



PRAYER FOR LIVING

DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR
LITURGICAL YEAR B/C~
NOVEMBER

SR. SANDRA SEOW
VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES



Prayer for Living Year B

Copyright © 2021 Sr. Sandra Seow

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the author.

Monday, 1st November, All Saints.

Revelation 7:2-4,9-14, 1 John 3:1-3, Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went onto the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance. Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness: they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.'

Blessed are you

Saints are ordinary people who lived their lives extraordinarily by living accordingly to the Beatitudes. Beatitudes are guides that help us live each day with the right attitudes and values.

To live the life of the Beatitudes is not an easy journey because it implies going against the current of this world that values wealth and power. Yet, today, Jesus invites us to make the Beatitudes part of our lives. We choose to be poor in spirit by recognising our poverty and accepting that we need God. We choose to be gentle and humble towards others, especially the weakest around us. We mourn as we suffer for the pain of others. We hunger and thirst for His justice in the world by standing up to what is true and loving. We give mercy and not condemnation to others who are in need of forgiveness. We work for peace and unity in the family, community, parish, society. We are ready to walk this path of the Beatitudes because we want to follow the same footsteps of Jesus.

Question for reflection:

At the end of my life, for what beatitude/s will I be remembered?

Tuesday, 2nd November, All Souls' Day.

Isaiah 25:6-9, Romans 5:5-11, Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-6

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling on Elijah.' Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink saying, 'Wait! And see if Elijah will come to take him down.' But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died, and he said, 'In truth this man was Son of God.' When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices with which to go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked they saw that the stone -- which was very big -- had already been rolled back. On entering the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and they were struck with amazement. But he said to them, 'There is no need to be so amazed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him.'

Life, death and resurrection

"But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last". One day, we will also take in our final breath, and our life here on earth will come to an end. Today, let us remember that the way we die will depend on how we live each day. Jesus lived for God by loving and serving others to the end. On the cross, His last words were a prayer of trust in God. He cried out, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*, which is the first line of Psalm 22, that expresses in the end, praise to God for His faithfulness and hope in His help. Can God be the center of our lives?

"...he has risen, he is not here". The next part of today's gospel is the resurrection of Jesus, which reminds us that He has risen, and we will too rise again. Jesus' death on the cross reveals that suffering and death

do not have the final word but love and life. Thus, this is our hope as we journey through life.

Question for reflection:

What does today's passage speak to me about my life and death?

Wednesday, 3rd November, St. Martin de Porres.

Romans 13:8-10, Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. 'Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, cannot be my disciple. No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple. 'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, anyone who saw it would start making fun of him and saying, "Here is someone who started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple without giving up all that he owns.'

The cost of discipleship

The call of Jesus to hate might sound strange for us as we read the gospel passage of today. However, we need to remember that Jesus often used exaggerated language to shock His listeners and get His point across. Jesus is calling those who desire to be His disciples to love Him before all else. Jesus has to be our first priority and our primary love. When He is our first love, He is the one who will empower us to love others with His unconditional and faithful love. Are we, as Christians and disciples of Jesus, ready to take on this commitment?

Our commitment to God is a personal daily decision. Jesus used the parables of the builder and the king to illustrate the need for us to reflect on the seriousness of being a disciple and our readiness to stay faithful

in our commitment to Him. May we not lose our enthusiasm halfway, but live our discipleship wholeheartedly to the end.

Question for reflection:

What does it mean to be Jesus' disciple?

Thursday, 4th November, St. Charles Borromeo.

Romans 14:7-12, Luke 15:1-10

The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to Jesus, and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you with a hundred sheep, if he lost one, would fail to leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine upright people who have no need of repentance. Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found the drachma I lost." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.'

God's extravagant love for all

Upon losing one sheep, a shepherd chose to walk away from his other 99 sheep to search for that one sheep. When he found it, he went back and threw a feast to celebrate his joy. Likewise, a woman lost her one coin and invested her time and resources to search for it. When she found it, she called all those around her to celebrate with her. The actions of the shepherd and the woman seem to be excessive. Who would do such a thing? God would! His love for each person, even the worst sinner in the eyes of the world, is faithful and unrelenting. God never gives up on anyone.

We can perhaps feel lost at this point in our journey of life. May we experience God our Shepherd coming to look for us and bring us into

His embrace of love. We need to allow ourselves to be loved by God so that we can open our hearts to welcome and include others, even those whom we regard as unworthy and weak.

Question for reflection:

What is God's message for me today as I pray with this gospel passage?

Friday, 5th November, 31st Week in Ordinary Time.

Romans 15:14-21, Luke 16:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes." Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" "One hundred measures of oil," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty." The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.'

To be proactive in living the faith

The steward in today's parable was dismissed because he was wasteful with his master's property. However, he did not dwell in hopelessness but started to act in order to ensure a secure future. He went to the people who owed money to his master and reduced their debts. By doing so, these people would be grateful to him and help him in his time of need. The master commended the steward for responding astutely to a challenging circumstance. What is the message for us from this parable? Jesus wants us, as children of light, to imitate this steward, not in his dishonest ways but in his decisiveness in acting and preparing for his future.

We might have the tendency not to take purposeful and resolute steps in living our Christian faith. We procrastinate, get distracted by other things, etc. As children of light, as disciples of Christ, we need to act and take steps to live the Gospel values of honesty, justice and love here and now so as to remain faithful to God.

Question for reflection:

Do I have the same astuteness (in living my faith) as the steward in today's parable?

Saturday, 6th November, 31st Week in Ordinary Time.

Romans 16: 3-9,16, 22-27, Luke 16:9-15

Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings. Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great; anyone who is dishonest in little things is dishonest in great. If then you are not trustworthy with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you are not trustworthy with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own? No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.' The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and jeered at him. He said to them, 'You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as upright in people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed in human eyes is loathsome in the sight of God.'

All I have is yours

'*You cannot be the slave both of God and of money*'. Jesus is not against money in itself. Money is merely a resource that we have to survive in this world. It should not be our master to whom we give our heart, mind and strength. Instead, our hearts should be drawn to God, who is our Creator, our Father, and He is the one whom we give wholly of ourselves.

"Money" can be taken literally, but it can also be taken symbolically. It can represent anything that can come between God and us. Today, we are invited to put God first in our lives. We do so by using all we have, be it time, health, talents, etc., to love and serve others for their good.

Question for reflection:

'You cannot be the slave both of God and of money'. What is Jesus' invitation for me in this time of prayer?

Sunday, 7th November, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.**1 Kings 17:10-16, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44**

In his teaching Jesus said, 'Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted respectfully in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the men who devour the property of widows and for show offer long prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.' He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'In truth I tell you, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury for they have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.'

Jesus sees and appreciates

In the gospel passage today, a poor widow put in two small coins into the temple treasury. Her contribution went unnoticed by those around her because of its insignificant quantity. However, Jesus saw the poor widow and her meagre contribution and drew his disciples attention to her. For Jesus, this poor widow was admirable because she gave from the goodness of her heart.

Today, many people are like this "poor widow", who quietly give of themselves in simple ways to do good for the benefit of others. Often, we fail to notice them because they are unassuming in what they do. Yet, Jesus' notices and appreciates them. The story of the poor widow challenges us to re-evaluate what we consider important in life. Often we value grand gestures, big contributions, etc. We want to be visible in our giving and doing so that others may admire us. But, perhaps the smallest action done out of love is what matters because what is important is that God is the one who sees and values our "two small coins".

Question for reflection:

Am I ready to give of myself to others by doing small, simple acts of love?

Monday, 8th November, 32nd Week in Ordinary Time.**Wisdom 1:1-7, Luke 17:1-6**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Obstacles are sure to come, but alas for the one through whom they occur! It would be better for such a person to be thrown into the sea with a millstone round the neck than to be the downfall of a single one of these little ones. Keep watch on yourselves! If your brother does something wrong, rebuke him and, if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says, "I am sorry," you must forgive him.' The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith like a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you.'

Lord, increase my faith to live the life you want me to!

"Keep watch on yourselves!". We are called to pay attention to our words and actions. This is because when we act in an unchristian way, we become stumbling blocks for others to grow in their knowledge and love for God. We need to be aware that our words and actions can lead people to God or away from God.

"If your brother does something wrong, rebuke him and, if he is sorry, forgive him...". We are called to work consistently for reconciliation. Often we bear grudges and resentments when someone hurts us. Yet, Jesus tells us to put mercy at the center of our hearts and choose to forgive the person. Therefore, like the disciples, let us ask Jesus, *"increase our faith"*, so that we can be a good influence on others and have the strength to put merciful love into action. Jesus always gives us the faith we need to live a life of love and peace each day.

Question for reflection:

Do my words and actions lead others to Christ?

**Tuesday, 9th November, The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica.
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12, 1 Corinthians 3:9-11,16-17, John 2:13-22**

Just before the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there. Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the dove sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: I am eaten up with zeal for your house. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us that you should act like this?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?' But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said.

A house of prayer, not a marketplace

In today's gospel, Jesus was angry because of what the Temple had become. The Temple had turned into a marketplace instead of a place where people encounter God. The words of Jesus continue to echo to us today, "*Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market*". We are called to encounter God and always enter into an intimate friendship with Him. However, there are times when we approach God in a transactional manner by saying to Him, "*You answer my prayer, and I will light three candles and pray the rosary everyday*". Let us enjoy being with Him when we worship and pray. We should always seek God first and not just search for benefits that we can get from Him.

In the gospel passage, Jesus presented His body to be the new living Temple. St. Paul, in the second reading, tells us that we too are God's temple. In us, God wishes to dwell and be present. Today and each day, He needs us to reveal His presence of love and peace to others.

Question for reflection:

How do I relate with God?

Wednesday, 10th November, St. Leo the Great.

Wisdom 6:1-11, Luke 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was travelling in the borderlands of Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten men suffering from a virulent skin-disease came to meet him. They stood some way off and called to him, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.' When he saw them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' Now as they were going away they were cleansed. Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself prostrate at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. This led Jesus to say, 'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner.' And he said to the man, 'Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.'

Turning back and praising God

"Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself prostrate at the feet of Jesus and thanked him". In today's gospel, ten lepers approached Jesus for healing. Jesus said to them, *"Go and show yourselves to the priests, " and they were healed along the way.* Yet, only one turned back to Jesus and praised God. This man, who was a Samaritan, recognised God's work in this moment of being healed. He did not walk away, but he saw the source of his healing with eyes of faith and turned back to Jesus and praised God.

God has gifted us with life, faith, family members and friends to journey with us, talents, abilities, etc. Even though we might struggle with challenges and difficulties in life, God continues to gift us with His presence that walks with us in these moments. Let us take this Samaritan man as a model of faith and follow his action of turning back to God and giving praise to Him with grateful hearts.

Question for reflection:

Do I take God and all that He does for me for granted?

Thursday, 11th November, St. Martin of Tours.

Wisdom 7:22- 8:1, Luke 17:20-25

Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was to come, Jesus gave them this answer, 'The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, "Look, it is here! Look, it is there!" For look, the kingdom of God is among you.' He said to the disciples, 'A time will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of man and will not see it. They will say to you, "Look, it is there!" or, "Look, it is here!" Make no move; do not set off in pursuit; for as the lightning flashing from one part of heaven lights up the other, so will be the Son of man when his Day comes. But first he is destined to suffer grievously and be rejected by this generation.'

Lord, may your kingdom come!

The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was to come. Jesus said, "*The kingdom of God is among you*". The kingdom of God is not a physical place, but it refers to the presence and love of God. The kingdom is present and made visible in the person of Jesus as well as in His words and actions. Today, Jesus tells us the same as He told the Pharisees that the kingdom of God, His presence is already here with us, in us and among us, even in situations of injustice, sickness and suffering. We need eyes of faith to perceive and recognise the signs of God's presence.

God's presence moves among us when we continue to live the gospel values of truth and love. When we extend a helping hand to the poor and the weak, God's kingdom is there. When we forgive a brother/sister, God's kingdom is there. When we comfort a grieving person, God's kingdom is there. Today, let us play our part in bringing His kingdom wherever we go.

Question for reflection:

How can I make the kingdom of God real and visible today?

Friday, 12th November, St. Josaphat.

Wisdom 13:1-9, Luke 17:26-37

Jesus said to his disciples, 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it also be in the days of the Son of man. People were eating and drinking, marrying

wives and husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all. It will be the same as it was in Lot's day: people were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but the day Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and it destroyed them all. It will be the same when the day comes for the Son of man to be revealed. When that Day comes, no one on the housetop, with his possessions in the house, must come down to collect them, nor must anyone in the fields turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose it; and anyone who loses it will keep it safe. I tell you, on that night, when two are in one bed, one will be taken, the other left; when two women are grinding corn together, one will be taken, the other left.' The disciples spoke up and asked, 'Where, Lord?' He said, 'Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather.'

The brevity of life

In the time of Noah, the people were eating, drinking and going about their daily business. We perhaps can also identify ourselves with the people in Noah's time because we are also constantly busy with activities and distracted with the things here on earth. In our busyness, Jesus never stops calling us to enter into a personal friendship with Him. It is from this relationship with Jesus that we work and go about our daily life. When we are rooted in Jesus, we will live a meaningful and purposeful life based on love.

"I tell you, on that night, when two are in one bed, one will be taken, the other left; when two women are grinding corn together, one will be taken, the other left". Our time here on earth is limited, and it will one day come to an end. Thus, we need to live as though today is our final day. Let us then focus on living this day with Jesus and have love as our motivation for all we do and say.

Question for reflection:

Everything in this life is passing. What am I really living for?

Saturday, 13th November, 32nd Week in Ordinary Time.

Wisdom 18:14-16, 19: 6-9, Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. 'There was a judge in a certain town,' he said, 'who had neither fear of God nor respect for anyone. In the same town there was also a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, "I want justice from you against my enemy!" For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, "Even though I have neither fear of God nor respect for any human person, I must give this widow her just rights since she keeps pestering me, or she will come and slap me in the face." And the Lord said, "You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now, will not God see justice done to his elect if they keep calling to him day and night even though he still delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"

Pray and never lose heart

In this pandemic world, there are many reasons why we get discouraged and give up on prayer, faith and even God. Today, Jesus tells us the parable of the fearless widow who did not give up but kept demanding justice from a rather unpleasant judge. He did not bother to help this widow because she was a nobody in his eyes. However, he ultimately gave in because of her persistence.

The point of this parable is that if the unjust judge would give in to the widow's requests because of her unwavering determination, how much more God, who is loving and merciful, would listen to us and respond to our needs? Therefore, Jesus calls us to pray and never to lose heart. Our persistent prayers do not change God's mind. Instead, when we keep praying, we become more trusting in God and His ways. We know that God only wants what is best for us.

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus' message for me today?

Sunday, 14th November, 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, World Day of the Poor.

Daniel 12:1-3, Hebrews 10:11-14, 18, Mark 13:24-32

Jesus said to his disciples: 'But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will come falling out of the sky and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send the angels to gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of the sky. Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, right at the gates. In truth I tell you, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Sky and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.'

The call to live a meaningful life of love

The gospel passage of today is full of vivid and frightening images and words. Jesus paints a picture of doom and gloom because He wanted to remind us that our physical life and everything here on earth will come to an end. We tend to live as though we are meant to live forever, but the reality is that we will meet death one day. Thus, Jesus wants us to reflect on how we can live our lives here on earth each day with meaning and purpose.

We are called to live a life of love and service. Today, the Church celebrate World Day of the Poor. Who are the poor? They are people who find themselves living on the fringes of society, such as the migrant workers, the unemployed, those living in debt, the elderly living alone in nursing homes, the homeless, etc. If we want to live a truly meaningful life, then let us open our eyes and “*see Jesus in the poor and to serve Jesus in the poor*” (Pope Francis, World Day of the Poor homily, 15th November 2020).

Question for reflection:

How can I serve Jesus in the poor today?

Monday, 15th November, St. Albert the Great.

1 Maccabees 1:10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-64, Luke 18:35-43

As Jesus drew near to Jericho there was a blind man sitting at the side of the road begging. When he heard the crowd going past he asked what it was all about, and they told him that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by. So he called out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.' The people in front scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, 'Son of David, have pity on me.' Jesus stopped and ordered them to bring the man to him, and when he came up, asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' 'Sir,' he replied, 'let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you.' And instantly his sight returned and he followed him praising God, and all the people who saw it gave praise to God.

What do you want?

In today's gospel, a blind man shouted unceasingly, "*Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me*". When the people tried to hush him and told him to be quiet, he ignored them and shouted even louder. Jesus stopped and asked him, "*What do you want me to do for you?*". He said to Jesus, "*Sir, let me see again*". His request was answered, and he praised God.

Like this blind man, we are called to seek Jesus with persevering faith and to keep presenting our deep needs to Him with trust. In this time of prayer, Jesus asks us personally, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" and let us honestly talk to Him and tell him of our needs. In front of Jesus, we can reveal what we have in our hearts: "*Lord, I want to see again. I want to learn how to let go. I want to love again. I want to live life with peace...*". May we always give praise to God for His loving and comforting presence in our lives.

Question for reflection:

"What do you want me to do for you?" What would my response be?

Tuesday, 16th November, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Gertrude.

2 Maccabees 6:18-31, Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town and suddenly a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He kept trying to see which

Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today.' And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house,' they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

Today, I must stay in your house

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and a rich man. When he heard that Jesus was in town, he rushed off and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus because he was too short to see Him with the presence of a huge crowd. Jesus took the initiative to draw close to Zacchaeus because He desired to encounter him personally and offer the gift of His friendship to him. He called Zacchaeus by his name and said, “*Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today*”. In that personal encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus experienced merciful love that moved him to change his life for the better.

Jesus looks at us always with love and tells us, “*Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today*”. Today and each day, He wants to enter our house, our hearts and be our companion in our lives. Let us be open and welcome Jesus with great joy. When we encounter Jesus, our lives will never be the same again.

Question for reflection:

Can I respond with joy, like Zacchaeus, to the call of Jesus?

Wednesday, 17th November, St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31, Luke 19:11-28

While the people were listening, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the kingdom of God was going to show itself then and there. Accordingly he said, 'A man of noble

birth went to a distant country to be appointed king and then return. He summoned ten of his servants and gave them ten pounds, telling them, "Trade with these, until I get back." But his compatriots detested him and sent a delegation to follow him with this message, "We do not want this man to be our king." 'Now it happened that on his return, having received his appointment as king, he sent for those servants to whom he had given the money, to find out what profit each had made by trading. The first came in, "Sir," he said, "your one pound has brought in ten." He replied, "Well done, my good servant! Since you have proved yourself trustworthy in a very small thing, you shall have the government of ten cities." Then came the second, "Sir," he said, "your one pound has made five." To this one also he said, "And you shall be in charge of five cities." Next came the other, "Sir," he said, "here is your pound. I put it away safely wrapped up in a cloth because I was afraid of you; for you are an exacting man: you gather in what you have not laid out and reap what you have not sown." He said to him, "You wicked servant! Out of your own mouth I condemn you. So you knew that I was an exacting man, gathering in what I have not laid out and reaping what I have not sown? Then why did you not put my money in the bank? On my return I could have drawn it out with interest." And he said to those standing by, "Take the pound from him and give it to the man who has ten pounds." And they said to him, "But, sir, he has ten pounds . . ." "I tell you, to everyone who has will be given more; but anyone who has not will be deprived even of what he has. "As for my enemies who did not want me for their king, bring them here and execute them in my presence." When he had said this he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

God, our Master, bids us use what we have to do good

In today's gospel, Jesus told a parable about a nobleman who entrusted a pound to his servants. When the master returned, the first two servants presented their profits from investing the one pound. However, the last servant was too afraid of his master and decided to hide the pound safely. This last servant is a good example of what we should not be doing.

God has entrusted us with abilities and gifts. He wants us to recognise the many opportunities we have in our daily lives to use what we have to serve others. Let us not be like the last servant in the parable who did

nothing because he was afraid of his master. God our Master is not to be feared but loved. He is the one who loves us unconditionally. We show our love for Him through placing our gifts to serve others, especially those in need.

Question for reflection:

How am I using my abilities and talents for the benefit of those around us?

Thursday, 18th November, Dedication of the Basilicas of St. Peter & Paul (Optional memorial)

Acts 28:11-16, 30-31, Matthew 14:22-33

After the crowds had eaten as much as they wanted, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he sent the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now some furlongs from land, was hard pressed by rough waves, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night he came towards them, walking on the sea, and when the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. 'It is a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said, 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' Jesus said, 'Come.' Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but then noticing the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord,' he cried, 'save me!' Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'You have so little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

Walk with trust

We can identify with the disciples' fear as they battled with the fierce storm and rough waves. We are scared of many things, for example, sickness, being dependent on others, failure, death, etc. Yet, like them, we find comfort in the gentle voice of Jesus telling us, "*Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid*". Let us believe that Jesus is with us in the storms and find our peace in Him.

Peter told Jesus, “*Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water*”. Jesus said, “*Come*”. Peter then left the security of the boat and stepped out onto the waves and started to walk to Jesus. However, he began to sink when he looked at the strong wind surrounding him. At that moment, when Peter started to sink, Jesus reached out at once and held him. Likewise, Jesus is by our side, waiting to hold onto us when we begin to sink with fear and anxiety. Let us never lose sight of Jesus and trust that He is always near us, ready to reach out to us and offer us His guidance and support.

Question for reflection:

In this time of prayer, what is Jesus’ personal word to me?

Friday, 19th November, 33rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59, Luke 19:45-48

Jesus went into the Temple and began driving out those who were busy trading, saying to them, 'According to scripture, my house shall be a house of prayer but you have turned it into a bandits' den.' He taught in the Temple every day. The chief priests and the scribes, in company with the leading citizens, tried to do away with him, but they could not find a way to carry this out because the whole people hung on his words.

To be a house of prayer for all people

In today’s gospel passage, Jesus drove out the merchants busy with trading in the Temple. Jesus reminded the people that the Temple was meant to be the house of prayer, a place of encounter between God and His people, where the poor and the marginalised are welcomed. But, unfortunately, with all the buying and selling, the Temple became a bandits’ den, a house where selfishness and greed dwell.

Today, our Church, our faith community, our very own lives are meant to be houses of prayer where all people can find and encounter God and His love and mercy. As a Christian community and as individuals, we can lose sight of God and end up serving our self-interest and needs. Let us never become deaf to the cry of Jesus as He reminds us, “*The Church, your faith community, your very life must be a house of prayer for all people*”.

Question for reflection:

How can I become a house of prayer where people can encounter God?

Saturday, 20th November, 33rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Maccabees 6:1-13, Luke 20:27-40

Some Sadducees -- those who argue that there is no resurrection -- approached Jesus and they put this question to him, 'Master, Moses prescribed for us, if a man's married brother dies childless, the man must marry the widow to raise up children for his brother. Well then, there were seven brothers; the first, having married a wife, died childless. The second and then the third married the widow. And the same with all seven, they died leaving no children. Finally the woman herself died. Now, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be, since she had been married to all seven?' Jesus replied, 'The children of this world take wives and husbands, but those who are judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry because they can no longer die, for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection they are children of God. And Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him everyone is alive.' Some scribes then spoke up. They said, 'Well put, Master.' They did not dare to ask him any more questions.

Love remains

In today's gospel, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, and the question they asked Jesus was to belittle this belief. The Sadducees assumed that to believe in the resurrection would mean that life after death would be the exact continuation of life here on earth. With great patience, Jesus explained that life after death would be the same, yet there would be a difference. After death, we will remain as our unique individuals, and God will continue to be in a personal relationship of love with each of us. However, there will no longer be exclusive human relationships in the next life, such as marriage. Instead, we will all stand before God and each other as His beloved children.

Jesus affirmed the reality of the resurrection by referring to the story of Moses and the burning bush where God revealed Himself as “*the God of Abraham, the God of Issac and the God of Jacob*”. God’s relationships with these patriarchs remained even after death. Thus, this is the comforting message for us today: “*Nothing can separate us from the love of God*” (Romans 8:39). Death is the door that opens us to the fullness of life with our Living God.

Question for reflection:

How can my belief in the resurrection influence the way I love God and others today?

Sunday, 21st November, The Solemnity of Christ the King.

Daniel 7:13-14, Revelation 1:5-8. John 18:33-37

Pilate called Jesus to him and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. As it is, my kingdom does not belong here.' Pilate said, 'So, then you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say that I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'

Christ our King

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. Jesus is king but not one that wields his power over others. Instead, He is king because He is the source of truth and love. Jesus is the voice of truth that reveals God is Father who loves all. Jesus is love in action who does good for others and gives them justice and mercy. Therefore, Jesus told Pilate, “*My kingdom does not belong here*”. His kingdom indeed is not like the earthly kingdoms that pursued power, prestige and riches. His kingdom is built on values of love, service, peace, honesty, mercy and justice.

Let us not simply celebrate this Feast externally but live the reality out in our daily life. Jesus is our king. He invites us to make Him our king by

living His values of truth and love so that we can build his kingdom in our homes, workplaces, parishes, neighbourhood, etc. Let Jesus, our king and our Lord, influence the way we live in each concrete day.

Question for reflection:

What does this Feast of Christ the King mean for me today?

Monday, 22nd November, St. Cecilia.

Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20, Luke 21:1-4

As Jesus looked up he saw rich people putting their offerings into the treasury; and he noticed a poverty-stricken widow putting in two small coins, and he said, 'I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than any of them for these have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

A generous heart that gives

In today's gospel, a poor widow gave two small coins, which was insignificant compared to the rich people around her who placed huge amounts into the treasury. Jesus noticed this woman and her two small coins and pointed her out to His disciples and said, "...*she in her poverty has put in all she had to live on*". He praised her generosity because she gave her everything to God.

We sometimes think that we are not doing, loving, caring enough. Today, let this gospel passage leads us to see that the little that we do or give does not matter because Jesus looks at our hearts. When we give of ourselves with a generous spirit, Jesus appreciates our small actions of love.

Questions for reflection:

Do I identify with this poor widow? Why?

Tuesday, 23rd November, St. Clement I, St. Columban.

Daniel 2:31-45, Luke 21:5-11

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, 'All these things you are staring at now -- the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be destroyed.' And they put

to him this question, 'Master,' they said, 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that it is about to take place?' But he said, 'Take care not to be deceived, because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the one" and "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven.

All things pass away...but God

In today's gospel, Jesus' disciples admired the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem, which was the central place for the Jews. Jesus, however, told them that all that they were admiring would one day be destroyed. In fact, the Roman army in 70 CE destroyed the city as well as the Temple. The destruction of their beloved Temple was a great suffering for the Jews. Jesus' message to His disciples and to us is: Everything in this world will pass away, yet there is no need to be afraid because our stronghold is God.

We too have experienced losing something or someone precious to us, for example, a friendship, financial security, health, etc. We are called to live by faith, not fear, because God is always close to us in these challenging times. Let us stay with the prayer of St. Teresa of Avila and find peace in these words: *"Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices."*

Question for reflection:

When I am faced with a crisis, do I root myself in God?

**Wednesday, 24th November, SS. Andrew Dung-Lac & companions.
Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28, Luke 21:12-19**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You will be seized and persecuted; you will be handed over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and brought before kings and governors for the sake of my name -and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Make up your minds not to prepare

your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated universally on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your perseverance will win you your lives.'

Go public!

Today, Jesus calls us to be convinced of our Christian faith and live the Gospel values of justice, love and mercy. We must never forget though our faith is private, i.e. it is about our personal relationship with Jesus, it is also public. We need to dare go public with our faith by bearing witnesses to Jesus to the people we meet each day. Our witnessing will bring tension from people, even those closest to us. For example, when we speak the truth to help a friend or stand up for someone marginalised by others in the office, etc., we must be prepared to face opposition and hostility.

In today's gospel, Jesus said, "*I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict... You will be hated universally on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost*". Jesus is with us when we face difficulties that come our way. Thus, let us be courageous to stand up for our Christian faith and all it stands for.

Question for reflection:

How can I bear witness to Christ today?

Thursday, 25th November, St. Catharine of Alexandria.

Daniel 6:12-28, Luke 21:20-28

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must realise that it will soon be laid desolate. Then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains, those inside the city must leave it, and those in country districts must not take refuge in it. For this is the time of retribution when all that scripture says must be fulfilled. Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days come! For great misery will descend on the land and retribution on this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to every

gentile country; and Jerusalem will be trampled down by the gentiles until their time is complete. There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the turmoil of the ocean and its waves; men fainting away with terror and fear at what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.'

Christ, the light of hope, shines in the darkness

In today's gospel, Jesus spoke about destructions, confusions, outbreaks of violence, etc. At this moment of our lives, we might be overwhelmed with the uncertainties caused by Covid-19 pandemic. It seems as though the world is turning upside-down. We might even suffer personal losses and crises and feel that we are no longer in control of our lives. Like the gospel today, our world seems to be in darkness.

The good news is that we are not alone in these moments of darkness because Jesus is with us. He said, "...*they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory*". Jesus always comes to us to free us from our anxiety and fear. Thus, we can "*stand erect, hold (our) heads high*" and live in Jesus' presence of hope and peace.

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus' message to me in this time of prayer?

Friday, 26th November, 34th Week in Ordinary Time.

Daniel 7:2-14, Luke 21:29-33

Jesus told his disciples a parable, 'Look at the fig tree and indeed every tree. As soon as you see them bud, you can see for yourselves that summer is now near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that the kingdom of God is near. In truth I tell you, before this generation has passed away all will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.'

The words of Jesus will remain

"Look at the fig tree and indeed every tree. As soon as you see them bud, you can see for yourselves that summer is now near". In countries

with four seasons, people look at new buds to see if summer is near. Today, Jesus invites us to perceive the signs of times and to discern what will pass away and what will remain. What then must we value in our lives that will never pass away?

Jesus tells us the answer: *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away”*. Jesus’ words are everlasting, and His life-giving words are what He gives to us to accompany us in this journey of life. *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path”* (Psalm 119:105). We must never forget that the Person behind the words which will never pass away is Jesus, who is Himself eternal. May we never take Him for granted but desire to have a closer relationship with Him. His words, his faithfulness and love will be our stronghold here, now and forever.

Question for reflection:

Do I value Jesus’ words above all else?

Saturday, 27th November, 34th Week in Ordinary Time.

Daniel 7: 15-27, Luke 21:34-36

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened by debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will come upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come down on all those living on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to hold your ground before the Son of man.'

Stay awake and pray

As we stand at the threshold of Advent, Jesus reminds us to be vigilant and watchful to His presence within us and around us. Jesus accompanies us as we go through the ups and downs of life. Thus, we need to keep our eyes fixed solely on Jesus and allow Him to give us His peace. We know that the future is unimaginable and unpredictable. We often find ourselves in situations that we have no control over and become weighed down by worries and anxieties. There are times when the pleasures of this world consume us to the point that we walk away from the path of following Jesus. Jesus never gives up on us but patiently

calls us to keep our attention on Him and follow Him in the way that leads us to live life with meaningful joy.

“Stay awake, praying at all times...”. Stay awake and be aware of Jesus’ presence by spending time praying. In prayer, we seek Jesus and ask Him for the daily strength to live each day with unwavering faith in Him.

Question for reflection:

“Stay awake, praying at all times...”. How can I put these words into practice today?

Sunday, 28th November, 1st Sunday of Advent.

Jeremiah 33:14-16, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2, Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the turmoil of the ocean and its waves; men fainting away with terror and fear at what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.' 'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened by debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will come upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come down on all those living on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to hold your ground before the Son of man.'

Advent: Jesus comes

Today, we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent. What is Advent all about? Advent means “coming”. There are three comings of Christ. In the first coming, Jesus, God incarnated, was born, lived a life doing good and died in the hands of those who opposed His message. The second coming is in the future when Christ will bring creation to completion, and He will come and make all things new. There will no longer be tears, sorrow, pain and death. In between the first and final coming, Jesus comes into our hearts each day to be our rest and consolation as we walk through life. Jesus comes because He is Immanuel, God-with-us. At this start of this Advent, Jesus calls us to slow down from our busyness and stay awake, be aware of His presence within us and

among us today. It is also a time to pray and renew our relationship of love with Jesus. May this Advent be a time to prepare our hearts for Jesus to come into our lives more fully. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus today!

Question for reflection:

How do I prepare my heart for Jesus this Advent?

Monday, 29th November, Advent Week I.

Isaiah 2:1-5, Matthew 8:5-11

When Jesus went into Capernaum a centurion came up and pleaded with him. 'Sir,' he said, 'my servant is lying at home paralysed and in great pain.' Jesus said to him, 'I will come myself and cure him.' The centurion replied, 'Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be cured. For I am under authority myself and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, "Go," and he goes; to another, "Come here," and he comes; to my servant, "Do this," and he does it.' When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, 'In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this. And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of Heaven.'

I will come myself and cure him

"Sir," he said, 'my servant is lying at home paralysed and in great pain'. Let us pause here and reflect on the centurion's words to Jesus. In this time of Advent, we might be feeling the joyful Christmas atmosphere around us. However, we are aware that many people are suffering. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many people worldwide to suffer from economic insecurities, sickness and uncertain futures. Humanity seems to be paralysed with fear and anxiety and living in great pain of loneliness and suffering. Many might also be spiritually paralysed from doubts about God and struggles with dryness in prayer. The centurion had a deep concern for his servant and went to Jesus to intercede for him. May we remember those we know who are suffering and intercede for their needs.

“I will come myself and cure him”. With these words, Jesus revealed the compassion of God. Let us find comfort in His compassionate love for all His people and say with trust, *“Only say the word, Lord...”*.

Question for reflection:

Who would I like to intercede for today?

Tuesday, 30th November, St. Andrew, Apostle.

Wisdom 3:1-9, Romans 10:9-18, Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking by the Lake of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast into the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Come after me and I will make you fishers of people.' And at once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. And at once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

Following the footsteps of St. Andrew

Today, we celebrate the Feast of St. Andrew, who calls us to follow his example of responding to Christ's call in this time of Advent. In the gospel passage, Jesus walked by the lake and saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew. He told these two brothers, *“Come after me and I will make you fishers of people”*. Both of them did not procrastinate but immediately left everything and followed Jesus.

Advent is a time to listen to Jesus as He calls us again, *“Follow me”*. Jesus calls us to follow Him in the ordinary moments of our day, such as spending time with a friend who is feeling down, investing our energy to do a job well, reaching out to a neighbour in need, etc. He calls us to follow Him in this mission of love. Do we hear Him calling? The fishermen heard Jesus' call and immediately responded. What about us? Let us not put any excuses of *“maybe later”*, *“tomorrow”*, or *“I am not ready...”*, but to respond to Jesus with trust and generosity.

Question for reflection:

What prevents me from listening and responding to Jesus' call, "*Follow me*"?



"Zacchaeus" by Father Sieger Köder