern the first question asked of the vineyard. Augustine's cultivation asks what the giver does for the receiver. Chrysostom's working day asks what the called person must do now. Gregory's history asks whose people the worker has entered. These are complementary emphases with real differences of identification and explanation.

The first reading most fully answers the objection that equal generosity makes labor pointless: the labor is part of God's cultivation, and charity becomes fruitful in the person who receives. The second most fully addresses despair and presumption: late conversion can be complete, yet delay is not promised another opportunity. The third most fully addresses possessiveness about the Church: its earlier and later members belong to a Lord whose field is larger than any generation. Together they turn the complaint about another's portion toward gratitude, conversion, and responsibility.

The Fathers explain the payment order differently. Augustine stresses one endless life and a common resurrection; Chrysostom makes the complaint magnify an unexpectedly full gift and distinguishes that equality from the maxim's reversal; Gregory interprets the older fathers' delay through Christ's opening of paradise.

The connections among the appointed elements extend beyond a sequence of separate lessons. The opened heart before the Gospel and the requested obedience at Communion describe a response dependent on divine help. Paul's labor for others and Augustine's account of the Eucharistic table show charity receiving a gift and becoming self-gift. The Collect and final prayer enclose that movement with love sought and redemption lived. The Psalm Communion emphasizes enabled fidelity; the John Communion emphasizes belonging to the self-giving Shepherd. The end is neither an account settled in one's favor nor a higher place secured against a neighbor. It is a life increasingly able to rejoice in the good it shares.

Scriptural Date and Location

Each passage the Mass reads or sings from Scripture, once, in canonical order; beneath each, its attribution, its setting and the critical horizon. The three orations are composed liturgical texts and carry no biblical date; the Entrance is entered through its identified biblical basis, and the acclamation through its adaptation of a biblical sentence.

Textual unit	Citation	Location	Date
Entrance (its basis)	Ps 37 (36):39–40	No place named in the verses	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
The composed antiphon <i>Salus populi ego sum</i> is treated through its identified biblical basis, Psalm 37:39–40, rather than as a verbatim extract or a historical event. These verses specify no author, place or occasion. No traditional date is held for them. The NABRE Psalms introduction supplies the common pre-Maccabean composition bound, not a precise date for this psalm or the Psalter’s assembly.			
Communion, Psalm option	Ps 119 (118):4–5	No place named in the verses	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
The opening petition of the great alphabetical psalm of the law: a command received, followed by the wish that one’s ways be directed to keep it. No author is named and no traditional date is held; the date shown is the Psalter’s common critical composition bound (NABRE, Psalms introduction). This is one of the Missal’s two alternative Communion texts for the day.			
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 145 (144):2–3, 8–9, 17–18; response v. 18a	No place named	Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
An alphabetical hymn to “God my king”, headed in the Douay–Rheims “Praise, for David himself” (v. 1): an attribution by title, with no traditional date attached. The response is taken from v. 18a. The date shown is the common composition bound in the NABRE Psalms introduction, which does not securely date an individual psalm. Neither the title nor these verses locates the writing.			
First Reading	Isa 55:6–9	Traditional ministry: Juda and Jerusalem (1:1); critical horizon: Babylonian exile; writing place unestablished	Traditional attribution: Isaias (ministry in Souvay’s traditional account), B.C. 740–701. Prophecy given: Toward the end of the Babylonian exile.
The two printed relations answer different questions and are not to be merged. The first is the inherited attribution of the book to the prophet Isaias: the range shown, 740–701 B.C., bounds his ministry in the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s traditional account (Souvay, 1910, “Life”), from the closing year of Ozias to the apparent latest prophecy, not his death. It does not date this chapter’s writing; Souvay’s tentative collection hypothesis concerns chapters 1–35. The second is the critical horizon of the prophetic activity: the official NABRE introduction generally attributes chapters 40–55 to an anonymous poet prophesying toward the end of the Babylonian exile. The prophecy addresses restoration from exile (Souvay, “Second Isaias”); that horizon is not a date for the writing or final assembly of the book, nor proof of a particular writing site.			
Gospel	Mt 20:1–16a	Spoken to the disciples on the journey toward Jerusalem, after Peter’s question (19:27)	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: a parable of Jesus, told within the journey that ends at Jerusalem, before the third prediction of the Passion (20:17–19); the chronology corpus holds no date for the narrated event.</i>			
Traditional attribution: St Matthew the Apostle. The printed figures are the disputed alternatives the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> reports, and they are not of equal standing. About A.D. 38–45 comes from early ecclesiastical writers counting from the Ascension. About A.D. 40–42 rests on a tradition of the Apostles’ dispersal, which the 1911 article itself calls “admittedly not too reliable”. A.D. 40–45 is the range reported by its survey of the Catholic critics of its day. About A.D. 60–68 is a conditional reckoning that fixes the Apostles’ definitive departure later. About A.D. 64–67 rests on a text of Irenaeus whose difficulties of interpretation the article says prevent any positive conclusion. About A.D. 50 is Durand’s date (1912) for the Aramaic original only; of the Greek rendering, he writes, we know nothing definite. The NABRE introduction states the modern critical horizon concisely: the “post-A.D. 70 date”, “probably at least a decade later”, within its probabilistic account; no closing year is given. Jacquier’s “Destination” reports a Jewish-Christian audience and publication in Judea; the NABRE instead regards the author as unknown and Antioch in Syria as a plausible composition site for a community with Jewish and Gentile Christians. Neither writing location is the setting of Jesus’ parable.			

Textual unit	Citation	Location	Date
Communion, John option	Jn 10:14	Spoken to the Pharisees after the healing of the man born blind (9:40–10:6)	Composition – disputed: c. A.D. 90–100; A.D. 96–100.
<i>Narrated event: the discourse of the good shepherd; no event date is held.</i>			
Traditional attribution: St John the Apostle. The two printed ranges are the received disputed alternatives reported by the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> : Durand’s approximate range for the Johannine writings (1912) and Fonck’s “general opinion”, preceded by his admission that certain historical dating is unavailable (1910, “Circumstances of the composition”). Fonck reports Ephesus as the writing place and Christians in Asia Minor as the first readers; those are not the scene of Jesus’ discourse. The Missal adapts the verse. Christ’s knowledge of his sheep belongs to a discourse of self-offering, and this option stands as an alternative to the Psalm text in the one Communion slot, not as a rite consecutive to it.			
Acclamation (its basis)	cf. Acts 16:14b, an adaptation	Event: Philippi in Macedonia, by the riverside on the sabbath (16:12–13)	Event – disputed: A.D. 50–53; A.D. 51–54. Composition : c. A.D. 64.
<i>Narrated event: the conversion of Lydia during St Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22).</i>			
Traditional attribution: St Luke. The two printed event ranges are disputed alternatives the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> gives for the second missionary journey in its articles on St Paul (1911) and on biblical chronology (1908); the composition figure is the date its article on Acts (1907) calls the most probable for the completion of the book. The mission’s date and the book’s composition are distinct relations. Breen’s probable composition setting is Paul’s Roman captivity, not Lydia’s Philippi; Acts addresses Theophilus (1:1), whose location is not supplied there. The liturgical verse adapts Luke’s narrative sentence into a petition for receptive hearing; it is not itself a verse of Scripture.			
Second Reading	Phil 1:20c–24, 27a	Paul in bonds (1:7, 13), at Rome in the received chronology; to “all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi” (1:1)	Composition – disputed: A.D. 61; A.D. 62–64.
Traditional attribution: St Paul, writing from imprisonment. The printed figures are disputed alternatives within the Roman captivity: the first is the year the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s chronology of St Paul assigns the captivity letters (1911); the second, the range its article on the letter gives for Paul “at Rome” (1911), where critics are said to disagree whether the letter falls early or late in the Roman sojourn. The apostle’s present imprisonment frames his alternatives of continued service and being with Christ; his hoped-for departure is not a dated narrated event.			

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

This study concerns the Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, on 20 September 2026, under the general United States calendar: Roman Missal, Third Edition, U.S. English implemented in 2011, and U.S. Lectionary for Mass, second typical edition, no. 133. No diocesan, religious, titular, dedication, or other proper solemnity at a particular church has been supplied. The dated national appointment does not determine an unnamed church's local calendar. The September 20 memorial supplies no additional proper to this Sunday.

The studied layer is the Missal's Entrance, three orations and two alternative Communion texts together with Lectionary 133. Authorized sung Entrance, Offertory, Communion, Psalm, and acclamation choices remain unselected. No concrete Preface or Eucharistic Prayer is chosen; those options have interdependent rubrical conditions. The Sunday Gloria and Creed belong to the Ordinary. No unique Sequence, proper Offertory-antiphon text, Eucharistic Prayer insertion, or distinctive dismissal is established here. An anticipated Saturday celebration has no separate Vigil formulary in this study. Both Communion alternatives are analyzed, never reported as a simultaneous performance.

The English Scripture printed here is the public-domain Douay–Rheims Challoner study text in the registered Gutenberg delivery, which draws on multiple Challoner editions. It is not the approved proclaimed English of the U.S. Lectionary. Restricted ICEL and CCD bodies are not reproduced. The composed Entrance, adapted acclamation, and orations receive locators and commentary, not replacement liturgical renderings. Historical biblical words retain their own public-domain status and are not offered under the project's content license. The study is a companion to the approved books, not a book for liturgical recitation.

The shared Week 25 formulary audit alone owns common Missal witness collation and its limits. Complete official 2008 Latin and U.S. 2011 altar-book collation has not been performed. The source-located descriptions used here do not claim diplomatic control of those uninspected books. The local instance manifest and target text audit own the dated inventory and the Lectionary's cuts. The historical dossier distinguishes attribution, prophetic activity, composition and narrated event. Its Date cells are generated from the shared chronology corpus; the separately attributed NABRE Matthew boundary belongs to the critical profile, not to the default traditional composition alternatives. Psalter bounds date neither individual poems precisely nor the collection's final assembly. Writing places and first audiences are distinguished from scenes narrated; uncertain locations remain qualified.

The three whole-formulary interpretations are editorial theological syntheses of checked arguments. None of the cited Fathers is credited with constructing this modern Mass assemblage. The Old Testament and Gospel are correlated under the Lectionary's arrangement; the Psalm is responsorial and the acclamation prepares the Gospel. Philippians belongs to the semi-continuous apostolic course, while the orations and Missal antiphons are shared across the Sunday cycles. Their theological convergence is not a claim of a single historical compositional design.³⁷

The bounded reception research includes historical English Augustine and Chrysostom, Gregory's Latin with a PL 76 facsimile controller, Aquinas's Parma and Dessain print witnesses, Jerome's modern Latin digital witness, Irenaeus's ANF OCR, and Bellarmine's abridged O'Sullivan translation. Exact source and search limits remain in the canonical research records. No exhaustive patristic survey, Hebrew or Greek critical-edition collation, or ecclesiastical approval is asserted. Direct ancient commentary on the three composed orations was not verified; sacramental and charitable interpretations illuminate those prayers without supplying a genealogy. Unchecked later commentary leads do not count as additional witnesses.

References

NPNF denotes *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series; ANF denotes *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Section numbers follow the cited work, with the Psalm abridgment's exception below.

1. *Douay–Rheims Bible*, Challoner, Gutenberg eBook 1581 delivery: Isaiah 1:1; 55; Psalms 36, 118, 144; Matthew 19:1–20:34; Philippians 1; Acts 1:1; 16; John 9:39–10:42.
2. USCCB, 20 September 2026, Lectionary 133; *2026 Liturgical Calendar*, printed pp. 5, 38. Checked 17 September 2026.
3. *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, U.S. English 2011, Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time; canonical Week 25 formulary audit. ICEL *Antiphonary*, printed p. 79. Text limits above.

³⁷*General Introduction to the Lectionary*, nos. 19–23, 67–68, 105–107.

4. *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, nos. 19–23, 67–68, 105–107, Liturgy Office English PDF.
5. Augustine, Sermon 87, §§1–10, 14–15; R. G. MacMullen, trans., NPNF I.6 (1888), New Testament Sermon 37, retained CCEL witness.
6. Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*: 36, third exposition, §§14–16; 118, sermon 4, §§1–3; 144, §§2–3, 7, 15–18. J. E. Tweed, trans., NPNF I.8 (1888). Its abridged Psalm 119, Aleph, §§4–6 parallels Latin Psalm 118, sermon 4, also read at Augustinus.it for the corporate voice.
7. Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* I.41, NPNF I.5; *Tractates on John* 47.1–3, NPNF I.7; retained CCEL witnesses.
8. Chrysostom, *Matthew* 64.3–5, Prevost–Riddle translation, NPNF I.10 (1888); *Acts* 35 on 16:13–15, NPNF I.11 (1889); *Philippians* 3 on 1:20–21 and 4 on 1:22–27, NPNF I.13 (1889); retained CCEL witnesses.
9. Gregory, *Homilies on the Gospels* I.19.1–4, PL 76, cols. 1154–1157; retained facsimile, exact impression unauthenticated.
10. Aquinas, *Isaiah* 55, *Opera omnia*, XIV (Parma: Fiacadori, 1863), pp. 556–557; *Philippians* 1, lectures 3–4, *In omnes D. Pauli Apostoli epistolas commentaria*, II (Liège: Dessain, 1857), pp. 371–373; page-image controllers.
11. Jerome, *Isaiah* XV on 55:6–9, DCO Latin *Pars* 4, pp. 27–30; 55:10–11, pp. 30–32, as context. Historical edition unidentified; paraphrase only, no offline substitute.
12. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II.13.3–4, Roberts–Rambaut, ANF 1 (Buffalo, 1887), pp. 373–374; raw OCR, paraphrase only.
13. Bellarmine, *Commentary on the Psalms*, O’Sullivan, trans. (1866): Psalm 36 on 30–40; 118 on 5–7; 144 on 8–9, 17–21. Abridged English, retained eCatholic2000 historical-body witness.
14. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, retained New Advent article texts: C. Souvay, “Isaias” (VIII, 1910), “Life”, “First Isaias”, “Second Isaias”; J. E. Jacquier, “Gospel of St. Matthew” (X, 1911), “Destination”, “Date and place of composition”; A. Durand, “The New Testament” (XIV, 1912), “Origin”; L. Fonck, “Gospel of St. John” (VIII, 1910), “Circumstances of the composition”; A. E. Breen, “Acts of the Apostles” (I, 1907), “Date of composition”; F. Prat, “St. Paul” (XI, 1911), “Chronology”, “Second mission”; J. Howlett, “Biblical Chronology” (III, 1908), “The apostles”; A. Vander Heeren, “Epistle to the Philippians” (XII, 1911), “Place and date”.
15. USCCB, *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, introductions to Isaiah, Psalms, and Matthew; complete introduction bodies inspected in the registered 21 September 2026 web state. Protected texts; historical orientation only.

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