

PRAYER FOR LIVING

“Love God, Love Others”

OCTOBER
YEAR A



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Thursday, 1st October, St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

Isaiah 66:10-14, Matthew 18:1-5

At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?' So he called a little child to him whom he set among them. Then he said, 'In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. 'Anyone who welcomes one little child like this in my name welcomes me.'

Learning To Be Little

In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah offers a tender image of God, who said, *"Like a child comforted by his mother, will I comfort you."* God is never far away from us in our sorrow. He always wants to give us peace and help us flourish once again, so that we may live life to the fullest. Let us rejoice, not because life contains no suffering, but because God is faithful and He is always with us, working for our good.

In the Gospel, Jesus' disciples want to know who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus places a child among them, overturning their understanding of greatness. In God's Kingdom, greatness is not about status, wealth, influence, or recognition, but is found in humility. Today, we are invited to depend on God's motherly love and become like a little child, free from the need to appear great in the eyes of the world and content to place our trust in God.

Reflective question:

Am I seeking greatness in the eyes of others, or in the eyes of God?

Friday, 2nd October, The Holy Guardian Angels

Exodus 23:20-23, Matthew 18:1–5, 10

The disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' So he called a little child to him and set the child in front of them. Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. 'See that you never despise any of

these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

God's Presence With Us

In the first reading from the book of Exodus, God says, *"I myself will send an angel before you to guard you as you go and to bring you to the place that I have prepared..."* The angel is God's active presence among His people as they wander through the uncertain wilderness. God is their hope, as He goes before His people, protects them and prepares a place for them. We often face uncertain paths and may not know where the journey will lead, but God does not abandon us. He guides us through His Word, prayer and the care of people He places in our lives. Even when the way ahead is unclear, we can trust that God walks with us.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the "angels" of the "little ones," reminding us that every person, especially the weak and vulnerable, is precious in God's sight. He continues to send "angels", working through people like caregivers, parents, friends, and even strangers to guide and help us in times of need.

Reflective questions:

How have I experienced God's care through others, and how can I be an instrument of His presence to someone today?

Saturday, 3rd October, 26th Week in Ordinary Time.

Job 42:1–3, 5–6, 12–17, Luke 10:17–24

The seventy-two came back rejoicing. 'Lord,' they said 'even the devils submit to us when we use your name.' He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Yes, I have given you power to tread underfoot serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you. Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven.' It was then that, filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, he said, *'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 who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'* Then turning to his disciples he spoke to them in private, *'Happy the eyes*

that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it’.

Our Names Written in Heaven

In today’s Gospel, the seventy-two disciples return from their mission filled with great joy. They are amazed by all they have seen and experienced. However, Jesus reminds them that their greatest reason for rejoicing is not what they have accomplished, but that their “*names are written in heaven.*” As we pray with this passage, let us reflect on what gives us joy. Often, we find joy in our achievements, recognition, or the results of our work. Yet Jesus tells us that our deepest joy comes from the reality that our names are written in heaven, in the heart of God where we belong. Even before we accomplish anything, we are already deeply loved by Him.

Like the seventy-two disciples, Jesus sends us out into our workplaces, neighbourhoods, homes, and parishes to bring His love to others through acts of kindness, forgiveness, honesty and service. Our mission may seem simple, but when we do it in Jesus’ name, it becomes a sign of God’s presence in the world.

Reflective question:

Do I find my deepest joy in what I accomplish, or in knowing that I belong to God?

Sunday, 4th October, 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Isaiah 5:1–7, Philippians 4:6–9, Matthew 21:33–43

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, ‘Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. “They will respect my son” he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, “This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance.” So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ They answered, ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives’. Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone. This was the Lord’s doing and it is wonderful to see? I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.’

Faithful Stewards

In the first reading taken from the prophet Isaiah, the vineyard represents God’s people. God lovingly tends and cares for the vineyard, expecting it to produce good fruit. Yet, instead of finding justice and integrity, He finds violence and hears cries of distress. This reminds us that God gives us the gift of life and faith, as well as abilities and opportunities, so our lives may bear fruit of love and justice.

In the Gospel, Jesus continues to speak about the vineyard. Its owner sends servants to collect the fruit that belongs to him, but the tenants reject and even kill them. Finally, he sends his beloved son, but they kill him too. The tenants have forgotten an important truth: they are stewards, not owners, of the vineyard. This message invites us to reflect on our own lives. Everything we have, including our gifts, time, possessions, and relationships, has been entrusted to us by God. We are called to use them wisely and generously. Let us serve faithfully in God’s vineyard, bearing good fruit out of love for Him and for the good of others.

Reflective question:

Do I recognise that all I have belongs first to God?

Monday, 5th October, St. Mary Faustina Kowalska.

Galatians 1:6–12, Luke 10:25–37

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, ‘Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? What do you read there?’ He replied, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself’. ‘You have answered right,’ said Jesus ‘do this and life is yours.’ But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, ‘And who is my

neighbour?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said “and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have.” Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands’ hands?’ ‘The one who took pity on him’ he replied. Jesus said to him, ‘Go, and do the same yourself’.

Becoming A True Neighbour

In the Gospel, a lawyer asks Jesus, “*Who is my neighbour?*” Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan. A man has been robbed and left wounded, but no one stops to help him. Yet a Samaritan, who is seen as an outsider, stops, shows compassion, tends the man’s wounds, and makes sure that he is cared for. Jesus shifts the question. The important question is not “*Who is my neighbour?*” but rather “*Am I a neighbour?*” The Samaritan is a neighbour to the wounded man because he allows compassion to move him into action.

Today, Jesus calls us to be neighbours to those in need: the lonely, the struggling, the sick and those treated unfairly. At times, we may be tempted to pass by because we are busy or think that someone else will help. However, Jesus invites us to stop, notice, and respond with compassion and love.

Reflective question:

How can I become a true neighbour to someone in need?

Tuesday, 6th October, St Bruno.

Galatians 1:13–24, Luke 10:38–42

Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord’s feet

and listened to him speaking. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said 'you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.'

The Better Part

In today's Gospel, Martha welcomes Jesus into her home and works hard to serve Him and His disciples. Mary, however, sits at Jesus' feet and listens to His word. Distracted by her many tasks, Martha becomes upset that she has to do all the work without Mary's help, so she turns to Jesus and complains. Jesus does not criticise Martha for serving; instead, He gently reminds her that she is missing what is essential: simply being with Him. Pulled in many directions, Martha allows her anxiety to rob her of peace and prevent her from being fully present to Jesus.

The question for us is not whether we serve, but whether our service flows from time spent with the Lord. Like Mary, we need to listen to Jesus first. Then our service will become a joyful response of love, rather than a burden.

Reflective question:

What prevents me from sitting at the feet of Jesus and finding rest in Him?

Wednesday, 7th October, Our Lady of the Rosary.

Acts 1:12-14, Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favor! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come

about, since I have no knowledge of man?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.

Mary, A Woman of Prayer

Today, as we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, the readings remind us once again that Mary is a person of prayer. In the Gospel, Mary listens attentively God with an open and prayerful heart. Although she does not fully understand His plan or know what lies ahead, she responds with complete trust: *"Let it happen to me as you have said."* In the first reading, we see Mary gathered in prayer with Jesus' disciples. She faithfully stays with them, patiently awaiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Her quiet presence gives them strength and reminds us of the importance of praying together, especially during times of uncertainty and waiting.

Through her example, Mary teaches us to remain faithful in prayer, listen attentively to God, and trust Him even when the way ahead is unclear. May we, like her, be able to say "Yes" to God each day, not just in big decisions, but also through small acts of love and service. May our daily prayer give us the courage and trust to follow God wherever He leads us.

Reflective question:

Am I willing to listen to God in prayer and trust Him, even when I do not fully understand His plan for me?

Thursday, 8th October, 27th Week in Ordinary Time.

Galatians 3:1–5, Luke 11:5–13

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him"; and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in

bed; I cannot get up to give it you". I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants. 'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

Our Generous Father

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells of a friend who keeps knocking at midnight. This teaches us that prayer should not be occasional or half-hearted. We are invited to keep asking, seeking, and knocking.

Unlike the sleeping friend in the parable, God is always loving and generous. He knows what we need even before we ask, yet He wants us to bring our needs, fears and desires to Him with trust. We might find that God does not always give us exactly what we expect. Sometimes, we ask for a specific answer to our prayers, but instead, He gives us strength, patience, or peace. Above all, He gives us the Holy Spirit who helps us remain faithful in difficult times and live each day with courage and love. Let us not lose heart but keep on trusting God, for He is our good Father.

Reflective question:

Do I continue to trust in God even when He answers my prayers differently from what I expect?

Friday, 9th October, SS. Denis and Companions, St. John Leonardi. Galatians 3:7–14, Luke 11:15–26

When Jesus had cast out a devil, some of the people said, 'It is through Beelzebul, the prince of devils, that he casts out devils'. Others asked him, as a test, for a sign from heaven; but, knowing what they were thinking, he said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is heading for ruin, and a household divided against itself collapses. So too with Satan: if he is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? -

Since you assert that it is through Beelzebul that I cast out devils. Now if it is through Beelzebul that I cast out devils, through whom do your own experts cast them out? Let them be your judges then. But if it is through the finger of God that I cast out devils, then know that the kingdom of God has overtaken you. So long as a strong man fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are undisturbed; but when someone stronger than he is attacks and defeats him, the stronger man takes away all the weapons he relied on and shares out his spoil. He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man it wanders through waterless country looking for a place to rest, and not finding one it says, "I will go back to the home I came from". But on arrival, finding it swept and tidied, it then goes off and brings seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and set up house there, so that the man ends up by being worse than he was before.'

To Become People of Faith

In the first reading, St. Paul says, *"those therefore who rely on faith receive the same blessing as Abraham, the man of faith."* He reminds us that belonging to God does not depend on simply observing external rules, but on placing faith in God as Abraham did. Abraham is called the *"man of faith"* because he trusted God even when His promises seemed impossible. His story shows that faith means trusting God with our lives and obeying Him. It is consoling to know that Abraham was not perfect. He was often afraid and impatient, yet he kept returning to God and trusting Him. Thus, his faith shows us that it is natural to have doubts and struggle with our weaknesses. What matters is that we keep relying on God, even in times of uncertainty.

In the Gospel, Jesus calls us to always fill our lives with God's presence by nurturing hearts rooted in prayer, truth, love and mercy. When we allow God to dwell within us, there is less room for pride, resentment, selfishness and despair. Let us always turn to God in prayer and allow Him to guide every aspect of our lives.

Reflective question:

Am I filling my heart with God's presence each day?

Saturday, 10th October, 27th Week in Ordinary Time.

Galatians 3:22–29, Luke 11:27–28

As Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said, 'Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked!' But he replied, 'Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it!'

Listening and Keeping the Word

After hearing Jesus speak, a woman praises His mother: *"Blessed is the womb that bore you."* Jesus gently reveals a deeper truth: real happiness belongs to those who hear God's word and keep it.

Prayer is a time to listen attentively to Jesus and allow His love to speak personally to our hearts. It is not simply something we do for God; it is God at work within us, guiding and transforming us. Yet prayer does not end when we leave our quiet time. Its true fruit is seen when we carry God's word into the day, allowing it to shape our thoughts, words, and actions. Like Mary, when we listen to God and follow His will, we find lasting happiness in Him.

Reflective question:

Do I accept Jesus' invitation to listen to God's word, obey it, and find true happiness?

Sunday, 11th October, 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Isaiah 25:6–10, Philippians 4:12–14, 19–20, Matthew 22:1–14

Jesus began to speak to them in parables once again, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. Next he sent some more servants. "Tell those who have been invited" he said "that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding." But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding". So these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the

wedding hall was filled with guests. When the king came in to look at the guests he noticed one man who was not wearing a wedding garment, and said to him, "How did you get in here, my friend, without a wedding garment?" And the man was silent. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth". For many are called, but few are chosen.'

The Feast of God's Love

In the first reading, God promises a joyful feast banquet for everyone. He will end suffering and death and wipe away every tear. This feast points to the joyful life God desires for us: a relationship of love and communion that begins now, not only in the future. In the Gospel, the king invites many guests to his son's wedding feast, but they refuse to come. He then invites everyone, but one person goes and does not put on the wedding garment.

The wedding garment reminds us that accepting God's invitation requires a transformed life. St. Paul shows us what this means: whether he has little or plenty, he trusts God rather than his circumstances. His confidence rests in God, who provides all he needs through Christ Jesus. Today, God invites us to His feast. Let us welcome His invitation with open hearts.

Reflective question:

What prevents me from responding to God wholeheartedly?

Monday, 12th October, 28th Week in Ordinary Time.

Galatians 4:22–24, 26–27, 31–5:1, Luke 11:29–32

The crowds got even bigger and Jesus addressed them, 'This is a wicked generation; it is asking for a sign. The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. On Judgement day the Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than Solomon here. 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.'

Jesus: The Greatest Sign of Love

In today's first reading, St. Paul reminds us, "*When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.*" Christian freedom does not mean doing whatever we want. Rather, it means living in the constant assurance that we belong to God, who loves us and calls us to love Him in return. When we live God's love, we are no longer enslaved by pride, anger, fear, or the constant need to prove ourselves. Today, let us stand firm in freedom and truly live as God's beloved children.

In today's Gospel, the people ask Jesus for a sign, even though He is the greatest sign, God's Word made flesh. Jesus calls them, and us, to conversion rather than seeking proof of God's love. Let us open our hearts to recognise His loving presence in Scripture, the sacraments and in daily life, and live freely as God's children.

Reflective question:

Do I look for signs while overlooking God's presence in ordinary moments?

Tuesday, 13th October, 28th Week in Ordinary Time.

Galatians 5:1–6, Luke 11:37–41

Jesus had just finished speaking when a Pharisee invited him to dine at his house. He went in and sat down at the table. The Pharisee saw this and was surprised that he had not first washed before the meal. But the Lord said to him, 'Oh, you Pharisees! You clean the outside of cup and plate, while inside yourselves you are filled with extortion and wickedness. Fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside too? Instead, give alms from what you have and then indeed everything will be clean for you.'

A Heart Set Free

In today's Gospel, a Pharisee was surprised when Jesus did not perform the customary ritual washing before the meal. Jesus used this moment to reveal a deeper truth: it is possible to appear clean and faithful outwardly while allowing the heart to remain filled with greed, selfishness, anger or unkindness.

This message remains relevant today. We may focus on how others see us or on following religious practices, yet still hold onto resentment, jealousy, pride or the need to control. Jesus invites us to look honestly within and allow God to cleanse us from the inside. A heart that is free means letting go of whatever prevents us from loving fully. When our hearts are free, our words and actions reflect compassion, generosity and love.

Reflective question:

What must I let go of so that my heart may be free to love God and others more fully?

Wednesday, 14th October, St. Callistus I.

Galatians 5:18–25, Luke 11:42–46

The Lord said to the Pharisees: ‘Alas for you Pharisees! You who pay your tithe of mint and rue and all sorts of garden herbs and overlook justice and the love of God! These you should have practised, without leaving the others undone. Alas for you Pharisees who like taking the seats of honour in the synagogues and being greeted obsequiously in the market squares! Alas for you, because you are like the unmarked tombs that men walk on without knowing it! A lawyer then spoke up. ‘Master,’ he said ‘when you speak like this you insult us too.’ ‘Alas for you lawyers also,’ he replied ‘because you load on men burdens that are unendurable, burdens that you yourselves do not move a finger to lift.’

Bearing the Fruits of the Spirit

In the first reading, St. Paul reminds us that we belong to Christ. Therefore, we are called to turn away from selfish desires and live by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit helps us bear the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. These qualities are visible signs that our lives belong to God.

In the Gospel, Jesus points out that the Pharisees carefully observe outward religious duties but neglect justice and the love of God. They focus on small details yet fail to show mercy to others. Jesus’ words also challenge us, because we can easily become like them. We may attend Mass, pray, and faithfully practise our religion, but these actions are empty if they do not make us more patient and generous or help us bring peace to others. Today, let us allow the Spirit to lead us so that we can

bear fruit of love, especially through justice, mercy and kindness toward those around us.

Reflective question:

How can I show greater love and mercy to others today?

Thursday, 15th October, St. Teresa of Jesus.

Ephesians 1:1–10, Luke 11:47–54

Jesus said, 'Alas for you who build the tombs of the prophets, the men your ancestors killed! In this way you both witness what your ancestors did and approve it; they did the killing, you do the building. And that is why the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles; some they will slaughter and persecute, so that this generation will have to answer for every prophet's blood that has been shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was murdered between the altar and the sanctuary". Yes, I tell you, this generation will have to answer for it all. Alas for you lawyers who have taken away the key of knowledge! You have not gone in yourselves, and have prevented others going in who wanted to.' When he left the house, the scribes and the Pharisees began a furious attack on him and tried to force answers from him on innumerable questions, setting traps to catch him out in something he might say.

Loved and Chosen

St. Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians by stating, *"Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence..."* God's love for us is eternal and unconditional. He did not begin loving us on the day we were born, when we first opened our hearts to Him or when we chose to do good. This truth can encourage us during moments when we feel forgotten or unloved. God sees us as His beloved children and continues to love us even when we make mistakes or turn away from Him. Being loved and chosen by God means that we are called to share His love with others so that they too can recognise that they are precious in God's sight.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks against people who honour the prophets of the past while refusing to accept the truth God speaks in the present. Likewise, we may admire saints and courageous people from the past

but ignore those who speak uncomfortable truths to us now. Today, let us be humble and open, even when God's message challenges us.

Reflective question:

Do I share God's love with others and remain open to His truth, even when it challenges me?

**Friday, 16th October, St. Hedwig, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.
Ephesians 1:11–14, Luke 12:1–7**

The people had gathered in the thousands, so they were treading on one another. And Jesus began to speak, first of all to his disciples. 'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees-that is, their hypocrisy. Everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. For this reason, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in hidden places will be proclaimed on the housetops. To you my friends I say: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. I will tell you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Can you not buy five sparrows for two pennies? And yet not one is forgotten in God's sight. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. There is no need to be afraid: you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.'

Living Honestly and Trusting God

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples, "*Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees-that is, their hypocrisy.*" Yeast is small, but it can spread through the whole dough. In the same way, hypocrisy can quietly enter our hearts when we become more concerned with appearing good before others than with living a life pleasing to God. Thus, we are called to live with honesty and freedom. We do not need to hide behind a mask or pretend to be perfect, for God knows us completely and loves us as we are. Let us come before God and allow His love to transform us from within.

Jesus then speaks about fear. We may fear failure, suffering, or an uncertain future. Yet God knows and cares about every detail of our lives, for "*even the hairs of your head have all been counted.*" Therefore, we can trust Him because we are precious in His sight.

Reflective question:

Where do I seek others' approval instead of God's, and what fear do I need to entrust more deeply to His loving care?

Saturday, 17th October, St. Ignatius of Antioch.

Ephesians 1:15–23, Luke 12:8–12

Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you, if anyone openly declares himself for me in the presence of men, the Son of Man will declare himself for him in the presence of God's angels. But the man who disowns me in the presence of men will be disowned in the presence of God's angels. Everyone who says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they take you before synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say, because when the time comes, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say."

Eyes of Faith, Hearts of Courage

In the first reading, St. Paul prays for the community of Ephesus: *"May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you..."* St. Paul desires that the Ephesians may receive wisdom and know God more deeply. This should also be our constant prayer for ourselves, our families, and our faith communities. Knowing God is more than learning facts about Him; it is having a personal relationship with Him. Like St. Paul, we too pray that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened. With eyes of faith, we recognise God's presence in our lives and face life with hope, courage and perseverance.

In the Gospel, Jesus calls His disciples and us today to acknowledge Him openly through the way we live, showing that Jesus has the central place in our hearts. Although we may fear criticism and do not want to stand out, our faith should be visible in our values, choices, words and actions. Jesus assures us that no act of faithfulness, however small, is hidden from God.

Reflective question:

How can I deepen my relationship with God, and make my faith visible through my words, choices and actions today?

Sunday, 18th October, 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Mission Sunday.

Isaiah 45:1, 4–6, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, Matthew 22:15–21

Then the Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, ‘Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man’s rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?’ But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, ‘You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.’ They handed him a denarius, and he said, ‘Whose head is this? Whose name?’ ‘Caesar’s’ they replied. He then said to them, ‘Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God’.

Belonging to God, Instruments of His Love

On Mission Sunday, the first reading reminds us that God can work through anyone to make His love known. God chose Cyrus, a foreign king who did not know Him, to serve His purpose. God says, *“It is for the sake of my servant Jacob, of Israel my chosen one, that I have called you by your name.”* In the same way, God can work through us and even those we least expect as instruments of His goodness. Our mission today is to share His love through simple acts of love at home, at work and in our community.

In the Gospel, the religious leaders ask Jesus whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus replies, *“Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar- and to God what belongs to God.”* As citizens, we are called to fulfil our responsibilities and contribute to the common good. Yet, because we bear the image of God, we belong to God first. On this Mission Sunday, we are reminded to offer our time, work, talents, and very lives to God, allowing Him to use us as instruments to help others encounter His love.

Reflective question:

What part of my life is God inviting me to offer more fully to Him, so that others may experience His love through me?

Monday, 19th October, Ss. Isaac Jogues and John de Brébeuf and Companions, St. Paul of the Cross.

Ephesians 2:1–10, Luke 12:13–21

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance’. ‘My friend,’ he replied- ‘who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?’ Then he said to them, ‘Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man’s life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs’. Then he told them a parable: ‘There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, “What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops.” Then he said, “This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time”. But God said to him, “Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?” So it is when a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God.’

Rich in the Eyes of God

A man in the crowd asks Jesus to settle a family dispute over an inheritance. Instead of becoming involved in the dispute, Jesus uses the situation to warn the crowd about greed and the danger of placing their security in wealth. Jesus then tells a parable about a rich man whose land produces an abundant harvest. Rather than thanking God or sharing with those in need, the man plans to build bigger barns to store everything for himself. He believes his wealth will guarantee him a comfortable, carefree life. However, he fails to realise that life is temporary and that material possessions cannot offer lasting security.

This parable challenges us to examine what we truly value. The world encourages us to accumulate and keep more for ourselves, but Jesus calls us to become rich in the eyes of God by generously sharing who we are and what we have. By offering our time, talents, resources and lives to help those in need, we become instruments of God’s goodness.

Reflective question:

How can I generously share what God has given me with someone in need today?

Tuesday, 20th October, 29th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ephesians 2:12-22, Luke 12:35-38

Jesus said to his disciples: 'See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready.'

Ready to Serve as God's Family

In the first reading, St. Paul reminds us, "*You are no longer aliens or foreign visitors: you are citizens like all the saints, and part of God's household.*" We are no longer outsiders but members of God's own family who belong to Him. God does not call us to serve Him from a distance, but invites us as His children into a loving and trusting relationship with Him. With God, we can be confident that we are fully known, loved, and always cared for.

In the Gospel, Jesus calls us, as members of God's family, to be dressed for action. This means always being ready to seek and do God's will in our daily lives, keeping our lamps burning through prayer, kindness, and service. The parable offers a surprising promise: when the master finds his servants watchful, he serves them. This reveals who God is: He comes not to be served but to serve, by showing us His constant love, often through the people around us. Having experienced His love, we are called to follow His example to serve others with humility.

Reflective question:

How can I keep my lamp burning today through prayer and acts of humble service to others around me?

Wednesday, 21st October, 29th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ephesians 3:2-12, Luke 12:39-48

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.' Peter said, 'Lord, do you mean this parable for us, or for

everyone? ‘The Lord replied, ‘What sort of steward, then, is faithful and wise enough for the master to place him over his household to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Happy that servant if his master’s arrival finds him at this employment. I tell you truly, he will place him over everything he owns. But as for the servant who says to himself, “My master is taking his time coming”, and sets about beating the menservants and the maids, and eating and drinking and getting drunk, his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful. The servant who knows what his master wants, but has not even started to carry out those wishes, will receive very many strokes of the lash. The one who did not know, but deserves to be beaten for what he has done, will receive fewer strokes. When a man has had a great deal given him, a great deal will be demanded of him; when a man has had a great deal given him on trust, even more will be expected of him.’

Faithful Stewards of God’s Gifts

In today’s Gospel, Jesus speaks of a faithful steward who is entrusted with caring for the household and providing food for the other servants at the proper time. This is what Christian discipleship is all about. We are stewards here on earth, entrusted with faith, time, abilities, material resources, and responsibilities in society and in the Church. We are called to use these gifts for the good of others. In the parable, the servant who says, “*My master is taking his time coming*”, begins to mistreat others and live selfishly. The same can happen to us when power leads us to dominate others, possessions make us self-centred, or we use responsibilities for personal gain.

True faithfulness is shown in how we treat others, especially when no one is watching or praising us. We are called to remain honest, compassionate, kind and generous in both great and small matters. Today, let us use everything God has entrusted to us to serve others faithfully and bring His love into the world.

Reflective question:

How am I using the gifts God has entrusted to me to serve others in my daily life?

Thursday, 22nd October, St. John Paul II.

Ephesians 3:14-21, Luke 12:49-53

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over! 'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

Rooted in Christ's love

St. Paul's prayer in Ephesians is one of the most beautiful prayers in the New Testament. He says, *"May He give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith...you will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until, knowing the love of Christ..."* He prays that we may come to know the vast, immeasurable love of Christ personally, not merely understand it as an idea. Knowing Christ's love helps us find security in our identity as God's beloveds, reshape our values and priorities, heal our fears and anxieties, and give us strength to love as we are called to.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us, *"Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."* Jesus is not promoting conflict. Rather, He wants us to know that being rooted in His love means we cannot remain neutral; we must choose His values of honesty over corruption, forgiveness over resentment, and compassion over hatred. These choices may create tensions when others do not understand us. Even when faith brings division, we are called to remain faithful to Jesus.

Reflective question:

How can Christ's love help me remain faithful to Him when others do not understand my choices?

Friday, 23rd October, St. John of Capistrano.

Ephesians 4:1-6, Luke 12:54-59

Jesus said again to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. And when

the wind is from the south you say it will be hot, and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret these times? Why not judge for yourselves what is right? For example: when you go to court with your opponent, try to settle with him on the way, or he may drag you before the judge and the judge hand you over to the bailiff and the bailiff have you thrown into prison. I tell you, you will not get out till you have paid the very last penny'

Unity

In the first reading, St. Paul states, *"Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together."* Christian unity grows when we bear with one another in love and practise selflessness, gentleness and patience. This is especially important when misunderstandings or differences arise in our relationships. Choosing peace and love is not a sign of weakness, but of the inner strength that comes from a close union with Christ.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells the crowds that although they can interpret signs in the weather, they fail to recognise God's presence in Him. What about us? We may be able to read the signs of the economy, people's moods or politics, but do we recognise what God is asking of us today? God always wants us to work for peace and reconciliation. Let us not wait, but begin building peace and unity today.

Reflective question:

What sign is God giving me at this moment, and how can I bring peace and unity today?

Saturday, 24th October, St. Anthony Mary Claret.

Ephesians 4:7-16, Luke 13:1-9

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.' He told this parable: *'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and*

he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."

The Fruit of Renewed Life

In today's Gospel, people tell Jesus about Galileans killed by Pilate. Jesus also speaks about the eighteen people who died when a tower collapsed. Instead of judging the victims or their sins, Jesus asks people to examine their own hearts: *"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* He rejects the idea that those who suffered were worse sinners than others. Tragedy is not an opportunity to judge, but a call to awaken. Life is fragile, and tomorrow is never guaranteed. Each day is God's gift and an opportunity to return to Him, love others and live with purpose.

We are called not just to live each day, but to bear good fruit wherever we are. Repentance means turning away from selfishness, resentment, dishonesty, indifference and fear, and choosing to follow Christ again. Jesus is patient and merciful. Like the gardener caring for the fig tree, He continues to care for us, nourish us through His Word and the Eucharist, and give us time to grow. He never gives up on us. Today, He invites us to allow His grace to change our hearts so that our lives may bear the good fruit of love.

Reflective question:

What concrete fruit of love can I bear today in my family, work, parish, or community?

Sunday, 25th October, 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Exodus 22:20-26, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10, Matthew 22:34-40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together and, to disconcert him, one of them put a question, 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

The Commandment of Love

In today's Gospel, a Pharisee asks Jesus, "*Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?*" He does not ask to learn, but to test Jesus. The Pharisees prided themselves on knowing the law and its many regulations. Jesus answers simply: "*Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself.*" These two commandments are inseparable. We cannot truly say that we love God if we refuse to love the people God places in our lives, even those we find difficult to love.

The world often sees love as a feeling or emotion. But the love Jesus teaches is more than a warm feeling; it is a faithful commitment. We love God even when we do not understand His ways or feel His presence. We love others even through misunderstandings, struggles, and difficult moments. We express this love through our care for our parents, spouse, children, friends and those in need. Jesus also calls us to pray for and seek the good of those who hurt us. Today, let us ask God for the grace to love Him wholeheartedly and to love others with patience, mercy, and faithfulness.

Reflective question:

How can I show God's love to someone I find difficult to love?

Monday, 26th October, 30th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ephesians 4:32-5:8, Luke 13:10-17

One Sabbath day Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who for eighteen years had been possessed by a spirit that left her enfeebled; she was bent double and quite unable to stand upright. When Jesus saw her he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are rid of your infirmity' and he laid his hands on her. And at once she straightened up, and she glorified God. But the synagogue official was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and he addressed the people present. There are six days' he said 'when work is to be done. Come and be healed on one of those days and not on the Sabbath.' But the Lord answered him. 'Hypocrites!' he said 'Is there one of you who does not untie his ox or his donkey from the manger on the Sabbath and take it out for watering? And this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has held bound these eighteen years - was it not right to untie her bonds on the Sabbath day?' When he said this, all his adversaries were

covered with confusion, and all the people were overjoyed at all the wonders he worked.

Healed by Mercy, Freed to Love

In the first reading, St. Paul says, *“Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgives you in Christ.”* This is the heart of Christian living. We have received God’s mercy freely; therefore, we are called to extend that same mercy to others. Forgiveness is not always easy. Hurt and resentment can remain in our hearts for a long time. Yet, St. Paul reminds us that hatred has no place in a life rooted in Christ. Let us ask God for the inner strength to let go of resentment, choose compassion and love, so as to imitate His merciful heart.

In the Gospel, Jesus heals a woman who had been unable to stand upright for eighteen years. While others focus on the Sabbath law, Jesus sees her pain, heals her and restores her dignity. Like the woman, we may carry burdens that bend us down, such as fear, unforgiveness, and disappointment. These burdens may prevent us from living with peace, joy and hope. Yet Jesus sees our struggles, reaches out with compassion, and calls us to stand upright and live in freedom as God’s children.

Reflective question:

What burden or past hurt do I need to bring to Jesus and ask Him to heal?

Tuesday, 27th October, 30th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ephesians 5:21-33, Luke 13:18-21

Jesus said, ‘What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it with? It is like a mustard seed which a man took and threw into his garden: it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air sheltered in its branches. Another thing he said, ‘What shall I compare the kingdom of God with? It is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through.’

Small Acts, Growing God’s Kingdom

In today’s Gospel, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a tiny mustard seed that grows into a large tree and to yeast that a woman mixes into flour until the whole batch rises. Both begin small and almost unnoticed, yet they gradually bring about growth and transformation.

What do these parables teach us? God often uses small and ordinary things to build His Kingdom of love. He desires to work through our simple lives and daily actions. In our families, workplaces, schools, parishes, friendships, and online interactions, we are called to be His instruments through small acts of kindness, patience, forgiveness, faithfulness, and service. Our Christian way of life should positively influence those around us. In a world often shaped by selfishness, materialism, and the pursuit of pleasure, our love, compassion, reconciliation, and faith can offer a different way of living. Like the mustard seed and the yeast, even our smallest acts of goodness can quietly transform lives and help God's Kingdom grow.

Reflective question:

What small act of love and kindness can I offer today to help God's Kingdom grow?

Wednesday, 28th October, SS. Simon and Jude, Apostles.

Ephesians 2:19-22, Luke 6:12-16

Jesus went out into the hills to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.

Built on Christ, Called to His Mission

In the first reading, St. Paul states, "You are part of a building that has apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone." A cornerstone is the first and most important stone laid in a building. It gives direction, alignment and strength to the entire structure. In the same way, Christ is the firm foundation of our lives.

When we place Him at the centre, He guides our choices, strengthens us in difficult times, and teaches us to live each day with love and faith.

In the Gospel, Jesus spends the whole night praying before choosing the twelve apostles. Though they have different backgrounds, personalities and abilities, He calls them by name and brings them together for His mission. Jesus also calls us to join His mission. Each of us has a place, a gift and a responsibility. We are called to help Him build a community where people feel welcomed, strengthened and led closer to Christ.

Reflective question:

Is Christ truly the cornerstone of my life, and how can I use my gifts to bring people close to Him?

Thursday, 29th October, 30th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ephesians 6:10-20, Luke 13:31-35

Just then some Pharisees came up. 'Go away' they said. 'Leave this place, because Herod means to kill you.' He replied, 'You may go and give that fox this message: Learn that today and tomorrow I cast out devils and on the third day attain my end. But for today and tomorrow and the next day I must go on, since it would not be right for a prophet to die outside Jerusalem. 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you refused! So be it! Your house will be left to you. Yes, I promise you, you shall not see me till the time comes when you say: Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Safe Under His Wings

In today's Gospel, Jesus continues His mission despite danger and rejection. He speaks with deep sorrow over Jerusalem, longing to gather its people as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. This reveals the tender heart of God: He does not force Himself upon us, but continually invites us to come close and receive His protection, mercy, and peace.

Today, we too can become like Jerusalem when we are too busy, self-reliant or distracted. Yet Christ never stops calling us. In moments of uncertainty and suffering, He offers us a safe place, not always by

removing every difficulty, but by remaining near and giving us strength to face it.

Reflective question:

What keeps me from letting Jesus draw me close to Him and guide my life today?

Friday, 30th October, 30th Week in Ordinary Time.

Philippians 1:1-11, Luke 14:1-6

Now on a Sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. There in front of him was a man with dropsy, and Jesus addressed the lawyers and Pharisees. 'Is it against the law' he asked 'to cure a man 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 hesitation?' And to this they could find no answer.

Making Mercy Visible

In the Gospel, the religious leaders watch Jesus carefully as He eats a meal on the Sabbath. A man suffering from illness stands before Him. Jesus knows that healing the man on the Sabbath may attract criticism, but He does not turn away. He asks, "*Is it against the law to cure a man on the Sabbath, or not?*" When no one answers, Jesus heals the man. For Jesus, rules and religious practices are meant to lead people closer to God and to one another. They should never become reasons to ignore someone who is suffering.

This Gospel challenges us because we may sometimes ignore another person's need when helping is inconvenient or may invite criticism from others. Jesus invites us to always see the person before us, rather than focus only on the cost or difficulty of helping. May we follow his example of love by making God's mercy visible in our daily lives.

Reflective question:

How can I make God's mercy visible by responding with love to someone in need today?

Saturday, 31st October, 30th Week in Ordinary Time.

Philippians 1:18-26, Luke 14:1,7-11

Now on a Sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to 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.'

To Live Is Christ

In the first reading, St. Paul proclaims with conviction, *"Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would bring me something more."* His whole life belongs to Jesus. Whether he lives to serve Christ through his mission or dies to be with Him, Christ remains his purpose. Nothing- not suffering, imprisonment, opposition, or even death- can take this away from him. Can we echo St. Paul's words, *"Life to me is Christ"*? This is challenging because we often place our careers, wealth, success, comfort, and others' approval at the centre of our lives. When these become our highest priorities, we may find ourselves anxious and exhausted. Today, let us place Christ at the centre of our lives. He gives us strength in times of difficulty and hope to guide every decision we make.

In the Gospel, Jesus shows us that when we place Him at the centre of our lives, we become free to serve others and to be quiet witnesses to His love. We are no longer trapped by the desire for honour, the need to prove ourselves, or the longing for recognition. Rooted in Christ, we rejoice when good is done.

Reflective question:

Where is Christ inviting me to serve with greater humility and freedom?

