

# FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

## CALLED TO A SPACIOUS LAND



### In the Shadow of the Word

**“The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”** (*Deuteronomy 26: 8-9*)

Israel proclaims its faith by confessing that the land in which it lives is God's gift, not a possession to be used for its own sake:

**“So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you...”** (*Ezekiel 47: 21-22*)

**Bowing down in His presence is a sign of acknowledgement and worship. This is what Jesus did before the Father during the temptation in the desert.**

We listen to: [Adoramus te, Domine de Taizé](#)

## Women who accompany us on our journey

### The names of five sisters appear in the book of Numbers in connection with their land rights:

“Zelophehad, who was the son of Hepher, had no sons but daughters, whose names were *Maalah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah*.

These five sisters went to the entrance of the tent of meeting to speak to Moses and Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the community, and they said to them: ‘Our father died in the wilderness, but he did not belong to the group of Korah who rebelled against the Lord. He died because of his own sin and left no sons. However, it is not just that our father's name should disappear from his clan simply because he did not have a son. Give us a portion of land among our father's brothers.’ ”

“Moses presented the case of these women to the Lord, and the Lord replied, ‘The daughters of Zelophehad are right. Assign them a portion of land among their father's brothers, and let their father's inheritance pass to them.’” (*Numbers 27: 1-7*)

It is astonishing that their names have been preserved and also that their boldness in standing before Moses has been recorded: that they were speaking out assertively and describing as unjust a custom that deprived them of the right to a land that was God's gift and which no one could dispose of unjustly. The final part is significant: Moses, after presenting the claim of the five women to the Lord, solemnly declared: ‘The daughters of Zelophehad are right. The Lord was on their side and their claim was just.’



**We remember millions of women around the world who today are denied their land rights.**

**Let us pray with Psalm 37 (36), repeating as a refrain, ‘The meek shall inherit the earth’.**

*Trust in the Lord and do good; live in the land and enjoy security.  
Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

*Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, for he will act; he will make your  
innocence shine like the dawn, and your righteousness like the noonday sun.*

*The just shall inherit the earth, and dwell in it forever. From the Lord comes the  
salvation of the righteous: he is their refuge in times of trouble.*

*The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and  
saves them because they take refuge in him.”*

*Dolores Aleixandre rscj  
Spain*

