

## **FIRST READING: Jeremiah 18:1-11** The potter (NIVUK)

<sup>1</sup> This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup> ‘Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.’ <sup>3</sup> So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. <sup>4</sup> But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. <sup>5</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to me. <sup>6</sup> He said, ‘Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?’ declares the LORD. ‘Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. <sup>7</sup> If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, <sup>8</sup> and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. <sup>9</sup> And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, <sup>10</sup> and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it. <sup>11</sup> ‘Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, “This is what the LORD says: look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.”’

## **PSALM 139:1-6,13-18**

<sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. <sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. <sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. <sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. <sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, <sup>[a]</sup> God! How vast is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup> Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand – when I awake, I am still with you.

## **SECOND READING: Philemon 1-21** A personal appeal to Philemon (NIVUK)

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker – <sup>2</sup> also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier – and to the church that meets in your home: <sup>3</sup> Grace and peace to you <sup>[a]</sup> from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. <sup>7</sup> Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts

of the Lord's people. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, <sup>9</sup> yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul – an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus – <sup>10</sup> that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus,<sup>[b]</sup> who became my son while I was in chains. <sup>11</sup> Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. <sup>12</sup> I am sending him – who is my very heart – back to you. <sup>13</sup> I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. <sup>14</sup> But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favour you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. <sup>15</sup> Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for ever – <sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord. <sup>17</sup> So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup> If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back – not to mention that you owe me your very self. <sup>20</sup> I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. <sup>21</sup> Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. <sup>22</sup> And one thing more: prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. <sup>23</sup> Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. <sup>24</sup> And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. <sup>25</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

**GOSPEL: Luke 14:25-33** The cost of being a disciple (NIVUK)

<sup>25</sup> Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup> 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> 'Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup> For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, <sup>30</sup> saying, "This person began to build and wasn't able to finish." <sup>31</sup> 'Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.