

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

12th February 2025

First reading

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17

‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden.’

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up — for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground — then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 104(103):1-2a. 27-28. 29b-30 R1a

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

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O Lord my God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and honour,
wrapped in light as with a robe!

All of these look to you

to give them their food in due season.

You give it, they gather it up;

you open wide your hand, they are well filled.

You take away their breath, they die,

returning to the dust from which they came.

You send forth your spirit, and they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth.

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. John 17:17b, a

Alleluia, alleluia.

Your word is truth, O Lord;
sanctify us in the truth.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 7:14-23

‘The things that come out of a person are what defile him.’

At that time: Jesus called the people to him again and said to them, ‘Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.’ And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, ‘Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his

stomach, and is expelled?' Thus he declared all foods clean. And he said, 'What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

While the heart is a powerful, traditional symbol for love, Jesus takes a somewhat more nuanced view of what lies hidden in the heart. It can be the seat of evil intentions, intentions that are damaging and destructive of others. The heart is the person's inner core and we know that our heart can hold both light and shade; it can be a reservoir for good and for harm.

One of the great traditional images of our faith has been the Sacred Heart. This image declares that at God's inner core is a totally selfless love, a love revealed fully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This greater love is powerfully creative and life-giving. Our own hearts should in some sense reflect the Sacred Heart, with an inner core linked to God's inner core. This vision of our potential echoes in a simple prayer that many of us will have learned at some time, "Come Holy Spirit, fill my heart, and kindle in me the fire of your love."