

Prayer for Living
Daily Reflections
Liturgical Year B
November



Following Jesus, my King

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PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR B

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Friday, 1st November, All Saints.

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

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: "How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

Saints in the making

"My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are in the future has not yet been revealed" (1st reading). The path to holiness is an ongoing journey that we are called to walk daily to respond to God, who calls us His children. Step by step, we learn to practice the beatitudes in our relationships with others. We learn to be gentle in our words, to weep with those who are grieving, to open our eyes and keep our hunger alive for a more just and merciful society, to sow seeds of peace through our actions and to inspire others around us to do the same, etc.

As we celebrate today's feast, let us persevere with patience and joy in loving God and neighbour, which is the essence of Christian holiness. Let us listen in prayer to God's personal call for each of us to love. In our own uniqueness, we are not meant to copy other examples of holiness but instead, be inspired to live it out, each person in his/her own ways.

Reflective question:

How am I invited to practice a beatitude today?

Saturday, 2nd November, All Souls' Day.

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

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi,

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

In God's love lies our hope

The experience of death, be it a loved one's passing or the inevitability of our own, is something that we often fear or struggle with. As today's gospel recounted, Jesus, too, went through the fearful struggle of death. Out of love for us, He faced it so that not even the reality of death could separate anyone from Him. In remembering all those who have gone before us, especially those close to us, let us find our consolation and encouragement in the unfailing love of Jesus, who *"died for us while we were still sinners"* (2nd reading). God loves us, and because of that unwavering love, we can have hope of sharing new life with the risen Lord.

We nurture our hope by being renewed in our experience of God's deep love for us. Let us find Jesus drawing near to love us in prayer today. In being loved by Him, may our hearts rest in trust and hope.

Reflective question:

Do I believe that nothing, not even death, can separate us from Jesus?

**Sunday, 3rd November, 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Deuteronomy 6:2-6, Hebrews 7:23-28, Mark 12:28-34**

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and put a question to him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well spoken, Master; what you have said is true: that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice." Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to question him any more.

More loving way

In today's gospel, through his dialogue with Jesus, the scribe came to understand the essential meaning of the commandments. The key point is love- not empty rituals. This insight allowed him to acknowledge that loving God and neighbour is *"far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice."* Without love as motivation, even a significant action like a sacrifice loses its meaning and purpose. On the contrary, with love as its centre, even the smallest action becomes meaningful and beneficial to others.

"Listen, Israel..." Like the scribe, we learn to listen again to God in prayer, as He shows us how to place love at the centre of our thoughts, words and actions. We do not necessarily need to make great sacrifices or go to distant places to love. Instead, we can begin by focusing on our immediate surroundings and the people close to us. As Pope Francis says, *"we need only to find a more loving way of doing what we are already doing"*.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus showing me to think, speak and act in a more loving way today?

Monday, 4th November, St. Charles Borromeo.

Philippians 2:1-4, Luke 14:12-14

Jesus said to his host, one of the leading Pharisees, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesies by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again."

Being gratuitous

In our daily lives, it is always easier for us to relate with those we like, who are familiar to us, or whom we admire. In the gospel, Jesus encourages us to step outside of our comfort zones and engage with people we typically keep at a distance. This includes those we find difficult to get along with and those we do not agree with. These people are the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind that Jesus is referring to in the passage.

Taking the first step to love beyond familiar boundaries may seem daunting, and deciding to love selflessly may require more effort. Yet, when we do so, we become more like Jesus, who loves us unconditionally. In this journey of loving like Jesus, we find the repayment that He promised us in the gospel. May Jesus give us the necessary will and strength today in prayer to love others generously.

Reflective question:

Who is Jesus inviting me to love freely today?

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

Philippians 2:5-11, Luke 14:15-24

One of those gathered around the table said to Jesus, "Happy the man who will be at the feast in the kingdom of God!" But he said to him, "There was a man who gave a great banquet, and he invited a large number of people. When the time for the banquet came, he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come along: everything is ready now.' But all alike started to make excuses. The first said, 'I have bought a piece of land and must go and see it. Please accept my apologies.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and am on my way to try them out. Please accept my apologies.' Yet another said, 'I have just got

married and so am unable to come.' "The servant returned and reported this to his master. Then the householder, in a rage, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 'Sir,' said the servant, 'your orders have been carried out and there is still room.' Then the master said to his servant, 'Go to the open roads and the hedgerows and force people to come in to make sure my house is full; because, I tell you, not one of those who were invited shall have a taste of my banquet.'"

Relationship with God

Today, we are presented with the image of the banquet in God's kingdom, symbolizing a close relationship with Him. This is a relationship to which everyone is invited, as we read in the gospel. The good news is that God invites each of us into His banquet, for He desires all people, without exception, to come to know Him personally. However, the decision to respond and enter the banquet is not forced upon us. It is a choice we make freely. Moreover, God invites us not just once or twice but in every moment of each day to grow in our knowledge of who He is. He beckons us to draw closer to His heart. As we experience His love more deeply, we can truly love others with His love.

Let us wait no longer. Let us find no more excuses. May we respond to God's invitation and taste the happiness of living in a relationship with Him.

Reflective question:

Am I open to responding 'yes' to God's invitation today?

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

Philippians 2:12-18, Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. "If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. "And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, 'Here is a man who started to build and

was unable to finish.' Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions."

Following Jesus

Following Jesus requires us to be ready to place Him always as the main reference point in our lives. Placing God at the centre of our lives often comes with a cost, as it requires effort to choose to live according to His ways. This often means letting go of our materialistic ways and embracing a simpler way of living. At times, it may require putting aside our ego or the opinions of others to truly listen to and trust in God's Word. Jesus invites us to count the cost of discipleship and be prepared for the challenges it brings. Being aware of this cost enables us to walk our journey with certainty and helps us persevere until the end.

There are times when our will and strength falter. We find that we do not have enough within us to go on. In these times, let us remember to stop and turn to Jesus for help. With deep trust, we ask Him to give us what we need because, in the end, *"it is God, for His own loving purpose, who put both the will and action in [us]"* (1st reading).

Reflective question:

What strikes me from today's prayer?

Thursday, 7th November, 31st Week in Ordinary Time.

Philippians 3:3-8, Luke 15:1-10

The tax collectors and the sinners, meanwhile, were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. "This man," they said, "welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he spoke this parable to them: "What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? 'Rejoice with me,' he would say, 'I have found my sheep that was lost.' In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner

than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance. "Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? 'Rejoice with me,' she would say, 'I have found the drachma I lost.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner."

Heart of God

Today's parables reveal the true heart of God: A Father who always seeks His children because each one matters to Him. This demonstrates the maternal love of God, as He willingly goes out to find those who are lost. Throughout Jesus' life, He embodies this infinitely loving God through both words and actions, by welcoming sinners and sharing meals with them.

Let us seek to be found by Jesus today, remembering that He never gets tired of searching for us. On our part, let us not be tired of being brought back to Him. By reuniting with Jesus, we find the joy of being loved and belonging to Him. This deep joy inspires us to go out and share God's unfailing love with others through our actions and words. We pray that those around us can also experience His love and know His true heart through our lives.

Reflective question:

How have I experienced God finding and loving me?

Friday, 8th November, 31st Week in Ordinary Time.

Philippians 3:17- 4:1, Luke 16:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer.' Then the steward said to himself, 'Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes.' "Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' 'One

hundred measures of oil,' was the reply. The steward said, 'Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty.' To another he said, 'And you, sir, how much do you owe?' 'One hundred measures of wheat,' was the reply. The steward said, 'Here, take your bond and write eighty.' "The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light."

Astuteness

We read in today's gospel that the dishonest steward's astuteness was praised because he used and applied his intelligence to preserve his life. In our daily lives, what are we preserving with our intelligence? Do we use it to preserve our ego or to preserve the life of God in us and the lives of others?

"So then, my brethren and dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord" (1st reading). Let these words of St. Paul invite us to use our God-given intelligence, astuteness and creativity to remain faithful in living a life according to the gospel values of compassion, humility, honesty, justice, etc. When we encounter various life situations that challenge us as His followers, let us not be afraid. Let us bring them into dialogue with Jesus through prayer. We ask the Holy Spirit to give us light and clarity in our minds and hearts so that we can also be astute to live our Christian life.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus inviting me to use my intelligence for the good of others?

Saturday, 9th November, The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica.

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12 or 1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17, John 2:13-22

Just before the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there. Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the dove sellers, "Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market." Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: I am eaten up with zeal for your house. The Jews intervened and said, "What sign can

you show us that you should act like this?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?" But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said.

We are God's dwelling place

A temple is called God's dwelling place precisely because God's presence is at its centre. In the gospel, money and material gains took centre stage. Therefore, Jesus drove out the sellers and money changers to restore God's rightful place in the temple.

Today's feast of the dedication of Rome's Lateran Basilica points to a deeper reality that the true place where God dwells is within each person, as St. Paul says, "*You are God's building... God's temple*" (cf. 1 Cor 3:9,16). In the silence of our hearts, let us realise with joy and gratitude that God is present in us, faithfully loving and accompanying us in all moments. At the same time, let us also allow Jesus to reveal what may be taking God's central place in our lives. We humbly ask Jesus to help us remove these distractions so that we can become a more authentic dwelling place for God.

Reflective question:

What are the things that take up God's central place in my life?

Sunday, 10th November, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

1 Kings 17:10-16, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44

In his teaching Jesus said, "Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive." He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury;

for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on."

Learning to gaze like Jesus

In today's gospel, the poor widow hidden among many rich people in the temple did not escape Jesus's gaze. He saw and understood the significance of her small but sincere offering and brought it to His disciples' attention. In our daily lives, we may feel that our little acts of kindness, genuine words to others, and thoughtful efforts to put others first may go unnoticed. Just as Jesus appreciated the widow's true generosity, He appreciates our sincere efforts to show love.

Today, Jesus is teaching us to have the same kind of gaze as Him. We are invited to look more closely and deeply at the various events in our lives. Like Jesus, may we learn to recognise and appreciate the great love behind seemingly insignificant words and gestures we witness in the people around us.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus' message for me in prayer?

Monday, 11th November, St. Martin de Tours.

Titus 1:1-9, Luke 17:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples, "Obstacles are sure to come, but alas for the one who provides them! It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone put around his neck than that he should lead astray a single one of these little ones. Watch yourselves! "If your brother does something wrong, reprove him and, if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I am sorry,' you must forgive him." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

Being aware of how we live

Today, we are reminded of a universal truth: we do not live our lives in isolation, but rather in connection with others around us. In the gospel, Jesus calls us to be mindful of how we live. Our attitudes, decisions,

words and actions can either lead others away from Jesus or draw them closer to a union with Him.

Today's gospel invites us to embrace humility by seeking and offering forgiveness in our relationships. Gradually, we learn to mend broken connections and lead others to live in union with Jesus and one another as sisters and brothers. When our pride prevents us from being sorry or the effort to forgive seems too challenging, let us not turn away but instead return to Jesus. Like the disciples, we can ask Him to increase our faith so that we can receive from the Lord whatever we need to continue walking toward reconciliation.

Reflective question:

Is there anyone I am called to ask for forgiveness or to forgive?

Tuesday, 12th November, St. Josaphat.

Titus 2:1-8, 11-14, Luke 17:7-10

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

Doing what we have been told

"When you have done all you have been told to do, say, 'we are merely servants...'" Jesus, in the gospel, reminds us of the fundamental attitude of being a servant. It is in the ability to listen to what we have been told to do and to obey by putting it into action. At first glance, listening and obeying may seem simple. However, our experiences reveal that it is often more challenging than it appears. Listening requires us to be open to God's word, while humility and trust are necessary to obey and follow His ways. Above all, love for God and genuine concern for others are essential in our service.

Our service begins with prayer. Through our conversation with Jesus, we learn to listen attentively and be at the service of the Word. From

there, we humbly do whatever He tells us. With love, we joyfully follow in the footsteps of our Master Servant.

Reflective question:

How am I called to be at the service of God and others?

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

Titus 3:1-7, Luke 17:11-19

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

God is compassionate

"When the kindness and love of God for humankind were revealed, it was not because He was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except His own compassion that He saved us" (1st reading). St. Paul's words reflect what we see in today's gospel. Jesus healed all ten lepers not as a reward for their deeds but out of compassion for them. This is the Good News: God is by nature compassionate. As Pope Francis said, *"His name is mercy"*. We must always be reminded of who God is, as we often believe that we need to earn His love. God's love is unconditional. The lepers were healed whether or not they returned to give thanks.

As we reflect on our own story, let us recognise the moments we have experienced God's compassionate love. Like the Samaritan leper, let us take time to give thanks today. Our gratitude leads us to grow deeper in faith as we become more aware of Jesus' presence right by our side.

Reflective question:

Do I believe that God is compassionate?

Thursday, 14th November, 32nd Week in Ordinary Time.

Philemon 7-20, Luke 17:20-25

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

Finding God

The question the Pharisees posed to Jesus today reveals a deep desire found in the human heart. We desire to find God and long for His presence in our lives. In responding to the Pharisees, Jesus directs them to seek God within themselves rather than focusing on external appearances. He invites us to recognize that God is already present among us and within us. *"We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass – grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence"* (Mother Teresa).

"Make no move; do not set off in pursuit..." Today, let us follow Jesus' directions and begin our prayer by quieting our minds and hearts. In the inner silence within, we allow His words to resound again. As we listen to Him, we find comfort and peace in the truth that the kingdom of God-Jesus Himself- is with us and among us, here and now.

Reflective question:

In the silence of prayer, can I perceive Jesus being with me?

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

2 John 4-9, Luke 17:26-37

Jesus said to his disciples, "As it was in Noah's day, so will it also be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating and drinking, marrying wives and husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all. It will be the same as it was in Lot's

day: people were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but the day Lot left Sodom, God rained fire and brimstone from heaven and it destroyed them all. It will be the same when the day comes for the Son of Man to be revealed. "When that day comes, anyone on the housetop, with his possessions in the house, must not come down to collect them, nor must anyone in the fields turn back either. Remember Lot's wife. Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose it; and anyone who loses it will keep it safe. I tell you, on that night two will be in one bed: one will be taken, the other left; two women will be grinding corn together: one will be taken, the other left." The disciples interrupted. "Where, Lord?" they asked. He said, "Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather."

Life

"Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose it, and anyone who loses it will keep it safe." During the time of Noah and Lot, the gospel tells us that the busyness and concerns of people's lives took over, and they failed to recognise and respond to God's voice and message. As a result, they ended up losing the very life they were trying to preserve. Is it not something we see and experience also today? For example, our career or work concerns often take precedence, impacting our physical and mental health; the excessive involvement in social or religious issues outside may prevent us from recognising the needs of those close to us at home; or the constant pursuit of enjoyment or travel may reduce our deeper spiritual sensitivity to God.

Jesus calls us today to be attentive to what truly matters: our relationship with God and loving others, starting with those closest to us. In prayer, let us give Him our attention and allow Him to remind us of where our true life lies.

Reflective question:

What have I understood in today's prayer?

Saturday, 16th November, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Gertrude. 3 John 5-8, Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. "There was a judge in a certain town," he said, "who had neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the same town there was

a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, 'I want justice from you against my enemy!' For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, 'Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death.'" And the Lord said, "You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"

Persevering in prayer

Do we get tired of praying and presenting the same petitions to God repeatedly? Do we get tired of waiting and feel tempted to stop praying altogether? Persevering in prayer with patience and determination is not easy. Thus, Jesus encourages us through today's parable not to lose heart. He invites us to learn from the widow in the gospel, embracing her persevering attitude in prayer. We are called to bring our various petitions to God: for those who ask for our prayers, for the sick among us, for those suffering in war-torn areas, for our own family's needs, etc.

Jesus reassures us that God is just: He knows our needs and responds in due time. His reassurance comes from His own experience of relating with His loving Father, who never lets Him down. Today, let us once again come to pray with faith, trusting in God's love, which never disappoints.

Reflective question:

Do I wait patiently for God's response to my prayer?

Sunday, 17th November, 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

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

Jesus said to his disciples, "In those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven. "Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell

you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father."

"Know that He is near..."

There are times in our lives when we experience significant changes that make it feel as though our whole world is breaking apart - when *"the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven."* The inevitable changes life brings can turn into challenges that threaten to overwhelm us. Yet, as the gospel reminds us, all is not lost. We are not alone in tough times because Jesus is with us. *"When you see these things happening, know that He is near."*

As we spend time in prayer, let us recognise Him present as a faithful Friend who is always close to us and never abandons us. In His constant companionship, we find our security and renewed hope. Today, we give thanks for the gift of His firm friendship in our lives. In the same way, may we strive to be faithful friends like Jesus to those around us who are going through turbulent times

Reflective question:

Do I realise that I am not alone in life, but Jesus is always with me?

Monday, 18th November, Dedication of the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Rev 1:1-4; 2:1-5, Luke 18:35-43

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

Seeing again

“Sir, let me see again.” The blind man’s request to Jesus is notable for its simplicity and wisdom. He asks for what he truly needs, not just physical sight but also a vision of faith. That is why he turns to Jesus, rather than anyone else. Pope Francis wrote, *“Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus but sees things as Jesus Himself sees them, with His own eyes: it is a participation in His way of seeing”* (*Lumen Fidei* 18). The blind man wants to see the world again differently – in faith.

Do we see the same need? We often need to look again at a situation, an experience, a specific person or even ourselves with new eyes of faith. As we pray, let us listen to Jesus asking personally: *“What do you want Me to do for you?”* Like the blind man, let us ask Jesus to teach us how to see with humility, hope, and patience, learning to recognise the good that is present before noticing the lack.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus teaching me to see again?

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

Revelations 3:1-6, 14-22, Luke 19:1-10

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

Encountering Jesus

“Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal, side by side with him” (1st reading). Indeed, this is what we see being fulfilled in the gospel. Zacchaeus heard God knocking at the door of his heart. He went to great lengths to overcome the obstacles in his way and open the door of his life to Jesus. How great must Zacchaeus’ joy be that day when he realised that Jesus was also seeking to encounter him.

Each day, without fail, Jesus comes to encounter us. Like Zacchaeus, let us be determined to overcome any obstacles that might prevent us from meeting Him, whether those are feelings of inadequacy, worries, pride or others’ opinions of us, etc. Instead, let us listen as He calls us by name, telling us, *“Come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.”* Let us not hesitate any longer, but let today be the day we actively seek to encounter Jesus through prayer and in our daily lives.

Reflective question:

What strikes me from today’s prayer?

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

Revelations 4:1-11, Luke 19:11-28

While the people were listening to this Jesus went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and they imagined that the kingdom of God was going to show itself then and there. Accordingly he said, “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to be appointed king and afterward return. He summoned ten of his servants and gave them ten pounds. ‘Do business with these,’ he told them, ‘until I get back.’ But his compatriots detested him and sent a delegation to follow him with this message, ‘We do not want this man to be our king.’” Now on his return, having received his appointment as king, he sent for those servants to whom he had given the money, to find out what profit each had made. The first came in and said, ‘Sir, your one pound has brought in ten.’ ‘Well done, my good servant!’ he replied. ‘Since you have proved yourself faithful in a very small thing, you shall have the government of ten cities.’ Then came the second and said, ‘Sir, your one pound has made five.’ To this one also he said, ‘And you shall be in charge of five cities.’ Next came the other and said, ‘Sir, here is your pound. I put it away safely in a piece of linen because I was afraid of you; for you are an exacting man:

you pick up what you have not put down and reap what you have not sown.' 'You wicked servant!' he said. 'Out of your own mouth I condemn you. So you knew I was an exacting man, picking up what I have not put down and reaping what I have not sown? Then why did you not put my money in the bank? On my return I could have drawn it out with interest.' And he said to those standing by, 'Take the pound from him and give it to the man who has ten pounds.' And they said to him, 'But, sir, he has ten pounds.' 'I tell you, to everyone who has will be given more; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 'But as for my enemies who did not want me for their king, bring them here and execute them in my presence.'" When he had said this he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

Faithfulness in loving

Today's gospel shows us the king's joy in witnessing his servants' faithfulness in growing the one pound entrusted to each of them. All of us have been entrusted with one gift: the capacity to love God and others. Just like the servants in the parable, we are called to develop this gift every day until the end of our lives. We exercise our capacity to love with small acts, such as giving a smile, showing a friendly gesture, giving a kind look, listening attentively, or performing a good deed- all done in the Spirit of Jesus.

In our prayer, let us listen to Jesus' words in the parable, *"since you have proved yourself faithful in a very small thing..."* We are reminded that what truly matters is not the outcome of our efforts but rather our faithfulness to love in seemingly small, mundane situations. Today, let us be with Jesus as we go about our daily activities. We ask Him to show us how to love those we encounter so that, at the end of the day, we can also hear Him say, *"Well done, my good servant!"*

Reflective question:

How am I called to be faithful today?

Thursday, 21st November, The Presentation of the Blessed Mary. Zechariah 2:14-17, 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 toward 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."

God's will: to love

"Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother." In today's feast, we celebrate Mary as someone who places God's will above her own and anyone else's. Like everyone, Mary faced challenges, fears, doubts, etc. Despite these struggles, she remained faithful in doing God's will: to love. We see her love for God demonstrated by her trust in Him, even at the foot of the cross. We remember how she cared for others by noticing their needs and bringing them to Jesus, as shown in the wedding of Cana.

In prayer, let us recognise that Jesus looks at each of us and stretches out His hands toward us. As His disciples, He invites us to be His sisters, brothers and mothers of today. Together with Mary, let us rejoice in being invited to be part of Jesus' family. We pray that our lives can witness to what it means to do the Father's will so that others may be drawn to come and be part of God's family as well.

Reflective question:

Does God's will take priority in my daily life?

Friday, 22nd November, St. Cecilia.

Revelations 10:8-11, Luke 19:45-48

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

House of prayer

Jesus tells us today what our lives are meant to be: a house of prayer where we live in a loving and personal relationship with God. This is our purpose- to live our lives with God. However, in the busyness of life, we

often overlook God's presence. Instead of living with Him, we may end up living life alone. In our loneliness, we might try to fill our lives with material possessions and superficial relationships that fail to truly satisfy us, ultimately preventing us from finding true fulfilment in God.

"He taught in the temple every day." Jesus comes to us daily because He never tires of calling and teaching us how to live with God. Let us learn to turn to Him in our troubles, rejoice together in life's simple blessings and to remember in faith that we are never alone. May today be a day of living with God and enjoying His presence.

Reflective question:

Do I spend my day connected to God?

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

Revelations 11:4-12, Luke 20:27-40

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

Belonging to God

Jesus reminds us today of our true belonging in life: we belong to God. We do not belong to anyone else or even ourselves. Our belonging to

God gives us the true foundation and security in life. In the face of life's changes and uncertainties- whether it is the prospect of an unknown future or even the reality of death - we are invited to remember that God remains faithful by our side, holding our lives safely in His hands. For He is our God, just as He is the *"God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."*

In our prayer time, let us find peace and inner joy in recognising that we belong to the Father as His dear children. Only then can we learn to live as Jesus Himself lived - unafraid to entrust ourselves more and more to God's loving hands. Let us ask for deeper faith to know and believe that He is the God of the living and we are the *"children of the resurrection."*

Reflective question:

Am I aware that I belong to God?

Sunday, 24th November, The Solemnity of Christ the King.

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

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

The self-giving king

In the gospel, it is striking that Jesus only acknowledged His identity as a king when He was about to fully give Himself on the cross. In doing so, He showed us what kind of king He is and what kind of kingdom He brings. It is not a kingdom where self-interest dominates but one where self-giving reigns. As king, Jesus is the first to pave the way and walk the path of total self-giving. As such, He embodies the true meaning of power which is meant for loving service to God and others.

As Christians, we are called to walk the same path of self-giving love in service to others. Let us humbly ask God to guide us in how we can use the power and authority we have in our different roles in life, such as spouse, parent, sibling, child, employer, colleague, friend, etc., to serve those around us. When the cost of self-giving seems too much, we can turn to Jesus for strength. We ask Him for the courage and joy to walk in His footsteps of love.

Reflective question:

In light of today's feast, do I understand the self-giving nature of Jesus' kingship?

Monday, 25th November, St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Revelations 14:1-5, Luke 21:1-4

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

Greater attachment to God

In the gospel, the widow showed that her trust and dependence were placed in God rather than in her material possessions. In contrast, the rich people depended and trusted more on their wealth. While valuing material resources is not inherently wrong, since they support our daily lives, we must not forget that they are just means for us to live. They are not the source of our lives. Ultimately, it is God who truly sustains us in life.

The poor widow showed that her understanding through her way of life. She was more attached to God and, thus, less attached to her money. As Henri Nouwen wrote, *"It is not so much a question of detachment as it is a question of fully trusting and following the voice of love. Detachment is only a consequence of a greater attachment. Who would worry about his few possessions when invited to be intimate with the lord of abundance, who offers more fish than we can catch and more bread than we can eat?"* Today, let us continue our journey toward greater attachment to God.

Reflective question:

How can I trust and depend more on God?

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

Revelations 14:14-19, Luke 21:5-11

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All these things you are staring at now – the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed." And they put to him this question: "Master," they said, "when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place?" "Take care not to be deceived," he said, "because many will come using my name and saying, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near at hand.' Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon." Then he said to them, "Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."

Building our faith relationship

Today's gospel calls us to consider how we look at external matters and events around us. Outward appearances can distract us from recognising what truly matters in life. For example, the Temple's impressive exterior led the people to overlook the fact that what is essential is not building physical structures but in cultivating a loving and lasting relationship with God. In our lives, what are we focussed on building? Do we prioritise building more physical structures over the development of stronger relationships with God and others? These relationships are what truly create true families and communities of faith.

Today, let us continue building our faith in God, personally and in the community. Our firm faith in God anchors us in hope. In difficult life circumstances, let us listen and believe in Jesus' words, "*Do not be frightened.*" With faith, we weather through disturbing news in life, such as conflicts in the family, unexpected illnesses that strike us, failures at work, etc. We strengthen our friendship with Jesus by spending time with Him in prayer. In doing so, we walk forward with trust and patience, always accompanied by our Friend.

Reflective question:

How can I strengthen my faith relationship with God?

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

Revelations 15:1-4, Luke 21:12-19

Jesus said to his disciples, "Men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defense, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives."

"Opportunity to bear witness"

"Men will seize you and persecute you..." When we truly live out the gospel values, persecution becomes inevitable. This can manifest in various ways, whether through conflicts with opposing worldly values or from others or within ourselves. For instance, by being honest and kind at work, we might find that our careers do not progress as quickly; others may dismiss our efforts when we stand up for someone in need; or our tendency to be judgmental can hinder us from seeing others with love, etc. These moments of persecution may lead us to feel discouraged or withdraw in fear.

In the gospel, Jesus teaches us to change our perspective and see these challenging moments as our opportunities to bear witness. We become true Christian witnesses when we continue practising our faith, even in the face of unpleasant consequences. We do so by being steadfast in our commitment to be humble, truthful, simple in our lifestyle and compassionate toward others. Today, let us ask for endurance in following Jesus. May our words and deeds give joyful witness to Jesus' presence and love for all.

Reflective question:

How can I turn moments of persecution into opportunities to bear witness?

Thursday, 28th November, 34th Week in Ordinary Time.

Revelations 18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3, 9, Luke 21:20-28

Jesus said to his disciples: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you must realize that she will soon be laid desolate. Then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains, those inside the city must leave it, and those in country districts must not take refuge in it. For this is the time of vengeance when all that scripture says must be fulfilled. Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days come! "For great misery will descend on the land and wrath on this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to every pagan country; and Jerusalem will be trampled down by the pagans until the age of the pagans is completely over. "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand."

Look to Jesus

When we experience great problems, it can feel as though we are witnessing the destruction and disasters depicted in the gospel. We experience agony, bewilderment, and fear due to the unknown future. While we cannot avoid or control troubles in life, we can choose how we respond to them. In stressful times, where do we look to? Do we look down and lament endlessly in self-pity or do we look around us, filled with increasing anxiety?

Today, Jesus tells us to look to Him: *"When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand."* By choosing to fix our eyes on Jesus, we may not be free from life's problems, but we can find reassurance in His love for us. With certainty of His love, we can echo the words of St. Paul, *"We are often troubled but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend; and though badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed"* (2 Cor 4:8-9).

Reflective question:

Can I choose to look to Jesus today?

Friday, 29th November, 34th Week in Ordinary Time.

Revelations 20:1-4, 11 - 21:2, Luke 21:29-33

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

Faithful and near

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." These words remind us of God's promise to always be faithful to us. Indeed, when we look back at our journey so far, we find these words to be true. People and events in life come and go, but God's loving presence remains a constant in our lives.

"...know that the kingdom of God is near." We are invited to rediscover that Jesus is close to us today. He calls us to perceive the signs of His presence in various ways: through nature, in people around us, in the surprises that life brings and above all, in His Word. Jesus comes and speaks His word to us daily. His Word gives us life and inspires us to live each day with love. May today be a day where we welcome and listen to the Word of God in faith. Let us make space for His Word in our minds and hearts so that we, too, can stay close to Him throughout our day.

Reflective question:

Do I experience Jesus' faithfulness and nearness in my life?

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

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

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

Follow me

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” When calling Peter, Andrew, James and John, Jesus saw them not just as simple fishermen but as His apostles – each one with the potential to share His love with all people. Jesus had faith in those He chose and trusted them to love and serve others as He did. Today, Jesus extends that same gaze of faith and trust to us. He calls us to be his fishers of men and women of today, in our time and place.

“And they left their nets at once and followed him.” How prompt and uncomplicated the apostles’ response was! In our prayer, let us be inspired to be just as daring by leaving behind our nets of pride, indecision, fear of others’ opinions, etc. We follow Jesus in love and trust by stepping out of our comfort zones to reach out to others with simple gestures, kind words or thoughtful acts. In doing so, we pray that each person we meet may come to encounter Jesus and choose to follow Him.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus calling me to be His apostle today?

