

The Gospel story shows us the nobility of a humble change of mind. The first son “thought the better of it.” He was open to change, to better thoughts. The second son’s mind was set and closed. One son asserts his disobedience in words, but then obeys in his actions; the second son obeys with his words, but disobeys in his actions. The question that Jesus poses is pointed and direct: Which son did what the father wanted? All would agree that “actions speak louder than words” and that even if his words were disobedient, the son who did the work as ordered did the father’s will. The chief priests and elders, the ones who speak most often about God, did not act accordingly. They were happy with their closed – mind exclusivity, excluding not only pagans from God’s favour, but even the Samaritans who failed their rigid test of orthodoxy. They did not respond to the message of repentance announced by John the Baptist with a change of heart. Instead, John’s message was heeded by those one would not expect to repent—tax collectors, prostitutes, and other sinners. Because of their actions, these sinners will enter the Kingdom of God ahead of the religious leaders. Jesus could ask us the same question. Do our words indicate our obedience to God? If not our words, do our actions? God desires a full conversion of heart, that our actions (and our words as well) will give evidence of our love for God.

#### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Grant us, O merciful God, that this our offering may find acceptance with you and that through it the wellspring of all blessing may be laid open before us. Through Christ our Lord.

#### **Communion Antiphon**

*Remember your word to your servant, O Lord, by which you have given me hope. This is my comfort when I am brought low.*

#### **Prayer after Communion**

May this heavenly mystery, O Lord, restore us in mind and body, that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ, to whose suffering we are united whenever we proclaim his Death. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

## **Twenty-Sixth Sunday**

**Year A**

**27<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

#### ***Not Promises but Acts***

*A theme common to all three readings is that of changing one’s mind. Our capacity to change our minds leaves us open to hazard and to hope; hazard when we choose to “renounce our integrity and to commit sin, hope when we choose to renounce sin to become law-abiding and honest” The gospel reading especially challenges us that in order to be a follower of Christ we must actively put our faith into practice and to follow the teachings of Jesus. Let us pray for the strength this week to “clothe” ourselves in Christ in order that we do his will and continue reaching out to all those in need.*

#### **Entrance Antiphon**

*All that you have done to us, O Lord, you have done with true judgement, for we have sinned against you and not obeyed your commandments. But give glory to your name and deal with us according to the bounty of your mercy.*

#### **Collect**

O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

#### **EZEKIEL 18: 25-28**

Thus says the Lord: ‘You say, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and

does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.'

#### THE WORD OF THE LORD

The Lord is addressing those who deem His ways unjust, reminding them that it is their own paths that are askew. The virtuous who turn to wrongdoing face consequences, but the wicked who reform their ways will find life. This speaks of the opportunity for change and redemption, and it underscores the significance of turning away from wrongdoing and embracing righteousness. God's mercy extends to those who change their hearts, demonstrating that true repentance leads to life. This challenges us to assess our own hearts and actions, recognising the power of change and the boundless reach of God's grace.

**PSALM: 25(24):4-5b. 6-7. 8-9.**

Response: *Remember your compassion, O LORD.*

O LORD, make me know your ways. Teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth, and teach me; for you are the God of my salvation.

Remember your compassion, O LORD, and your merciful love, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions. In your merciful love remember me, because of your goodness, O LORD.

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he shows the way to sinners. He guides the humble in right judgement; to the humble he teaches his way.

#### PHILIPPIANS 2: 1-11

Brothers and Sisters: If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy; complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who,

though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

#### THE WORD OF THE LORD

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul talks of a more specific and positive change of mind: "in your minds, you must be the same as Christ Jesus", or as an older translation put it, "let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." Day by day we must be constantly keeping an open mind to that of Christ's. Paul emphasises one aspect in particular of the mind of Christ, his humble openness and self-emptying in contrast to the conceited grasping and clinging of Adam: "he did not cling to (or grasp at) his equality with God (as Adam did in Eden) but emptied himself.

*Alleluia, alleluia. My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord, and I know them, and they follow me. Alleluia.*

#### MATTHEW 21: 28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." And he answered, "I will not", but afterwards he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, "I go, sir", but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him.'

#### THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD