

## **SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, 16 JULY 2023**

**FIRST READING: Genesis 25:19-34** Jacob gains the birthright of Esau

<sup>19</sup> This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, <sup>20</sup> and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram<sup>[a]</sup> and sister of Laban the Aramean. <sup>21</sup> Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. <sup>22</sup> The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, 'Why is this happening to me?' So she went to enquire of the LORD. <sup>23</sup> The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the elder will serve the younger.' <sup>24</sup> When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>25</sup> The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>26</sup> After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.<sup>[c]</sup> Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. <sup>27</sup> The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. <sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. <sup>30</sup> He said to Jacob, 'Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!' (That is why he was also called Edom.<sup>[d]</sup>) <sup>31</sup> Jacob replied, 'First sell me your birthright.' <sup>32</sup> 'Look, I am about to die,' Esau said. 'What good is the birthright to me?' <sup>33</sup> But Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

**PSALM 119:105-112**

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. <sup>106</sup> I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. <sup>107</sup> I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word. <sup>108</sup> Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws. <sup>109</sup> Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law. <sup>110</sup> The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts. <sup>111</sup> Your statutes are my heritage for ever; they are the joy of my heart. <sup>112</sup> My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.<sup>[a]</sup>

**SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11** You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit

**8** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you<sup>[a]</sup> free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened<sup>[b]</sup> by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the

likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.<sup>[c]</sup> And so he condemned sin in the flesh,<sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.<sup>6</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.<sup>7</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.<sup>8</sup> Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.<sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life<sup>[d]</sup> because of righteousness.<sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of<sup>[e]</sup> his Spirit who lives in you.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23** The parable of the sower

**13** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.<sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.<sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed.<sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.<sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.<sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.<sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.<sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.<sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.'<sup>18</sup> 'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:<sup>19</sup> when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.<sup>20</sup> The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy.<sup>21</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.<sup>22</sup> The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.<sup>23</sup> But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'