

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 62)

ANTIPHON: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

LECTOR: O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water. **R.**

LECTOR: So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory. For your love is better than life, my lips will speak your praise. **R.**

LECTOR: So I will bless you all my life, in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul shall be filled as with a banquet, my mouth shall praise you with joy. **R.**

LECTOR: For you have been my help; in the shadow of your wings I rejoice. My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our heart, that we might see how great is the hope to which we are called. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) How great is the goodness, Lord, that you keep for those who fear you.

Or

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

TODAY'S READINGS Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27

NEXT WEEK (23rd Sunday of Year A) Ezekiel 33:7-9; Psalm 94; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20

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Stoking the fire in our bellies



30 August 2026 22nd Sunday Year A

A woman once shared her experiences as a youth leader when she had to deal with a child who, having been twice warned about his misbehaviour, was told to leave the group. However, the boy kept turning up. "Why do you keep coming back?" she asked.

The boy said, "Because no one else remembers my name." This simple story is a reminder that sometimes people will hang around, will keep coming back, not through anger or rage, but because that someone needs to hear their name spoken with love. It is a quiet fire burning within them.

Jeremiah knows that fire. He says to the Lord, "You have seduced and overpowered me, Lord." However, he also realises the Word of the Lord has become a reproach for him. "There is in my heart a fire, a burning fire imprisoned in my bones. The effort to restrain it wearied me, I could not bear it."

Jeremiah tries to stay silent, because speaking God's Word brings ridicule and threat. But he can not. The fire in his heart keeps him going.

Peter, after Jesus shares with the apostles that he will go to Jerusalem to suffer, says, "God forbid it, Lord! This must not happen to you!" Peter wants a messiah without suffering, a path without a cross.

Jesus turns to him and says, "Get behind me, Satan ... If anyone wants to be my follower, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me."

Jesus' journey to the cross is not about seeking pain. It is about not walking away when God's fire says, "Stay!" or "Go!" It is about choosing love over comfort, truth over popularity, sacrifice over safety. It is the fire in his heart.

From the second reading, Saint Paul teaches us about how to live: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Present your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." That is not a call to one dramatic act of sacrifice. It is rather a call to small acts of sacrifice and offering to the Lord every day, such as when we are patient with difficult people, or generous when we would rather save and hold back, or speaking the truth when silence would be easier.

This week we are invited to examine the fire in our hearts. Where is God pressing on us to act, even though it is inconvenient? Maybe it is forgiving, or serving, or simply remembering and speaking someone's name. Following Jesus can be costly and painful, but the One who carried the cross has walked the path from death to life. And he walks with us now, turning our small sacrifices into something that will last.

May we never run from the fire. Let it light our way and lead us home. Let it encourage us to be active in social justice, supporting positive movements to create a better world. Amen.

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