

Living the Word: Philemon 1 – 21

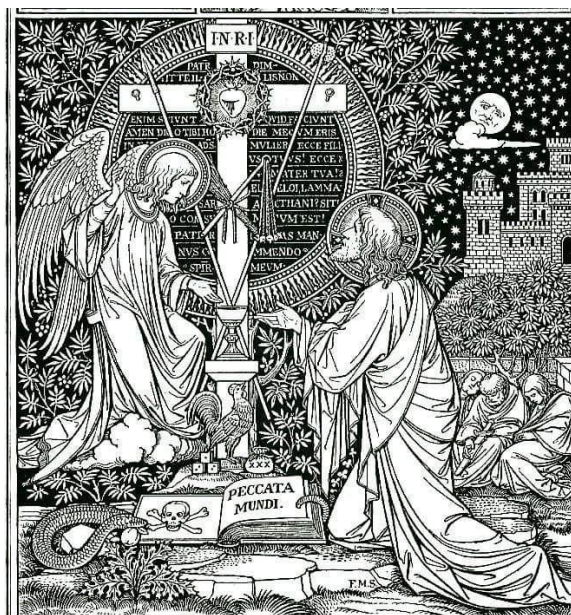
St Paul's letter to Philemon includes much needed encouragement to remain faithful to Christ's teaching. When we do so, heaven rejoices, and those in the world who are wearied by sin will find refreshment among us. We also learn of how apostolic authority works: the teachings of the apostles carry the weight of Christ's commandments. Yet these commands do not coerce but entice us: what God desires is not our blind submission, but our love for His will. And we see Onesimus being sent back to Philemon as still a slave in social rank. However, Philemon has to receive him as a 'beloved brother' in Christ Jesus! When we turn to Christ, our world may look the same, but the message of the Gospel transforms us.

On the Nativity of Our Lady, 8th September, by St Alphonsus Liguori

Before the birth of Mary, the world was lost in the darkness of sin. "Mary was born, and the dawn arose," says a holy Father. Of Mary it had already been said: Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising? As the earth rejoices when the dawn appears, because it is the precursor of the sun, so also when Mary was born the whole world rejoices because she was the precursor of Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who being made her Son, came to save us by His death; hence the Church sings, "Thy nativity, O Virgin Mother of God, announced joy to the whole world; for from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness, who has given us life eternal." So that when Mary was born, our remedy, our consolation, and our salvation came into the world; for through Mary, we received our Saviour.



Sunday 7th Sept. 2025
12th Sunday after Trinity
or 23rd in Ordinary Time
Gospel: Luke 14: 25 – 33



It is not easy to be a Christian. It would be much easier to follow the crowd, to agree with what is popular, and not to worry whether it is right or not. In today's Gospel, Jesus spells out the cost of following him; He informs us that it will cost us everything. These are hard words, startling even. The true disciple is to hate, actually hate, their very life, together with those who are closest to them. The parable of one preparing to build, and of another preparing for war, gathering together all the relevant facts before making the decision whether to proceed, invites us to calmly consider what discipleship really is, for it is not found in the security of possessions. No one who heard Jesus's words would be in any doubt about the unbearable burden of the Cross. That is the cost to us of following Him.