

PRAYER FOR LIVING

**“God, the Patient Sower,
Trust in Him”**

JULY
YEAR A



BY SR SANDRA SEOW
VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES

PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR A

**Copyright © 2026 Sr. Sandra Seow
All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be
reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the author's
written permission.**

Wednesday, 1st July, 13th Week in Ordinary Time.

Amos 5:14-15, 21-24, Matthew 8:28-34

When Jesus reached the country of the Gadarenes on the other side, two demoniacs came towards him out of the tombs - creatures so fierce that no one could pass that way. They stood there shouting, 'What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before the time?' Now, some distance away, there was a large herd of pigs feeding, and the devils pleaded with Jesus, 'If you cast us out, send us into the herd of pigs'. And he said to them, 'Go then', and they came out and made for the pigs; and at that the whole herd charged down the cliff into the lake and perished in the water. The swineherds ran off and made for the town, where they told the whole story, including what had happened to the demoniacs. At this, the whole town set out to meet Jesus, and as soon as they saw him, they implored him to leave the neighbourhood.

Seek good

In the first reading, God says, "*Seek good and not evil, so that you may live...I hate and despise your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals...Let me have no more of the din of your chanting, no more of your strumming on harps. But let justice flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream.*" Let us take these words to heart and reflect on how we express our love for God. He does not desire empty gestures of songs, offerings and festivals. What he truly wants is for our worship and prayers to be accompanied by lives of justice and honesty. If we say we truly love God, it must be evident in the way we treat those around us, especially the poor and the vulnerable.

In the Gospel, Jesus heals two men who seem to be possessed. However, the townspeople ask Him to leave because they are more upset about losing their pigs and their financial losses than by the healing of human lives. Today, we are invited to "*seek good*" by following the example of Jesus, who places human lives and dignity above personal security, habits and profits.

Reflective question:

In what areas of my life do I ask Jesus to "go away" because following His way of justice and love would mean stepping out of my comfort zone of my security, habits, and routine?

Thursday, 2nd July, 13th Week in Ordinary Time.

Amos 7:10-17, Matthew 9:1-8

Jesus got back in the boat, crossed the water and came to his own town. Then some people appeared, bringing him a paralytic stretched out on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Courage, my child, your sins are forgiven'. And at this some scribes said to themselves, 'This man is blaspheming'. Knowing what was in their minds Jesus said, 'Why do you have such wicked thoughts in your hearts? Now, which of these is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Get up and walk"? But to prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' - he said to the paralytic - 'get up, and pick up your bed and go off home'. And the man got up and went home. A feeling of awe came over the crowd when they saw this, and they praised God for giving such power to men.

Go and prophesy

In the first reading, Amaziah, the priest, tells the Prophet Amos to go away because the king of Israel does not want to hear his prophecy, which threatens his sense of security. However, Amos is confident that the message he delivers to the king is one that God has entrusted to him. He says, *"I was no prophet...it was the Lord who took me from herding the flock and the Lord who said, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"* Despite being misunderstood and his message unwelcome to others, Amos stands firm. His strength does not come from self-confidence but from the courage rooted in the One who calls him.

In the Gospel, Jesus, too, faces misunderstanding from religious leaders for speaking words of healing to the paralytic. However, He speaks because He wants to bring healing and wholeness to the person. By virtue of our baptism, we are called to be prophets to those around us, entrusted with the mission to speak truth and show mercy. Although this mission is not easy, we depend on God for strength and courage.

Reflective question:

To whom is God inviting me to share a word of courage, mercy or forgiveness today?

Friday, 3rd July, St. Thomas, Apostle.
Ephesians 2:19-22, John 20:24-29

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe'. Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

The risen Christ, our Lord and foundation

In today's first reading, St. Paul reminds us, "You are no longer foreigners or strangers; you are citizens alongside all the saints and members of God's household... with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone." These words resonate with us today. Our true identity lies not in being outsiders, but in being loved members of God's family. Christ is the solid foundation on which we stand with confidence, providing us with a secure ground that sustains us, even during times of trial and challenge.

In the Gospel, Thomas openly shares his doubts, and Jesus responds by inviting him into faith through touching His wounds and side. This encounter between Thomas and Jesus shows us that questioning our faith does not disqualify or exclude us; rather, it can lead us toward a meaningful encounter with the risen Christ. He embraces our uncertainties, meets us where we are and calls us to trust. The risen Christ is the foundation of our lives, and so, we live with hope, guided by faith and strengthened in love.

Reflective question:

What doubts or fears can I bring to the risen Christ today so that I can profess Him more deeply as my Lord and foundation?

Saturday, 4th July, St. Elizabeth of Portugal.

Amos 9:11-15, Matthew 9:14-17

John's disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?' Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's attendants would never think of mourning as long as the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come for the bridegroom to be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on to an old cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine into fresh skins and both are preserved.'

New wineskin

John's disciples are upset that Jesus' disciples do not practice fasting. Jesus answers that His presence is like the joy of a bridegroom at a wedding feast, a time meant for celebration, not sorrow. Today, Jesus is our Bridegroom whose presence in our lives brings joy and newness, never boredom or sadness.

He then uses the image of wineskins to call for less rigidity and more flexibility in the way we live and practice our faith. When we cling to rigid norms, we close our hearts to the surprises of God's new ways. New wine requires new, flexible skins that can expand to contain it; if poured into old, brittle ones, the skins will break. Today, let us be like new wineskins, open and ready to allow God's active presence to work as He wills, rather than limiting Him by clinging to old ways that may no longer serve us.

Reflective questions:

In what ways do I resist God's invitation to embrace newness, and what small step can I take to be open to them?

Sunday, 5th July, Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Zechariah 9:9-10, Romans 8:9, 11-13, 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 mere 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, and I will give you rest

In the first reading, the prophet Zechariah urges us to "*Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion! Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you...*" These words of the prophet call us to rejoice because God Himself approaches us. He is neither distant nor indifferent; instead, He consistently seeks to draw near, offering peace to our weary and restless hearts.

In today's Gospel, Jesus echoes the same invitation: "*Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.*" His rest begins when we stop pretending that we can manage life on our own strength. It happens when we stop striving to be "enough" for others and for society's expectations, and when we accept the limits of our control over things we cannot change, such as the future, other people, and the outcomes of our efforts. Jesus promises that He will be with us and help bear the weight of our burdens. Today, let us turn to Jesus and receive the rest that we are truly searching for.

Reflective questions:

What burden do I want to bring to Jesus, and what rest do I most desire today?

Monday, 6th July, 14th Week in Ordinary Time.

Hosea 2:16-18, 21-22, Matthew 9:18-26

While Jesus was speaking, up came one of the officials, who bowed low in front of him and said, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and her life will be saved'. Jesus rose and, with his disciples, followed him. Then from behind him came a woman, who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years, and she touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I can only touch his cloak I shall be well again'. Jesus turned round and saw her; and he said to her, 'Courage, my daughter, your faith has restored you to health'. And from that moment the woman was well again. When Jesus reached the

official's house and saw the flute-players, with the crowd making a commotion he said, 'Get out of here; the little girl is not dead, she is asleep'. And they laughed at him. But when the people had been turned out he went inside and took the little girl by the hand; and she stood up. And the news spread all round the countryside.

God's faithful love

The first reading from Hosea reveals a God who stands by His unfaithful people and never gives up on them. God says, *"I am going to lure her and lead her out into the wilderness and speak to her heart.....I will betroth you to myself forever, betroth you with integrity and justice, with tenderness and love."* We can be unfaithful to Him in simple and ordinary ways. For instance, we often forget about Him in our daily lives and make decisions as if He is not involved. We tend to rely on worldly things and seek others' approval instead of trusting in His care and guidance. We also sometimes withhold love and harbour resentments in our hearts. Yet God remains faithful to us, calls us into *"wilderness"* moments of prayer to speak to our hearts, renewing our relationship with Him.

In the Gospel, an official and a woman seek Jesus' help, one for his deceased daughter and the other for her illness. To both, Jesus does not turn them away but brings life and restoration. Through these encounters, we see the heart of God, whose faithful love brings new life even in times of hopelessness.

Reflective question:

How has God been quietly faithful to me despite my unfaithfulness?

Tuesday, 7th July, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time.

Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13, Matthew 9:32-38

A man was brought to Jesus, a dumb demoniac. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke and the people were amazed. 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel' they said. But the Pharisees said, 'It is through the prince of devils that he casts out devils'. Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness. And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the

labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest’.

Compassionate heart

In today’s Gospel, Jesus heals a man who cannot speak and restores his voice. He then travels through towns and villages, teaching and proclaiming the Good News about God’s Kingdom, as well as healing *“all kinds of diseases and sickness.”* His actions are motivated by a compassionate heart. The Gospel passage states: *“When he saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.”*

Today, we are invited to have this same compassion grow in us and to motivate us to respond to others’ needs with loving actions. Many people around us may feel *“harassed and dejected”* on the inside, which can make them appear outwardly withdrawn, grumpy, and impatient. Instead of being quick to judge and hardening our hearts towards them, we can pause and ask, *“What pain might be causing this behaviour?”* In this moment of prayer, let us draw close to Jesus and ask Him to give us eyes of love to see the people we will encounter today, and have hearts of compassion to respond to their hidden struggles.

Reflective question:

Who might Jesus be asking me to see through His eyes of compassion?

Wednesday, 8th July, 14th Week in Ordinary Time.

Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12, Matthew 10:1-7

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to cast them out and to cure all kinds of diseases and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, the one who was to betray him. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows: ‘Do not turn your steps to pagan territory, and do not enter any Samaritan town; go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.’

Sow integrity

Today's first reading, the prophet Hosea says, "*Sow integrity for yourselves, reap a harvest of kindness, break up your fallow ground: it is time to go seeking the Lord until he comes to rain salvation on you.*" To "sow integrity" means choosing what is honest and right in everyday situations, whether in the words we speak, how we manage our finances, or in our relationships with others. God sees our hearts and appreciates the daily efforts we make to live according to the Gospel values of justice, truth and faithfulness. When we sow integrity, we will "*reap a harvest of kindness*", as our lives begin to bear good fruit of love. God's presence will rain on lives, softening our hardened hearts, healing what is broken and making growth possible in areas where it seems there is no life.

In the Gospel, Jesus sends us out to a world hungry for kindness, truth and love. However, the mission begins in the fields of our own hearts. We cannot effectively share His message unless God has first changed our lives, preparing the soil of our hearts and planting seeds of His truth, justice and love within us.

Reflective question:

What is the one concrete way that I can sow integrity today, trusting that God will bring kindness in my life and relationships?

Thursday, 9th July, SS. Augustine Zhao Rong & Companions.

Hosea 11:1-4, 8-9, Matthew 10:7-15

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'As you go, proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. You received without charge, give without charge. Provide yourselves with no gold or silver, not even with a few coppers for your purses, with no haversack for the journey or spare tunic or footwear or a staff, for the workman deserves his keep. Whatever town or village you go into, ask for someone trustworthy and stay with him until you leave. As you enter his house, salute it, and if the house deserves it, let your peace descend upon it; if it does not, let your peace come back to you. And if anyone does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, as you walk out of the house or town shake the dust from your feet. I tell you solemnly, on the day of Judgement it will not go as hard with the land of Sodom and Gomorrah as with that town.'

The tender love of God

In the first reading, God says, “*When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt, ... I myself taught Ephraim to walk; I took them in my arms, yet they have not understood that I was the one looking after them. I led them with reins of kindness, with leading-strings of love.*” Such a tender picture of God’s love. He knows our story, including our moments of weakness and growth. He stoops down, carries us, and keeps loving us no matter what. Today, let us find comfort in His love that will never let us go.

In the Gospel, Jesus sends the disciples and us today to proclaim the Good News that the presence of God is near. We are called to bring healing and peace to each person and each household. However, we cannot share what we do not have. Therefore, we first need to experience God’s tender love and allow that love to pass through us, reaching others through our words, actions, and presence.

Reflective question:

How can I let the tender love of God shape the way I speak and act toward the people I am sent to?

Friday, 10th July, 14th Week in Ordinary Time.

Hosea 14:2-10, Matthew 10:16-23

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: ‘Remember, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves. Beware of men: they will hand you over to Sanhedrin and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the pagans. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes; because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved. If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next; and if they persecute you in that, take refuge in another. I tell you solemnly, you will not have gone the round of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.’

Living our faith amid tension

In today's Gospel, Jesus prepares us for the challenges we may face when we choose to follow Him and take our faith seriously. Our closest relationships might be strained as we try to live out the Gospel values such as simplicity, forgiveness, honesty, and truth. Tensions can arise from differing opinions on priorities and values, leading to divisions among us.

The comforting truth that we must always remember is the words of Jesus: *"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves."* Like sheep, we trust that we can depend on our Shepherd who will never abandon us. Like serpents, we are called to be wise, knowing when to speak and when to be silent. Like doves, we must remain gentle, always choosing the path of peace, even when provoked. Let us stay faithful and trust that the Spirit is with us, giving us the words we need when the time comes.

Reflective questions:

Do I experience tension or misunderstanding because of my faith? How has God's presence guided me in dealing with these situations?

Saturday, 11th July, St. Benedict.

Isaiah 6:1-8, Matthew 10:24-33

Jesus said to his apostles: 'The disciple is not superior to his teacher, nor the slave to his master. It is enough for the disciple that he should grow to be like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, what will they not say of his household? Do not be afraid of them therefore. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows. So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

God cares

In the first reading, we read about the call of the Prophet Isaiah. He recognises his sinful condition, saying, *"What a wretched state I am in! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips..."* However, God does not call perfect people; instead, He empowers those He chooses. He cleanses Isaiah's unclean lips and makes him an instrument to speak His words to the people of Israel. God calls us today to be His prophets. Let us allow Him to touch and heal our weaknesses so that we can courageously become witnesses to His love.

In the Gospel, Jesus prepares His disciples, and us today, for a mission that He knows will not be easy. We will encounter misunderstanding and opposition. Therefore, Jesus reassures us three times, saying, *"Do not be afraid,"* and highlights God's care for even the smallest sparrows. If God our Father cares for them, we can trust that He will care for us even more. Today, let us anchor ourselves in God's love, especially in moments of fear or doubt.

Reflective question:

Do I truly trust Jesus when He tells me, *"Do not be afraid"*?

Sunday, 12th July, Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 55:10-11, Romans 8:18-23, Matthew 13:1-23

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables. He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

God's word is fruitful

In today's first reading, taken from the Prophet Isaiah, God says, *"As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens, and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth...so the*

word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty....” When God speaks, His words have life and the power to make things happen, even if we do not see results immediately.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the sower who scatters seeds everywhere: hard paths, rocky ground, thorny soil and good soil. The focus is not on the seeds themselves, but on the conditions of the soil. Just like the sower, God sows His word to everyone, but whether or not we can receive and nurture it depends on the state of our hearts. When we allow our hearts to harden and get filled with worries and distractions, it becomes difficult for God’s word to take root within us. Let us ask God to soften our hearts and remove any obstacles so that His word can transform our lives, enabling us to live with renewed courage and act with love.

Reflective question:

Do I let God work in my heart to become good soil?

Monday, 13th July, St. Henry.

Isaiah 1:10-17, Matthew 10:34-11:1

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: ‘Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man’s enemies will be those of his own household. Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me. Anyone who welcomes a prophet will have a prophet’s reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man will have a holy man’s reward. ‘If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.’When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.

Love God above all

In the first reading, God calls His people and us today to conversion. He tells us that following religious rituals alone does not please Him; rather, what He wants is a life of us doing acts of love for others. He says, *“Cease to do evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow.”* True love for God is shown in a changed life that turns away from causing harm and actively does good, especially for those around us who are vulnerable.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of division because following Him can sometimes put us against others, even those closest to us. Choosing to live a life of doing good can disrupt family expectations, values, and personal comfort. Despite opposition, Jesus' constant call is to love Him above all.

Reflective question:

How can I choose to do good even if it creates tension in my relationships with others?

Tuesday, 14th July, St. Camilus de Lellis.

Isaiah 7:1-9, Matthew 11:20-24

Jesus began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles had been worked, because they refused to repent. ‘Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard on Judgement Day with Tyre and Sidon as with you. And as for you, Capernaum, did you want to be exalted as high as heaven? You shall be thrown down to hell. For if the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have been standing yet. And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard with the land of Sodom on Judgement Day as with you.’

Transformation

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks harshly to the towns for their hardened hearts. They have witnessed His good works and admired His teachings, but nothing changed. They remain indifferent and continue to live as though nothing happened.

What does this Gospel have to say to us today? In our journey of faith, we have experienced God's love through events and people, received answers to our prayers, felt the power of the Word of God, appreciated the beauty of the sacraments and benefited from the support of our faith communities. After receiving so much, how have we responded? Every gift and light we receive from God is an invitation for us to take a small step toward changing our attitudes and habits. We are called to allow God to be the centre of our lives and to influence the way we live and love.

Reflective question:

What concrete change is God inviting me to make after experiencing His goodness in my life?

Wednesday, 15th July, St. Bonaventure.

Isaiah 10:5-7, 13b-16, Matthew 11:25-27

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 mere 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.'

Humility

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives thanks to God the Father, saying, "*I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children.*" The things about God are received by humble hearts. "*The learned and the clever*" often rely on their own ideas, knowledge and status. They tend to believe that they already know everything. The "*mere children*" are those who are humbly aware that they do not have everything figured out and are ready to listen and receive guidance.

Today, let us strive to put humility into practice by acknowledging our need for God and allowing His Word to continually shape our values and attitudes. We come to Jesus with open hands, ready to receive what He wants to reveal to us.

Reflective question:

Do I have a humble heart that seeks to learn from Jesus?

Thursday, 16th July, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.**Isaiah 26:7-9, 12,16-19, Matthew 11:28-30**

Jesus said, '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.'

Not alone but with Jesus

In the Gospel, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest." How comforting these words are for us who carry the weight of work stress, family responsibilities, hidden worries and disappointment. Jesus does not stand far from us or remain indifferent to our struggles. Instead, He wants to walk alongside us and help share our burdens.

Let us listen to Jesus as He invites us, "Come to me." We do not need to pretend to be strong or that everything in life is fine. Just as we are, we can come to Him and place our burdens in His hands. With Jesus, we can go through life with less tension and a stronger sense of trust.

Reflective question:

What burden am I carrying today that I need to share with Jesus, trusting that He wants to share the weight with me?

Friday, 17th July, 15th Week in Ordinary Time.**Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8, Matthew 12:1-8**

Jesus took a walk one Sabbath day through the cornfields. His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them. The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath'. But he said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry - how he went into the house of God and how they ate the loaves of offering which neither he nor his followers were allowed to eat, but which were for the priests alone? Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath day the Temple priests break the Sabbath without being blamed for it? Now here, I tell you, is something greater than the Temple. And if you had understood the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not

sacrifice, you would not have condemned the blameless. For the Son of Man is master of the Sabbath.'

Compassion first

As Jesus and his disciples walk through the cornfields, they become hungry and begin picking ears of corn to eat. The Pharisees then accuse them of breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus defends them by recalling King David and his people eating the loaves in the Temple when in need. Then He says, *"What I want is mercy, not sacrifice."*

In this Gospel, Jesus wants us to know that God's law is intended to bring life, and not to burden and weigh people down. When rules are used without compassion, they can distort our understanding of God rather than reveal Him as He truly is: a God of love and mercy. Today, we are invited to place people's needs before rigid rule-keeping, and to remember that norms and rules are pathways to love, not tools used to hurt others and put them down.

Reflective question:

How can I put compassion first rather than clinging to external sacrifices, rules and appearances?

Saturday, 18th July, 15th Week in Ordinary Time.

Micah 2:1-5, Matthew 12:14-21

The Pharisees went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him. Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he cured them all, but warned them not to make him known. This was to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah: Here is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, the favourite of my soul. I will endow him with my spirit, and he will proclaim the true faith to the nations. He will not brawl or shout, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break the crushed reed, nor put out the smouldering wick till he has led the truth to victory: in his name the nations will put their hope.

Justice and gentleness

In today's Gospel, the religious leaders view Jesus with hostility and plot against Him. Yet, Jesus does not stop doing the good that He has been doing, nor does He fight back against the religious leaders. He simply continues to heal. He is indeed the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: *"Here*

is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, the favourite of my soul...He will not brawl or shout, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break the crushed reed, nor put out the smouldering wick..." Jesus lives His life pursuing justice by standing with the weak and helping those in need. He embodies gentleness by offering compassion and understanding instead of being harsh toward those who are fragile. Through His actions, He shows that true strength lies in kindness and empathy.

For us today, the invitation is to let Jesus' gentle love and strength touch our own lives, especially in our weaknesses. From Him we learn how to stand for what is right with a firm yet gentle strength that never becomes harsh toward the people around us.

Reflective question:

How can I stand up for what is right with gentle strength like Jesus?

Sunday, 19th July, Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Wisdom 12:13,16-19, Romans 8, 26-27, Matthew 13:24-30 (shorter version)

Jesus put another parable before the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" "Some enemy has done this" he answered. And the servants said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?" But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn."'

Darnel among wheats

In the Gospel, Jesus shares a parable about a sower who plants good seeds (wheat) in his field, but an enemy scatters weeds (darnel) among them. When they grow together, the servants want to remove the weeds, but the master says to wait until harvest to separate them. This parable shows God's patience, allowing time for growth and conversion.

This is encouraging news for us because we often find both wheat and weeds growing side by side in the fields of our hearts. We nurture the wheat of faith, love, and kindness, but we also struggle with the weeds of selfishness, pride, doubt, and resentment. God does not give up on us just because we have flaws. He patiently works with us and waits for us to take the steps toward change over time. We are called to have the same patient love for others in our lives. Often, we regard someone as “bad” because of some faults we notice in them. The parable invites us not to judge others too harshly, but to recognise that there is good in everyone, and to be patient, as God is also at work in them. Let us practice patience and recognise that there is more to someone than their faults.

Reflective questions:

How is God inviting me to be patient with myself while I work towards change, and how can I also be patient with others, knowing there is hope for their growth and transformation?

Monday, 20th July, St. Apollinaris. Micah 6:1-4, 6-8, Matthew 12:38-42

Some of the scribes and Pharisees spoke up. ‘Master,’ they said ‘we should like to see a sign from you.’ Jesus replied, ‘It is an evil and unfaithful generation that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was in the belly of the sea-monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. On Judgement day the men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation and condemn it, because when Jonah preached they repented; and there is something greater than Jonah here. On Judgement day the Queen of the South will rise up with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than Solomon here.’

A call to justice, mercy and humility

In the first reading from the prophet Micah, God asks His people, “*My people, what have I done to you?*” He reminds them of His patient love and how He has rescued them from slavery. He has walked with them throughout their journey. He then reveals what He truly wants from them in response to His love. He does not seek impressive offerings, but a

changed life: *“to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God.”* Today, God asks us to remember His love in our story so far, and calls us to respond to His love by living a life of justice, mercy and a humble relationship with Him.

In the Gospel, some scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus for a *“sign.”* However, they ignore the greatest sign already present: Jesus Himself. Like them, we often look for signs while missing God’s presence in the ordinary ways, such as in Scripture, in the Eucharist, in the people who love us, and in the silence of our hearts. Today, let us recognise Jesus’ presence and respond to Him by choosing honesty over convenience, compassion over indifference, humility over pride.

Reflective question:

What is the one concrete way I can respond to God’s love today?

Tuesday, 21st July, St. Lawrence of Brindisi. Micah 7:14-15, 18-20, Matthew 12:46-50

Jesus was speaking to the crowds when his mother and his brothers appeared; they were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. 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, he is my brother and sister and mother.’

Belonging to God’s household

In the Gospel, Jesus addresses a crowd of people when His mother and relatives want to speak with Him. Looking at the crowd, He says, *“Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.”* Jesus is not rejecting His family, but He emphasises that true kinship with Him is not based on blood relations, but on doing the Father’s will. Obedience is the true mark of belonging to God because it shows that our love is real and active, and not just words or feelings.

Today, we are invited to be part of Jesus’ family by listening and putting God’s word into practice. To obey is to trust God enough to allow His will

to shape our daily choices, even when we do not fully understand His ways.

Reflective question:

How can I obey the Father's will today so that my words and actions reflect that I am part of Jesus' family?

Wednesday, 22nd July, St. Mary Magdalene.

Song of Songs 3:1-4b , John 20:1-2, 11-18

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.' Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' 'They have taken my Lord away' she replied 'and I don't know where they have put him.' As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him'. Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' - which means Master. Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find the brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

Mary Magdalene: The first Easter witness

Mary Magdalene is a disciple of deep faith. Even in moments of uncertainty and confusion, she stays close to Jesus. In the Gospel, when Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb and discovers that the stone has been rolled away, she does not return home. Instead, her faith and love for Jesus compel her to stay and search for His body. In her sorrow, Jesus appears to her, but she does not recognise Him at first. It is only when He calls her by name, "Mary," that her faith is fully awakened. She turns to Him and exclaims, "Rabbuni!" Her faith is rooted in Jesus, who knows

and loves her personally. Afterwards, she is sent to share the good news of the Resurrection with the other disciples.

Today is the Feast of Mary Magdalene. May her faith inspire us to stay close to Jesus, even in times of sadness and doubt. Like Mary Magdalene, let us listen as Jesus calls us by name and rejoice in being sent out as His missionaries to share our faith with those around us.

Reflective questions:

How have I experienced Jesus calling my name, and how did I respond?

Thursday, 23rd July, St. Bridget of Sweden.

Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13, Matthew 13:10-17

The disciples went up to Jesus and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because' he replied, 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled: you will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive. For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed by me. But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.'

God, the true living fountain

The first reading from the prophet Jeremiah tells of God's love story with Israel. He remembers how His people once followed Him with trust, but over time, they turned to false gods. He says, "*They have abandoned me, the fountain of living water, only to dig cisterns for themselves, leaky cisterns that hold no water.*" The people have exchanged a fresh, flowing foundation of living water for broken containers that hold no water, leaving them thirsty. The words of God continue to echo to us today. We often exchange God, our true source of love, for idols of success,

comfort, approval and pleasure- things that promise a lot but ultimately never give us the fullness of contentment we long for.

In the Gospel, Jesus states that He speaks in parables because He recognises that many people's hearts are closed. They look but do not see, and they listen but do not truly hear. Today, we pray that our hearts will not become distracted so that we can listen to God as He speaks to us. He wants us to return to Him, the "*fountain of living water*", where we can find our fulfilment and joy.

Reflective question:

What "*leaky cisterns*" do I depend on for security or satisfaction instead of trusting God as my true source of living water?

Friday, 24th July, St. Charbel Makhluf.

Jeremiah 3:14-17, Matthew 13:18-23

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart; this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path. The one who received it on patches on rock is the man who hears the words and welcomes it at one with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing. And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'

The conditions of our hearts

Today, let us take a moment to reflect on Jesus' explanation of the parable of the sower and the seeds. In this parable, the seed represents God's Word, while the different types of soil symbolise our hearts. The path stands for those who hear God's Word but fail to let it take root. The rocky soil describes those who receive the Word with enthusiasm, yet lack the depth to withstand challenges, leading them to give up when troubles arise. The thorny ground illustrates a heart that allows the Word to grow but is ultimately choked by worries, wealth, and worldly

pleasures. Finally, the good soil represents the heart that listens, truly understands, and bears fruit.

We are called to be "*good soil*," but this does not mean we need to be perfect. Instead, it is about being open, receptive, and persevering. God scatters His Word daily in our hearts. Our part is to create space to listen to His Word, pay attention to its growth, and to remove "*thorns*" of unhealthy attachments and distractions that stop it from growing. Let us depend on God to keep the soil of our hearts soft and available.

Reflective question:

What must I change within myself for God's Word to take deeper root in me?

Saturday, 25th July, St. James, Apostle.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15, Matthew 20:20-28

The mother of sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons to make a request of him, and bowed low; and he said to her, 'What is it you want?' She said to him, 'Promise that these two sons of mine may sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom'. 'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus answered. 'Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?' They replied, 'We can'. 'Very well,' he said, 'you shall drink my cup, but as for seats at my right hand and my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted by my Father.' When the other ten heard this they were indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that among the pagans the rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Treasure in earthenware

St. Paul in the first reading of today states, "*We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us.*" We need to recognise that our lives are like fragile earthenware jars - clay pots that are easily chipped and broken. These earthenware jars symbolise our weaknesses, failures,

sufferings and limitations. However, this is precisely where God wants His power and love to shine. God does not wait for perfect vessels. He is happy to place the treasure of His life inside our fragility. This way, others can see that the strength and courage in us come from Him, and not from our own willpower or perfection.

In the Gospel, James and John ask Jesus for the places of honour. Jesus responds by saying, *“Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant.”* For Jesus, true greatness is not about power or status, but service. We are called to follow the footsteps of our Master by placing ourselves at the service of others. Let us find contentment in being God’s earthenware, reflecting His presence and love to those around us.

Reflective question:

Today, how can I intentionally choose to serve humbly instead of seeking recognition?

Sunday, 26th July, Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12, Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 13:44-52

Jesus said to the crowds: ‘The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value, he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. ‘Have you understood all this?’ They said, ‘Yes’. And he said to them, ‘Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old’

Treasure

Today’s three readings invite us to reflect on our true treasure and how we live for it. In the first reading taken from the book of Kings, God invites King Solomon to ask for anything. Solomon responds, *“Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil...”*

Instead of asking for long life, wealth or victory, Solomon's true treasure is his desire for wisdom to discern God's will rather than seeking personal gain. In the second reading from Romans, St. Paul states that we are chosen and called to "*become true images of His Son.*" God's purpose is to shape and mould us to be like Christ, which is His treasure in us. Today, let us seek God and His wisdom as our true treasure, so that we can become more like Christ.

In the Gospel, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a hidden treasure in a field and a precious pearl. In the parable, the man and the merchant joyfully sell everything they have to own it. Let us be aware that we have God's treasure in us. The daily invitation is to rearrange everything else- our possessions, time, and plans- around it.

Reflective question:

What can I give up to gain greater awareness of God's treasure within me and live a life centred around it?

Monday, 27th July, 17th Week in Ordinary Time.

Jeremiah 13:1-11, Matthew 13:31-35

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.' He told them another parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through'. In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. This was to fulfil the prophecy: I will speak to you in parables and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.'

Mustard seed and yeast

In today's Gospel, Jesus uses the images of a mustard seed and yeast to explain the Kingdom of God. Both the mustard seed and the yeast start small and hidden, but they have the inner power to grow quietly until they change everything around them. The small mustard seed grows into a large tree, and the yeast makes the dough rise.

In a world that often values big achievements and immediate impact, God chooses to act through small acts, such as unnoticed acts of kindness, quiet service, and simple words of encouragement. In His hands, these ordinary acts carry His life and love. Today, we are invited to collaborate with God, planting seeds of goodness in all that we do and say. We trust that God will make these seeds grow.

Reflective question:

How does Jesus' parable of the mustard seed and yeast invite me to see that small and ordinary efforts of love matter?

Tuesday, 28th July, 17th Week in Ordinary Time.

Jeremiah 14: 17-22, Matthew 13:36-43

Leaving the crowds, Jesus went to the house, and his disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable about the darnel in the field.' He said in reply, 'The sower of the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world; the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the Evil One; the enemy who sowed it, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. The Son of man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of falling and all who do evil, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the upright will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Anyone who has ears should listen!'

Patient love

In today's Gospel, Jesus' disciples ask him to explain the parable about the weeds and the wheat growing together in a field. Jesus explains this to show that God's love is patient and kind.

Today, we see signs of evil (weeds) growing alongside goodness (wheat) in our hearts, in the Church, in families, and in society. We observe generosity and selfishness, honesty and lies, compassion and indifference. We often wish that all evil would end and love would reign now, and hope that God would remove all weeds once and for all. Jesus reminds us that God is patient. He is not indifferent to the realities in us and around us. He does not rush, as He always gives time for conversion. Today, let us focus on being good seeds in the places where we are, and

humbly ask God to help us remove the weeds from our own hearts so that we can grow in love and become signs of His Kingdom in the midst of this wounded world.

Reflective question:

When I see “*wheat and weeds*” in my own life and in the lives of others, how is God calling me to be patient instead of feeling discouraged?

Wednesday, 29th July, SS. Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

1 John 4:7-16, John 11:19-27

Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come, this message continues to resonate with us. She went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, ‘If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you’. ‘Your brother’ said Jesus to her ‘will rise again.’ Martha said, ‘I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day’. Jesus said: ‘I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she said, ‘I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.’

Bethany, the house of friendship

In the first reading, St. John reminds us that “*whoever lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them.*” God’s home is not a building, but it is found in relationships. Wherever there is love, God is present. Today, we celebrate the Feast of the three siblings, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Their home in Bethany is a place where Jesus feels at home due to their love and friendship. If we choose to love, our lives can also become “*Bethany*,” where Jesus feels at home.

In the Gospel, Jesus goes to Bethany after Lazarus has died. Martha goes out to meet Jesus and expresses her pain and her hope honestly, saying, “*If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.*” Despite her grief, she stays in dialogue with Jesus. In that conversation, Jesus reveals Himself by stating, “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” Like Martha, we can talk to Jesus honestly when we feel disappointed and

sad. Jesus always meets us where we are, helping to deepen our faith and guiding us to a mature declaration of “*Lord, I believe*”, even amid the challenges of our lives.

Reflective question:

How can my life be a place where Jesus is welcomed and loved?

Thursday, 30th July, St. Peter Chrysologus.

Jeremiah 18:1-6, Matthew 13:47-53

Jesus said to the crowds: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. ‘Have you understood all this?’ They said, ‘Yes’. And he said to them, ‘Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old’

In the Potter’s hands

In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah watches a potter at work. Whenever the clay in the potter’s hands is spoiled, he patiently reshapes it into another vessel. God then says to Jeremiah, “*as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so you are in mine.*” This message continues to resonate for us today. Our lives, with all our plans and setbacks, are like clay in God’s hands. He is our potter, lovingly shaping us from what is flawed into something beautiful. We need to let ourselves be softened by trusting in Him, rather than letting pride and fear harden our hearts.

In the Gospel, Jesus describes a net that gathers all kinds of fish, both good and bad. There will be sorting at the end, but until then, both types of fish will be in the same net. The message is that God understands our strengths and weaknesses, recognising both the good and the bad in us. He never gives up on us but patiently works in us. Today, let us be like clay in the Potter’s hands, staying open to be moulded according to His purpose.

Reflective question:

In what area of my life is God inviting me to let Him reshape today?

Friday, 31st July, St. Ignatius of Loyola.**Jeremiah 26:1-9, Matthew 13:54-58**

Coming to his hometown, Jesus taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? His sisters, too, are they not all here with us? So where did the man get it all?' And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country and in his own house', and he did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Be open to God's presence

In today's Gospel, Jesus returns to His hometown, goes to the synagogue, and begins to teach. His townspeople are amazed at His wisdom and at the stories of His works. Instead of opening their hearts, they close them because they "know" His family, His background, His childhood. They ask, "*This is the carpenter's son, surely?*" and they "*would not accept Him*", so "*He did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.*"

Familiarity can blind us. We can grow so used to Jesus, the Scripture, the Eucharist, or the people closest to us that we no longer expect God to speak or act through them. Today, Jesus invites us to recognise His presence in people, events and places, and to welcome Him in the ordinary moments of life. Where there is trust and openness, He can work in us and through us.

Reflective question:

Do I allow familiarity to stop me from recognising Jesus at work in my life and in the circumstances around me?



By: Mike Moyers