

Lectionary Texts for July 30, 2017 • Eighth Sunday after Pentecost - Year A  
Genesis 29:15-28 • Psalm 105:1-11, 45b • Romans 8:26-39 • Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

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*Jacob Encountering Rachel with her Father's Herds* by Joseph von Führich, 1800-1876  
Oil on Canvas, 1836  
Belvedere Museum  
Vienna, Austria

The Genesis story of Jacob and Laban, Leah and Rachel, has many dimensions, one of the strongest being Jacob's love for Rachel. Over the centuries artists have focused on this aspect, largely neglecting Laban's deceit. This painting by Joseph von Führich, based upon Genesis 29:1-14, shows Jacob's tenderness and caring. Rachel is portrayed as being graceful and gentle, while Leah, in the background, appears somewhat muscular and workmanlike.

Joseph von Führich became an art student in Prague in 1816; ten years later he went to Rome to continue his studies. In Rome he became associated with a group known as the Nazarenes, early 19th century German Romantic painters who aimed to revive honesty and spirituality in Christian art.

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About von Führich it is written that “...he does not admit that ecclesiastical art is its own end, but that its end is to be serviceable in God’s house...” He began teaching in Vienna in 1834, and in 1841 became a professor of composition at the Academy of Vienna. His late work consists largely of prints and drawings with a religious content, bringing him great popularity.

— Curated by Norman Mahan

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### **Genesis 29:15-28**

Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?”

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah’s eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful.

Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.”

Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.”

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.”

So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) When morning came, it was Leah!

And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?”

Laban said, “This is not done in our country — giving the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”

Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

### **Psalm 105: 1-22, 45b**

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,  
O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,

the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac,  
which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant,  
saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance."  
that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws. Praise the Lord!

### **Romans 8:26-39**

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things?

If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?

It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to

come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"Have you understood all this?"

They answered, "Yes."

And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."