

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, 23 JULY 2023

FIRST READING: Genesis 28:10-19a Jacob dreams of a ladder from heaven to earth

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹ When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ There above it^[a] stood the LORD, and he said: 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.^[b] ¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' ¹⁶ When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' ¹⁷ He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.' ¹⁸ Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel,^[c] though the city used to be called Luz.

PSALM 139:1-12,23,24

¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:12-25 Our future glory is beyond compare

² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For those who are

led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, ‘Abba,^[b] Father.’ ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that^[c] the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 The parable of the weeds

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷ ‘The owner’s servants came to him and said, “Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?” ²⁸ “An enemy did this,” he replied. ‘The servants asked him, “Do you want us to go and pull them up?” ²⁹ “No,” he answered, “because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”’ ³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.’ ³⁷ He answered, ‘The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰ ‘As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.