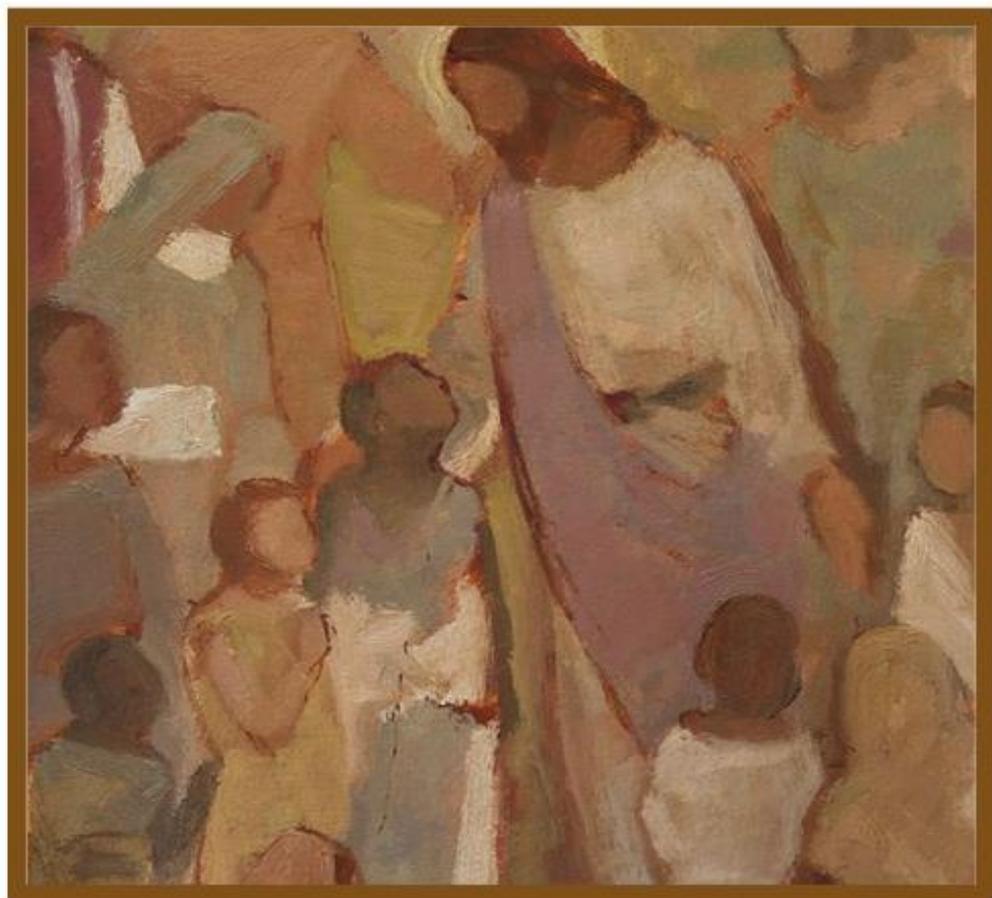


"...Whatsoever you do to the least of my  
brothers, you are doing it to me"



**Prayer for Living  
Daily Reflections for  
Liturgical Year A~ November**

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Verbum Dei Missionaries

# **PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR A**

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## **Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, Feast of All Saints Day.**

**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.'*

### Called to be a saint

Today, let us rejoice and be glad that holiness is for all of us. Often, we think that to be a saint, we need to be a religious sister or brother or do religious things like staying in the chapel the whole day, serving the poor, going for mission work in faraway countries, etc. However, holiness is for every baptised person and means doing ordinary daily things with extraordinary love. *"We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves"* (Pope Francis, Gaudate et Exultate no.14).

In today's gospel, Jesus explains holiness in terms of practical ways of loving: to be humble and simple by placing others as more important than ourselves, mourning with others in their suffering, extending merciful love to others, working for justice and living in peace with all. Listen to Jesus as He calls us to have eyes to see and recognise the needs of others around us and hearts to love them by working and serving them for their good. Let us not miss realising our deepest potential and becoming who we truly meant to be.

### **Reflective question:**

Do I believe that I can be a saint?

**Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, All Souls' Day**  
**Isaiah 25:6-9, Romans 5:5-11, Matthew 11:25-30**

*Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'*

Come to me

Don't we often feel overburdened from carrying heavy loads of expectations, responsibilities, failure, loss, and hopelessness? Let today's gospel speak to our hearts: "*Come to me...and I will give you rest*". This does not mean that Jesus will come and take away all hardships from us. Instead, He tells us that He wants to walk with us as we journey through life. When we are yoked and linked to Jesus, we do not carry our burdens ourselves, but He carries them with us. With Him, every heavy load becomes light.

Today, as the Church calls us to pray for our beloved deceased, we are also invited to remember that we are mortals and that one day, we will face the startling reality of death. However, we have hope that even at the gates of death, when no one can accompany us, Jesus walks with us and leads us to God's eternal presence of peace. As people of faith, we also pray for our loved ones who have died. We believe that our prayer expresses our love for and communion with them.

**Reflective question:**

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

**Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, St. Martin de Porres.**  
**Romans 9:1-5, Luke 14:1-6**

*Now it happened that on a Sabbath day Jesus had gone to share a meal in the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. Now there in front of him was a man with dropsy, and Jesus*

*addressed the lawyers and Pharisees with the words, 'Is it against the law to cure someone on the Sabbath, or not?' But they remained silent, so he took the man and cured him and sent him away. Then he said to them, 'Which of you here, if his son falls into a well, or his ox, will not pull him out on a Sabbath day without any hesitation?' And to this they could find no answer.*

### To see others through God's eyes

Jesus invites us to place the greatest law of loving God and loving others above all other religious norms. In the gospel, the Jewish religious leaders wanted to test Jesus to see if He would heal the man with dropsy. They regarded the sick man as an object, a prop to be used and failed to see him as a person who was suffering. Jesus, on the other hand, saw the man as a person with dignity, a person in need of help. Thus, He was ready to heal the sick man even though He knew He would break the Sabbath law and incite the religious leaders' anger.

Today, we are called to have a heart for people, especially those in need, by not looking down at them and treating them as objects but by putting them before ourselves and recognising their dignity as children of God. Let us take our lead from Jesus and have love as our top priority.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I treat others with loving respect?

### **Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, St. Charles Borromeo.**

#### **Romans 11:1-2, 11-12, 25-29, Luke 14:1,7-11**

*Now it happened that on a Sabbath day Jesus had gone to share a meal in the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man." And then, to your embarrassment, you will have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher." Then, everyone with you at the table will*

*see you honoured. For everyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be raised up.'*

### Being humble as Jesus is humble

There is a tendency in us to seek and gain recognition and honour from others. We want to be seen as significant and powerful. Often, we promote ourselves at the expense of others. In today's gospel, Jesus was a guest at a dinner party when He noticed people trying to pick the important places where they could be seen and honoured. Jesus presented to those around Him a parable that completely reversed the idea of exalting oneself. He said, "*For everyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be raised up*".

Status-seeking was never a top priority of Jesus. He was always content to be regarded as one of the lowly and least and humbled Himself to be at the service of others. In Philippians 2:7-8, St. Paul gave us Jesus as the true model of humility. He, though divine, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant to be at the service of others. Today, let humility guide us throughout our day by freeing us from selfish motivations and desires and becoming humble as Jesus is.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I imitate Jesus in His way of humility today?

### **Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> November, 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9, 13, Matthew 23:1-12**

*Addressing the crowds and his disciples Jesus said, 'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must therefore do and observe what they tell you; but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practise what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader headbands and longer tassels, like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, being greeted respectfully in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi. You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only*

*one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up.'*

### One Father, one Teacher

In today's gospel, Jesus criticised the religious leaders, who looked for honour and status. Jesus invites us to avoid such distinctions within the faith community where we regard one person as greater. Instead, He wants us, in virtue of our baptism, to be a community of brothers and sisters where all are equal before God our Father and Jesus our Teacher. With our unique gifts and roles in the Church, we are called to love God by serving those He entrusted us and journeying with one another towards living as His children.

*"... the Church is nothing other than the 'journeying together' of God's flock along the paths of history towards the encounter with Christ the Lord, then we understand too that, within the Church, no one can be 'raised up' higher than others. On the contrary, in the Church, it is necessary that each person 'lower' himself or herself, so as to serve our brothers and sisters along the way." (Pope Francis, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015). May we learn from Jesus and journey together towards God.*

### **Reflective question:**

What must change in me to live Jesus' vision of a church as communion, equality and service?

### **Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> November, 31<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Romans 11:29-36, Luke 14:12-14**

*Jesus said to his host, one of the leading Pharisees, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relations or rich neighbours, in case they invite you back and so repay you. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; then you will be blessed, for they have no means to repay you and so you will be repaid when the upright rise again.'*

### God loves a big-hearted, cheerful giver

In Jesus' time, the Pharisees had high social standing in Jewish society and would only associate with those in their class. Jesus, in the gospel, challenged His host, who invited Him to a meal to expand his heart and

welcome into his home those he considered undeserving and lowly. He knew that His host invited to his home only those who could give him something back in return, for example, to get invited for a meal in future.

Jesus ate with the rich and the poor, the religious and the sinners. He associated with all without expecting to get anything in return for giving of Himself. By doing so, He revealed a God whose heart is big enough to include all and love all without conditions and expectations. Often, we can be tempted to exclude people who are different from us as well as give ourselves to others and expect to get something in return. Let us look at Jesus again and allow Him to teach us how to expand our hearts to all and practice generosity that does not seek a return from others.

**Reflective question:**

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

**Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 31<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Romans 12:5-16, Luke 14:15-24**

*One of those gathered round the table said to Jesus, 'Blessed is anyone who will share the meal in the kingdom of God!' But he said to him, 'There was a man who gave a great banquet, and he invited a large number of people. When the time for the banquet came, he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, "Come along: everything is ready now." But all alike started to make excuses. The first said, "I have bought a piece of land and must go and see it. Please accept my apologies." Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and am on my way to try them out. Please accept my apologies." Yet another said, "I have just got married and so am unable to come." The servant returned and reported this to his master. Then the householder, in a rage, said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame." "Sir," said the servant, "your orders have been carried out and there is still room." Then the master said to his servant, "Go to the open roads and the hedgerows and press people to come in, to make sure my house is full; because, I tell you, not one of those who were invited shall have a taste of my banquet."'*

### Come to the table of plenty

In today's gospel, one of the guests, invited by a leading Pharisee to his grand banquet, exclaimed with joy, "*Blessed is anyone who will share the meal in the kingdom of God!*" His outburst was most likely due to the sight of the gathering of his friends and fellow Pharisees whom he considered righteous and good. Thus, for him, this meal was a foretaste of the banquet in God's kingdom where the virtuous and deserving would gather. Jesus told the parable to show the reality that God welcomes all to His table- the saints and the sinners. His universal and unconditional love will never exclude anyone.

God desires us, as we are, to be at His table of fellowship, to His banquet of communion. Do we have the same desire as God? We are free to respond to His invitation to be with Him here, or we can be caught up with the things in this world that we turn Him down. Let us be attentive to God's invitation to be with Him here, now, and forever.

### **Reflective question:**

What is my response to God's daily invitation to be with Him?

### **Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> November, 31<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **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.'*

### Love Jesus first and love others

*"Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, cannot be my disciple...".* These words of Jesus seem odd and harsh to us. However, it is not for us to take them literally. Jesus does not call us to hate but to love. The key message is that we are called to love Him above all other people, including our families. He has to be our first love. Our relationship with Him is the firm foundation on which our other relationships are built.

To follow Jesus is not easy. It requires us to choose to place Him above all others. Like the man who built a tower or the king who marched to war, we need to think and reflect and see if we are determined to follow Him and walk His path faithfully to the end. Our discipleship is not a half-hearted matter. Let us talk to Jesus today about what He wants from us and ask Him to give us the perseverance to follow Him wholeheartedly.

### **Reflective question:**

Is Jesus my primary love?

### **Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> 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 pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market'. Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up'. The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary 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 the words he had said.*

**Saturday, 9 November, Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome  
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, sheep, and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market'. Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up'. The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary 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 the words he had said.*

Zeal for You, O Lord

Jesus saw the people's hearts present at the Temple that day. Many people were fixed on their rituals and personal agendas, and the sellers were concerned with getting more profits from selling their items. Their hearts were not with God.

Jesus' passionate zeal and love for God was why He made a whip and drove the sellers out of the Temple. He wanted the people to reassess the uncomfortable truth: they needed to put God back as the centre of their lives. Today, Jesus calls us back to love God with all our heart, mind and strength. Love for God is not simply going for Eucharistic celebration on Sundays, but it implies that we love Him in those we meet from Mondays to Sundays. When we care for the poor in our society, strive to be patient with a person who is unlovable, or take time to be with our families instead of at work, these are moments when our hearts are with God.

**Reflective question:**

Is God at the centre of my life?

**Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> November, St. Leo the Great.**

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

*Jesus said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward 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" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty". To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat" was the reply. 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.'*

### Setting our hearts on God

All these characters in today's parable are typical people of the world. To gain comfortable and easy lives for themselves, they had no qualms of getting involved in dishonest and scheming ways. They set their hearts on having the wealth of this world without wavering and procrastinating. *"For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light."*

We, as God's beloveds, are children of light. However, we sometimes lack the firmness and determination to set our hearts on God and live our lives according to His ways and values. If only we are determined to put God as the centre of our life, we will truly be fulfilled and happy. Today, let us fix our eyes on Jesus and let Him teach us how to live as children of light.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I be determined to pursue God and live according to His ways?

**Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> November, St. Martin of Tours.**

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

*Jesus said to his disciples, 'And so 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.'*

God is my treasure, my Master

The message in today's gospel is that material wealth cannot control us and enslave us. Money is not evil in itself. We need money to survive and support our families. The reminder for us today is to use our material resources and even our gifts, time, life experiences, etc., to serve others for their good. No one can say that they have nothing to give and share. We have something in which we can offer to help others who are in need.

"*You cannot be the slave both of God and of money*". Let God, not money, be our Master in charge of our lives. As we spend this time in prayerful reflection of the gospel passage, let us be aware of the presence of Jesus, the one who loves us, and let Him be the treasure of our hearts.

**Reflective question:**

What is the master of my life?

**Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Wisdom 6:12-16, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Matthew 25:1-13**

*Jesus told this parable to his disciples, 'The kingdom of Heaven will be like this: Ten wedding attendants took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones, though they took their lamps, took no oil with them, whereas the*

*sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him." Then all those wedding attendants woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other attendants arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "In truth I tell you, I do not know you. So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour."*

### Keep the light of faith shining

In the parable today, the ten bridesmaids, tired of waiting for the bridegroom, ended up sleeping. When he finally arrived, five sensible bridesmaids had extra oil, had their lamps ready and went to meet him. The five foolish took no oil with them and were in need as the sensible ones would not share their oil with them.

The focus here is not to promote selfishness but to show the reality that the oil cannot be borrowed. Why? The oil symbolises something personal: the time we dedicate to praying and listening to God, the good works of loving service we do to others, the words of encouragement we say to build others up, etc. The oil of love keeps the light of faith burning bright. There are things in life that no one can do for us. Today, let us not be caught up with distractions and worries that we miss what is essential. May we keep the flame of faith which shows itself in our love for God and others alive in our hearts to the very end.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I keep the flame of faith burning bright today?

**Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 32<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Wisdom 1:1-7, Luke 17:1-6**

*Jesus said to his disciples, 'Causes of falling 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.'*

### Increase our faith!

As Jesus said in today's gospel, obstacles to sin will surely come our way. We will face obstacles that lure us away from living the gospel values of love, truth, honesty, compassion and justice and might find ourselves living controlled by our pride. Thus, we need to stay vigilant and keep watch on ourselves because our unloving ways are stumbling blocks that lead people away from God. Everyday, we need to pray and ask God to help us to give witness by our words and actions.

Jesus continued by speaking about reconciliation. If a fellow brother or sister commits an offence, we need to forgive the person when he/she repents. A good way to give witness to others is by forgiving, not judging and condemning. The task of following Jesus is not easy. Like the disciples, we can turn to Jesus and cry to Him, *"Increase our faith"*. Jesus offers us the consoling reality that we only need to have faith the size of a tiny mustard seed to overcome obstacles to sin and become good examples for others as well as peacemakers working always for reconciliation.

### **Reflective question:**

How can my way of living point others to Jesus?

**Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> November, 32<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Wisdom 2:23-3:9, Luke 17:7-10**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal immediately"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty".'*

## Joy in God

"...*But the souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God... they are at peace*" (1<sup>st</sup> reading). Often, we hear this reading in funeral masses. Today, let us find comforting hope that death is a door through which we will one day pass and find ourselves in God's embrace and there, we find peace.

We can already be with God here and now by living as God wants us to. As His faithful servants, we give ourselves selflessly for the good of those around us without seeking human praises and recognition but finding our reward in God alone. This can be a struggle as we want to be appreciated by others. Today, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who gave Himself to love and serve others faithfully. Instead of appreciation, they hung Him on the cross. In the end, God did not abandon Him but raised Him to life. Let us walk in the same path of loving service of Jesus. We know that God is generous and will give us more than we have given.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I concretely give myself for the good of someone today?

### **Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November, St. Albert the Great.**

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

*Now on the way to Jerusalem Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten lepers 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 at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. This made Jesus 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.'*

#### A humble heart is a grateful heart

"...*one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.*" In today's Gospel passage, Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one returned to Him to give thanks. As we prayerfully read the passage, let it speak to us about never

forgetting that all that we have and all that we are is a gift of God, and thus, we are invited to live in a constant and daily attitude of wonderment and gratitude.

Wonderment and gratitude start with a humble heart, i.e. a heart that recognises God's presence in our lives. Today, let us ask for humility to see God and His works in our lives. It is a temptation to dwell on all the bad things that happen to us that cause us to forget the good things God has given us. Today, let us ask for a humble heart that wonders and be grateful for the many gifts we have received from Him. "*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.*" (Psalm 107)

**Reflective question:**

Is my heart humble enough to always be grateful for God and His gifts?

**Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> November, St. Margaret of Scotland and St. Gertrude.**

**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 here! Look there!" For, you must know, 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 there!" or, "Look 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 must suffer grievously and be rejected by this generation.'*

The kingdom of God is among you, with you, in you

When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered, "*The kingdom of God is among you*". Here, He is referring to the kingdom of God, which is already present to some extent in and through His words and works. He challenged the religious leaders to have eyes of faith to see and rejoice. Today, He tells us, "*The kingdom of God is among you. His presence is in your midst*". Do we have eyes to recognise His presence living in us and moving around us?

When we feel discouraged at how our lives are going or afraid of the many uncertainties ahead of us, let us find comfort in the reality that God is with us and will continue to work in and among us.

**Reflective question:**

How does the reality of God's presence here with me change how I live today?

**Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> November, St. Elizabeth of Hungary.**

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

*Jesus said to the 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, God 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, anyone on the housetop, with his possessions in the house, must not come down to collect them, nor must anyone in the fields turn back either. 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 two will be in one bed: one will be taken, the other left; two women will be grinding corn together: one will be taken, the other left.' The disciples interrupted. 'Where, Lord?' they asked. He said, 'Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather'.*

Jesus is present in all things

There is nothing wrong with going through the rhythm of the daily business of living. However, are we so caught up in the routines of life that we forget to recognise the presence of Jesus with us? In today's gospel, Jesus spoke about people being busy living in Noah's and Lot's time, but everything stopped and ended when disasters descended on them. In the busyness of life, Jesus calls us to be aware of His presence and hold onto our faith in Him. When problems and crises hit us, we know that we can depend on Him for strength and courage.

*"I tell you, on that night two will be in one bed: one will be taken...".* Jesus reminds us of the painful truth that our time here on earth is temporal.

We do not know when the end of our own earthly time will be. Let us be open to Jesus' presence each day so that the end of our own earthly life will not take us by surprise. With faith, we know that death is not to be feared because it is a doorway to encountering God fully.

**Reflective question:**

Do I recognise Jesus present in all my activities?

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> November, Dedication of the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul.**

**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 man. In the same town there was 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, "Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death".' And the Lord said 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he 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?'*

Never lose heart

The widow in today's parable was poor and powerless. Still, she had the power of persistence and determination that kept her going to the corrupted judge until He listened and did as she requested. This widow speaks to us about the importance of not losing heart even when the odds are against us. Sometimes, we face circumstances that are against us and become disappointed when God seems absent and silent. It is tempting to conclude: "*What is the point of praying since my prayers are unanswered?*"

This widow is a model of determined and persevering faith. At the end of the passage, Jesus asks us, "*When the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?*". Will He? Will He find in us a strong, persevering faith? Let us never lose heart, even in the face of great challenges in life.

God answers our prayers in His time and ways. He is faithful and will provide for all of our needs. We know that we are safe in God's hands.

**Reflective question:**

Do I give up easily on God, especially when He seems distant and silent?

**Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, Matthew 25:14-30**

*Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man about to go abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one, each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out on his journey. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now a long time afterwards, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness." Next the man with the two talents came forward. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness." Last came forward the man who had the single talent. "Sir," said he, "I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you had not sown and gathering where you had not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back." But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have got my money back with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of*

*what he has. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."*

### Take the risk and live!

God entrusts us with gifts and resources. Often, we forget that it is a risk that God takes, just like the master in today's parable who took the risk of entrusting his resources to his three servants. The first two servants chose to work hard according to their strengths and abilities, but the last servant with the one talent decided to hide it because he was afraid of his master. Fear is an obstacle that prevents us from living our lives with purpose and meaning. Today, Jesus also calls us to take a risk and not be afraid of using all we have received from God to give life, goodness, and joy to those around us.

Let us reflect on these words of Nelson Mandela: *"We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people our permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others"* (Mandela, 1994). May we dare to use the gifts we have received from God for the good of others.

### **Reflective question:**

Do I allow fear to prevent me from becoming the person God is calling me to be?

### **Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 33<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **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 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 for what had happened.'*

### Let me see again!

In today's passage, the blind man, upon knowing that it was Jesus who was passing by, started to shout with all his might, "*Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me*". Even though he was blind, this man had the eyes of faith to perceive that Jesus could give him what he truly needed. Jesus stopped and asked the blind man, "*What do you want me to do for you?*". The man did not ask for wealth so that he could stop being a beggar. Instead, he simply said, "*Let me see again*".

Today, let us allow Jesus to ask us this same question, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" Do we know what our deepest desire is? We have many wants - from a new car, the latest handphome, a better job, a bigger promotion, etc. Jesus asks us to express our deepest needs, not our greatest wants, to Him. In this time of prayer, let us talk to Jesus and tell Him what we need in our lives now so that we can live life to the fullest.

### **Reflective question:**

What do I truly need? (e.g. need for peace, patience or strength to do God's will)

### **Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November, Presentation of Mary in the Temple.**

#### **Zechariah 2:14-17, Matthew 12:46-50**

*Jesus was speaking to the crowds when suddenly his mother and his brothers were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. Someone said to him: Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to speak to you. But to the man who told him this Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'*

### Being members of God's family

In today's gospel, Jesus' mother and other family members wanted to speak with Him. However, Jesus pointed to His disciples and said, "*Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother*". By doing this, Jesus

revealed a new family of God in which all would be held, not by blood ties, but by the desire to do God's will.

Today, as we celebrate the memorial of the Presentation of Mary, we remember that she is a faithful member of this family of God because she opened herself always to seek and do God's will. In the Annunciation, she did not let fear hold her back but trusted and did what God asked of her. Even at the cross of her Son, she stood on with courage because she trusted in God. Let us ask Mother Mary to help us rejoice that we are part of God's family and brothers and sisters of Jesus when our deepest desire is to do what God wants, even when we do not fully understand where He is leading us.

**Reflective question:**

What does being part of God's family mean for me?

**Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, St. Cecilia.**

**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 imagined 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 afterwards return. He summoned ten of his servants and gave them ten pounds. "Do business with these" he told them "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 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. The first came in and said, "Sir, your one pound has brought in ten". "Well done, my good servant!" he replied "Since you have proved yourself faithful in a very small thing, you shall have the government of ten cities.". Then came the second and said, "Sir, 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 and said, "Sir, here is your pound. I put it away safely in a piece of linen because I was afraid of you; for you are an exacting man: you pick up what you have not put down and reap what you have not sown." " You wicked servant!" he said "Out of your own mouth I condemn you. So you knew I was an exacting man, picking up what I have not put down 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 from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. “But 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.*

### Faithfulness to small things

In today’s parable, we read about a king who called ten of his trusted servants and gave them each one pound to do business with, and then he left. When the king returned home, the servants gave an account of what they did with their one pound. The king responded to the two servants who invested their one pound wisely: *“Well done, my good servant! Since you have proved yourself faithful in a very small thing...”*

Let us pause and ask ourselves honestly: Have I been faithful in the very small things entrusted to me? Have I done my best in completing insignificant tasks that would not earn me any praise and attention from others? *“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies”* (St. Teresa of Calcutta). Today’s parable challenges us to examine our attitudes towards the ‘*small things*’ in our lives. Let us not be like the servant who did nothing with his one pound. Instead, we do little things with a lot of love to express our love for Jesus.

### **Reflective question:**

How faithful am I to the small things that have been entrusted to me?

**Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, St. Clement I, St. Columban.**

**1 Maccabees 2:15-29, Luke 19:41-44**

*As Jesus drew near and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it and said, ‘If you in your turn had only understood on this day the message of peace! But, alas, it is hidden from your eyes! Yes, a time is coming when your enemies will raise fortifications all round you, when they will encircle you and hem you in on every side; they will dash you and the children inside your walls to the ground; they will leave not one stone standing on another within you-and all because you did not recognise your opportunity when God offered it!’*

### The power of love

*“As Jesus drew near and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it...”*. Jesus drew close to Jerusalem and wept for the city because its people failed to recognise God in the person of Jesus. Despite all His words and works, the people chose to close their hearts to God. The act of weeping reveals Jesus’ helplessness before the freedom of the people and the choices they made to reject God’s love.

Jesus always takes the initiative to come to us and calls us to recognise His presence and enter into a friendship with Him. He never gives up on any of us but patiently beckons. Though He is God, He never forces us but respects our freedom and waits for our response. Even if we give Him a negative response, Jesus never gives up on us.

### **Reflective question:**

How do I respond to Jesus’ invitation to recognise His presence of love in my life today?

### **Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, SS. Andrew Dung-Lac.**

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

*Jesus went into the Temple and began driving out those who were selling. ‘According to scripture,’ he said ‘my house will be a house of prayer. But you have turned it into a robbers’ den’. He taught in the Temple every day. The chief priests and the scribes, with the support of the leading citizens, tried to do away with him, but they did not see how they could carry this out because the people as a whole hung on his words.*

### To hang onto Jesus’ words

*“...my house will be a house of prayer. But you have turned it into a robbers’ den”*. In today’s gospel, the people regarded making money as a higher priority than praying and being with God. The sellers and buyers saw the Temple as a place to get something for themselves, whether earning money or buying a product. Jesus drove all such trade out of the Temple to make the place what it should have been, i.e. a house of prayer. The religious leaders allowed such activities to carry on because they profited from them. Thus, Jesus’ action provoked the religious leaders to anger. They wanted to get rid of Him out of their selfishness and pride. On the other hand, the ordinary people *“hung on his words”*

because they humbly recognised God's presence in Him. Today, what would our response to Jesus be?

Like the religious leaders, we can work for God but end up serving our personal ambitions and purposes. Today, let us be like the ordinary people by hanging onto His words that keep calling us to walk the path of God.

### **Reflective question:**

What is Jesus' invitation for me in this time of prayer?

### **Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> November, St. Catherine of Alexandria.**

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

*Some Sadducees-those who say that there is no resurrection-approached Jesus and they put this question to him, 'Master, we have it from Moses in writing, that 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, to which of them will she be wife 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 if' 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 sons 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 all men are in fact alive.' Some scribes then spoke up. 'Well put, Master' they said - because they would not dare to ask him any more questions.*

#### God of the living, not of the dead

*"Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all men are in fact alive."* What does Jesus mean by saying this? God is the God of life. Our death is not the end of life but the beginning of a life fully with God. Thus, death brings us to live our real identity as children of God. In the gospel, Jesus' example of the woman with the seven husbands

emphasises that the main concern after death is not to which husband she would belong. Rather, she belonged to none of the brothers except God alone. Thus, there will be no more exclusive ties between families and friends, but all humanity will live in complete love and unity.

How much longer will we live? None of us can know for certain. What we know for sure is that we will one day meet God face-to-face. For now, we make each moment today as good as any moment in eternity by living with a heart full of love for God and others.

### **Reflective question:**

Knowing that I belong to God for all eternity, how do I want to live each moment of today?

### **Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> November, Christ the King.**

**Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17, 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, 28, Matthew 25:31-46**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink, I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord,*

*when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the upright to eternal life.'*

### Jesus in the least of these

Do we see others as an extension of Jesus Himself? Do we see Jesus in the poor, the sick, the forgotten, the prisoners, the ones in death row, etc.? Today, let us listen to Jesus as He says, "*I was hungry...thirsty... a stranger... lacking clothes... sick... in prison*". Jesus identified Himself not with the powerful and wealthy but with the marginalised in society. Do we dare to recognise Jesus in the crucified ones of today?

*"... you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me"*. Not only are we called to find Him in vulnerable ones, we are also called to love them by serving them and working for their good. Jesus in each person, and thus, each meeting with someone becomes a sacred encounter with Jesus Himself. Today, may we experience deep joy from loving each person who comes our way. By loving them, we are loving Jesus.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I concretely love and serve Jesus today?

### **Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> November, 34<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

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

*As Jesus looked up he saw rich people putting their offerings into the treasury; then he happened to notice 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 contributed money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in all she had to live on.*

### Two small coins

In today's gospel, Jesus noticed a poor widow dropping two small coins into the treasury. In the time of Jesus, widows tended to be poor because, without a husband to support them, they had to depend totally on the generosity of other family members. Yet this poor widow gave her two small coins to God. Jesus saw the extraordinary love and trust she

had for God shown in her willingness to be even more vulnerable after offering the little that she had.

Today, Jesus invites us to admire this poor widow and imitate her love and trust for God. We might feel that we have very little to give: little time, little strength, little happiness, little health, etc. We might even be scared to be vulnerable when we let go of the little we have. Listen to Jesus as He assures us God sees, knows, and values the little we give Him. Let us not hold back but entrust our two small coins into God's loving hands,

### **Reflective question:**

How is Jesus inviting me to live this day?

**Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November, 34<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**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 this is about to take place?' 'Take care not to be deceived,' he said 'because many will come using my name and saying, "I am he" and, "The time is near at hand". Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.'*

### God alone

Jesus overheard some people admiring with pride the beautiful Temple in Jerusalem, which was the most sacred place where God dwelled. They felt a sense of security that nothing and nobody could destroy God's holy Temple. Jesus said to them, "*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*". In fact, the great Temple, which seemed indestructible, was indeed destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.

Often, we are like the people in today's gospel. We become overly absorbed in the things of this world and put our security in them. Today Jesus invites us to put our security in God alone, not on created things that come and go. This is because God is eternal, and His love never ends. We are called to enter into a relationship with Him and place Him as the centre of our lives. His loving presence gives us the greatest security in the midst of change, uncertainty and loss.

**Reflective question:**

Is God my security that I firmly hold onto?

**Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 34<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28, Luke 21:12-19**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'Men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name - and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are 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 by all men on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives.'*

True witness for Christ

Jesus honestly told His disciples that they would be seized and persecuted because they would bear witness to Him. As we look at the church's history, we know that Christians have been persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Today, many more continue to suffer for what they believe in. In this time of prayer, let us say a prayer for the persecuted Christians in the world. We pray that Jesus will be their comforting light in their deepest darkness.

We might not be facing imprisonment and persecution. However, we too might face opposition from family members and friends who do not support us in our faith journey with Jesus. Let us find comfort in Jesus' words: "*I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict*". We are never alone

in our difficulties and trails. Jesus sustains us so that we can continue standing firm in bearing witness to our faith.

**Reflective question:**

Today, how can I witness God's love in me?

**Thursday, 30th November, St. Andrew the Apostle.**

**Romans 10:9-18, Matthew 4:18-22**

*As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'. And they left their nets at once 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. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.*

Follow me

In today's gospel, Jesus walked past Simon, Andrew, James and John as they were going about their daily work and routines and said to them, "*Follow me*". They responded to His call and allowed God to work in and through their lives. Through them, people encountered God.

Likewise, Jesus calls us to follow Him in the midst of our daily routines, tasks and experiences. He calls us to follow Him and go beyond where we are in our discipleship, to take on new steps in loving others more, to participate in the mission of sharing the Good News with others, etc. We might hesitate to respond to Jesus' call because of fear and indifference. However, if we take the steps to do as He tells us, we will find that He uses our lives to bring goodness and love to others. Andrew and the rest left everything and chose to follow Jesus. Today, may we trust in Jesus and have the courage to allow Him to work powerfully in us and through us for the good of others.

**Reflective question:**

Jesus says, "*Follow me*". What is my response to Him?



By: J. Kirk Richards

