

# Readings + 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 15 A + July 16, 2023

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

## First Reading Isaiah 55:10-13

<sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.  
<sup>12</sup> For you shall go out in joy,  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

## Psalmody Psalm 65:1, 8-13

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be fulfilled.

**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water.

**You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.**

You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

**You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.**

May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy.

**May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.**

## Second Reading Romans 8:1-11

*Paul writes:* <sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending God's own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, God condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the One who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through this Spirit that dwells in you.

## Holy Gospel Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*Matthew, Mark, and Luke all include the parable of the sower and the seed, and Jesus' interpretation of it, with slight variations.*

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and

sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And in the sowing, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> If you have ears, hear!"

*[<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples came and asked Jesus, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup> He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the dominion of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.'*

*<sup>14</sup> With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:*

*You will indeed listen, but never understand,  
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.*

*<sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and their ears are hard of hearing,  
and they have shut their eyes;*

*so that they might not look with their eyes,  
and listen with their ears,  
and understand with their heart and turn—  
and I would heal them.'*

*<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup> I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.]\**

<sup>18</sup> "Hear then the parable of the sower.

<sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the dominion of heaven and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.

<sup>23</sup> But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

*\*Omitted from the lectionary*

**Psalmody** Psalm 65:1-13 – full version (1-8 are optional in the lectionary)

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be fulfilled.

**To you, the one who answers prayer, to you all flesh shall come.**

Our sins are stronger than we are, but you blot out our transgressions.

**Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple.**

Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.

**You make firm the mountains by your power; you are girded about with might.**

You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.

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