

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 102)

ANTIPHON: The Lord is kind and merciful; slow to anger and rich in compassion.

RESPONSE: **The Lord is kind and merciful; slow to anger and rich in compassion.**

LECTOR: My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. **R.**

LECTOR: It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion. **R.**

LECTOR: His wrath will come to an end; he will not be angry for ever. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults **R.**

LECTOR: For as the heavens are high above the earth so strong is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

Or

The chalice of blessings that we bless is a communion in the blood of Christ; and the bread that we break is a sharing in the body of the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Sirach 27:30-28:7; Roman 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35

NEXT WEEK (25th Sunday of Year A) Is 55:6-9; Ps 144; Philippians 1:20-24, 27; Mt 20:1-16

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*Seeing yourself
through
another*



13 September 2026 24th Sunday Year A

In his letters, St Paul often provides a pithy saying for his readers to digest and integrate into themselves. In other words, he writes aphorisms. Stoic and Cynic sages of ancient philosophy did this too.

One of my favorite modern philosophers, Blaise Pascal, in a book he wrote called *Thoughts (Pensées)*, included one about our constant need for distraction: 'Humans can't be happy because of their inability to sit quietly in a room alone.' (Two years before he died, Pope Francis wrote an extraordinary but little-known letter on Pascal, 'The Grandeur and Misery of Man'.)

Philosophers often distilled their teachings into sharp little punches of wisdom that left a mark long after the philosophers were gone. The marketing industry attempts much the same, though they aim to tie their product to an emotionally potent song or image or phrase.

Songwriting might be a closer example to St Paul's writing. The song's 'hook' or the chorus repeats a memorable line that can stick in your memory for decades. Recently, as I was thumbing through shirts in my closet, the refrain from a hymn we sang in the church I attended as a child jumped into my mind: "Trust and Obey! For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but trust and obey."

Aphorisms are meant to be memorized and meditated on. They are meant to encapsulate a whole way of seeing, of acting, of existing in the world. Here are couple of my favorite Pauline aphorisms: I have been crucified with

Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. There is one God. There is one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.

The second reading today (Romans 14:7-9) includes an aphorism. It begins: 'The life and death of each one of us has its influence on others ... alive or dead we belong to the Lord.' Let's ponder this deeply. If you were to memorise it, recalling it often, asking God to allow it to shape your outlook, your actions, your relationships, what might happen? One thing is that you might start to see the world in a way that reorients you amidst the chaos of our western culture's failed individualistic, self-interested, and materialist patterns that are so deeply engrained in us. The aphorism teaches you to see the meaning of yourself through another (the Lord) and through a community (we) that extends beyond the horizon of physical life.

St Paul continues: 'This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord of both the dead and of the living.'

Sayings like this tell the truth. They articulate the essential. In a world of relentless shallow speech, glossy fakes, and curated illusions, it is more important than ever to apprentice ourselves to the school of St Paul, the philosopher, learning how to chew on his aphorisms until we become what they say.

W Chris Hackett

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