



"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 20TH, 2026

THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST

The Downside Up Kingdom

If asked what comes to your mind first when you think of God's governance or reign, many of us will probably say things like "bliss, harmony, joy, unconditional love, justice, inclusion, and perfect communion." All of these (and probably others) are part of what our Christian hope is, and we have the certitude they will be fulfilled in God's kingdom.

However, as I was reading this Sunday's scriptures I realized there is one striking feature of God's kingdom that we often miss: its downside up character.



What I mean by this term is that the kingdom that Jesus announced and gave signs of during his earthly lifetime appears contrary to the way we assume things are in life.

This can be perceived already in the Old Testament, as in the Book of Jonah, for instance. This book is listed as part of the prophets, but a deeper analysis shows it is more a parable than a typical prophetic book.

The main theme in the book is Jonah being sent by God to Nineveh, a sinful city (and one the Israelites greatly despised because its rulers had taken them captives in the past) to prophesy its destruction. Jonah tries in vain to run away from this mission. He explicitly states that he was almost sure God would not destroy the city if its inhabitants repented, and this is in fact what happens.

Jonah is really angry. In all justice, according to human standards, Nineveh deserved to be destroyed. Jonah is also angry because he feels personally disgraced as a prophet. His prophecy was not fulfilled. He values his personal prestige more than the thousands of inhabitants in the city, including the animals. This is what God is trying to teach him: mercy is the number one value. The rest is subordinate to His loving mercy.

In his Letter to the Philippians, chapter 1, St. Paul speaks about his personal preference for being in the Lord's presence and live in perfect communion with Him already, but he also understands that for the time being, even if being in the flesh implies suffering and toil, he must continue to be in the body for the progress and joy of the converts he is upholding.

St. Paul has understood that in God's reign what is really valuable is not what we might prefer, no matter how wonderful it may seem, but what is most useful for God's purposes.

And in this Sunday's Gospel reading (Matthew 20:1-16) we find a parable that I need to confess that took me some time to digest. In this parable there is a landowner hiring laborers for his vineyard at different times of the day, but in the end, contrary to the laborers' expectations, they are all paid the same wage. And the landowner does not hide to do it. On the contrary, he pays those who worked only one hour first, before everyone, and so on, until he comes to the ones who worked the most hours. It is clear he wants to make a point here.

When those who worked the most hours complain, he reminds them they had agreed to work for that amount, but then he adds, "Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

It is clear that this is probably not a good system to apply in salary policy. However, what the parable teaches has nothing to do with salary policy, but with God's extravagant generosity. Should we feel offended by God's generosity?

The concluding remark by Jesus is the clue: "So the last will be first, and the first will be last." In other words, in the kingdom Jesus proclaims values are often downside up in relation to the values of this world.

Fr. Carlos E. Expósito, Rector

READINGS FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jonah 3:10-4:11 + Philippians 1:21-30 + Matthew 20:1-16
+ Psalm 145:1-8

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 20th, 2026 The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
10:00 AM Mass in All Saints' Church
Join Zoom Meeting from our website at www.allsaintschurch.org
Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children
Ages 5 to 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