



"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY – SEPTEMBER 7TH, 2025

PRIDE, GIVE WAY TO LOVE

Trusting Mercy, Renouncing Power: The Radical Way of Christ

"Grant us, O LORD, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy..."

This week's Collect lays before us a timeless and relevant spiritual challenge: to let go of pride and self-reliance, and to entrust ourselves wholly to the mercy of God. It is a radical invitation—not merely to believe in God's mercy, but to boast in it, to shape our lives around it, and to allow it to reorient our relationships, choices, and values.

This call is embodied in today's Epistle reading: Paul's letter to Philemon. Unlike Paul's other writings, this letter does not offer a theological argument or address a congregation. Instead, it is a deeply personal, pastoral appeal. Yet in its intimacy, it may offer the clearest image of the Gospel being lived in real time.



Paul is writing from prison to Philemon, a Christian householder, about a runaway slave named Onesimus, who seems to have become a believer under Paul's care and has grown dear to him. But Paul sends him back to Philemon—not as a slave, but as "a beloved brother." He does not command Philemon to accept Onesimus, but appeals to him on the basis of love. In doing so, Paul refuses to lean on his apostolic authority, and instead relies on the transforming power of God's mercy to shape Philemon's response.

Philemon, in turn, is invited to let go of his social and legal power over Onesimus. In the Roman world, a runaway slave could be punished severely, even killed. But the Gospel calls Philemon to a new vision of humanity: no longer master and slave, but siblings in Christ.

Jesus, in the Gospel reading from Luke, uses radical language to express what this grace-filled discipleship entails. He speaks of the cost of following Him, of "hating" family, carrying the cross, and giving up all possessions. These are shocking words. But they are meant to awaken His listeners then, and us now, to the seriousness of the call. Jesus is not advocating hatred in the literal sense, but pointing to the kind of deep loyalty that discipleship demands. Even the most foundational aspects of life—family, security, identity—must be placed second to our allegiance to Christ.

In that sense, Paul and Philemon embody this difficult teaching. Paul, imprisoned and powerless, still places the Gospel first. Philemon is being asked to surrender not just a slave, but his position of dominance. This is not theoretical religion. It is faith put into radical, relational practice.

The readings from Deuteronomy and Psalm 1 place this all within the ancient rhythm of covenant: the way of life versus the way of death. Moses calls the people to choose life by loving and obeying God. The Psalmist describes the righteous as trees planted by water and nourished by God's word. These aren't abstract spiritual ideals, but real-world choices: to live by mercy and justice, or by self-interest and pride.

So what about us? In our personal lives, the invitation is to ask: Where do I rely on my own strength? Is it in control over my schedule, my image, my money, my achievements? How can I release my grip and trust more deeply in God's mercy?

This might mean taking a risk: to forgive, to speak truth in love, to extend generosity beyond what feels safe. It might mean praying with open hands instead of closed fists.

In our communal life as a church, we are called to examine how we welcome others, especially those different from us, to be honest about where we might still hold onto roles of dominance or exclusion, and to be willing, like Paul, to advocate for the vulnerable; or like Philemon, to let go of social power for the sake of Gospel reconciliation.

Discipleship is not cheap. Jesus is clear about that. But neither is it joyless. Those who walk in the way of mercy discover a deeper freedom, a fuller life. As our Collect reminds us, God never forsakes those who make their boast in His mercy. We are not alone on this journey.

Like Philemon, we may not have asked to be caught up in the hard work of reconciliation. Like Paul, we may feel limited or weary. Like Onesimus, we may carry the burden of our past. But Christ calls all of us into a new kind of community: a kingdom where mercy reigns, and pride gives way to love.

This week, may we have the courage to say yes to that kingdom.

Fr. Carlos Expósito, Rector

READINGS FOR THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Deuteronomy 30:15–20 + Psalm 1 + Philemon 1–21 + Luke 14:25–33

CALENDAR

Note: We worship in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10:00 AM. Tuesday Noon Mass is held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

SUNDAY September 7th, 2025 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 AM Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5 - 12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

Christian Formation for Adults (the 2nd and 4th Sundays)

Youth and adults around Noon after the Mass in the Library

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

www.allsaintschurch.org

www.edsd.org