

Love and you will live!



PRAYER FOR LIVING

DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR
LITURGICAL YEAR C~
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PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR C

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

Amos 8:4-6, 9-12, Matthew 9:9-13

As Jesus was walking on from there he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. Now while he was at table in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice. And indeed I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'

Follow me!

Today's gospel can be summed up with two words: God's love. As a tax collector, Matthew was considered a sinner by the religious leaders. Yet, Jesus took the initiative to draw close to Matthew and called him to follow Him. Experiencing God's forgiving love through Jesus, Matthew put his trust in Jesus and responded to the call, which started his faith journey from being a sinner to a disciple. Jesus then went to have a meal with Matthew and other tax collectors. This action was considered scandalous by the religious leaders. For Jesus, He wanted to reveal God's inclusive love that welcomed the sinners and outcasts.

Today, Jesus takes the initiative to come to us and calls us again, "*Follow me*", despite our sins and brokenness. Jesus loves us and will never keep His distance from us. Like Matthew, we are called to respond to His call with trust and allow Jesus to lead us to experience God's love that will always empower us to live as His disciples and share in His mission. May we, as His disciples, have His same heart of inclusive love.

Question for reflection:

How open am I to Jesus' call, "*Follow me*"?

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

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

John's disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?' Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's attendants cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth onto an old cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine in fresh skins and both are preserved.'

The new wine of God's love

Our Christian faith is one of joy, not sadness. It is a deep joy that comes from the certainty that God is with us and loves us unconditionally and faithfully. His living presence brings gladness to our lives. In today's gospel, John's disciples regarded God as God of the law. Therefore, they could not understand why Jesus' disciples did not fast as required. Jesus told them that His disciples did not fast because He had come to bring the new wine of God's merciful and unconditional, and thus, it was a time of joy.

Jesus continues to offer us the new wine, the good news of God's love. The new wine that Jesus brings requires us to let go of our old ways of relating with God, old ways of scrupulously observing laws, and old ways of life that do not reflect God's loving presence. Instead, Jesus calls us to have a new wineskin, i.e. a new way of knowing and loving God, a new way of living joy and sharing God's love with others.

Question for reflection:

Does my faith in God bring joy to my life?

Sunday, 3rd June, 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Isaiah 66:10-14, Galatians 6:14-18, Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting. And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting. Start off now,

but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Take no purse with you, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome, go out into its streets and say, "We wipe off the very dust of your town that clings to our feet, and leave it with you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God is very near." I tell you, on the great Day it will be more bearable for Sodom than for that town. 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. Look, I have given you power to tread down 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 instead that your names are written in heaven.'

To be labourers in God's mission field

We often think that the work of mission has been tasked to selected people, such as religious and priests. In fact, it is the responsibility of every baptized Catholic to bring the good news to others. We all have a part to play in proclaiming to others the message that "*the Kingdom of God is very near to you*", i.e. "*the presence of God is very near to you*". We communicate it by creating communion with others, speaking words of peace, reaching out to offer forgiveness, working for justice, etc. We manifest God's loving presence to all, especially those who are the weakest and most vulnerable. As pointed out by Jesus in the gospel, there will be moments when people do not welcome the good news we bring. However, we must not be disappointed by the people's negative responses. Instead, we continue to be faithful to Jesus's mission to us.

"...rejoice instead that your names are written in heaven". The cause of our joy is not based on how successful we are in living the mission but

on the reality that our names are written in heaven, in God's heart because we are His beloved children, His trusted friends.

Question for reflection:

How can I take an active part in proclaiming the good news to others?

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

Hosea 2:16, 17-18,21-22, Matthew 9:18-26

While Jesus was speaking to them, suddenly one of the officials came up, who bowed low in front of him and said, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and her life will be saved.' Jesus rose and, with his disciples, followed him. Then suddenly from behind him came a woman, who had been suffering from a haemorrhage for twelve years, and she touched the fringe of his cloak, for she was thinking, 'If only I can touch his cloak I shall be saved.' Jesus turned round and saw her; and he said to her, 'Courage, my daughter, your faith has saved you.' And from that moment the woman was saved. When Jesus reached the official's house and saw the flute-players, with the crowd making a commotion, he said, 'Get out of here; the little girl is not dead; she is asleep.' And they ridiculed him. But when the people had been turned out he went inside and took her by the hand; and she stood up. And the news of this spread all round the countryside.

God's love for us

In the first reading today, God, through the prophet Hosea, declares His faithful love to Israel, to each of us. He loves us with "*integrity and justice, with tenderness and love*". God's love for all humanity is personal and tender. We are invited to allow ourselves to be loved by Him. In today's gospel, Jesus shows us the face of God's faithful love in healing the official's daughter and the woman who suffered from a haemorrhage.

Both of these people, the grief-stricken father and the helpless woman, were drawn to Jesus because they had faith that He would not turn them away. When the woman touched His cloak, He turned to her and offered her words of hope, "*Courage, my daughter, your faith has saved you*". Likewise, Jesus did not shun the official for his expectation that He could do something to bring his dead daughter to life. In the end, Jesus took her hand and restored her to life. In Jesus, we see the depth of God's

love that is never indifferent to us but is always there for us. Today, let us entrust ourselves to God and experience His personal love for us.

Question for reflection:

Do I believe that God loves me?

Tuesday, 5th July, St. Anthony Zaccaria.

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

A man was brought to Jesus, a dumb demoniac. And when the devil was driven out, the dumb man spoke and the people were amazed and said, 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.' But the Pharisees said, 'It is through the prince of devils that he drives out devils.' Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and all kinds of illness. And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest.'

Jesus' loving way of seeing

In today's gospel, there were two reactions to the healing of a dumb man by Jesus. The people who witnessed the healing were amazed and saw the goodness behind Jesus' action. However, the religious leaders saw the same event but saw evil instead. The religious leaders were blinded to God's presence in Jesus because their hearts were hardened by their personal hatred for Him. We are invited to imitate the way Jesus looked at people. He always saw goodness in others, even in those whom the rest of society regarded as sinners. Today, let us see with Jesus' eyes and perceive the good in others.

The gospel also tells us that Jesus recognised that the people coming to Him were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. He did not look at them as obstacles but as people who needed love and hope. He reached out to them with compassionate love. Today, Jesus asks us to be labourers working with Him in the mission field. The mission starts when we can look at others around us with eyes of compassionate love.

Question for reflection:

What lenses do I use to perceive others?

Wednesday, 6th July, St. Maria Goretti.**Hosea 10:1-3,7-8, 12, Matthew 10:1-7**

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to drive them out and to cure all kinds of disease and all kinds of illness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon who is known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who was also his betrayer. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows: 'Do not make your way to gentile territory, and do not enter any Samaritan town; go instead to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.'

Jesus calls us to Him and sends us to others

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples to be with Him and to go out and proclaim the good news. These disciples were not perfect and often did not understand what Jesus was saying and even bickered about being the best in the group. We wonder if Jesus could have chosen better disciples to follow Him. These people, though not perfect, were the ones whom Jesus chose and trusted.

As baptised Christians, we are not meant to be passive recipients but active collaborators in Jesus' mission. We are called to work alongside Him to proclaim the good news that God is near to us and that He loves us. In the time of prayer, let us listen to Jesus as He personally calls us by our name to follow Him as His disciples, despite our weaknesses and faults. Jesus is the first who commits Himself to us. Thus, we also need to keep on choosing Jesus and committing ourselves to follow His ways faithfully each day.

Question for reflection:

What is my greatest challenge in responding to Jesus' call to be His disciple?

Thursday, 7th July, 14th Week in Ordinary Time.

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

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those suffering from virulent skin-diseases, drive out devils. You received without charge, give without charge. Provide yourselves with no gold or silver, not even with coppers for your purses, with no haversack for the journey or spare tunic or footwear or a staff, for the labourer deserves his keep. 'Whatever town or village you go into, seek out someone worthy and stay with him until you leave. As you enter his house, salute it, and if the house deserves it, may your peace come upon it; if it does not, may your peace come back to you. And if anyone does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, as you walk out of the house or town shake the dust from your feet. In truth I tell you, on the Day of Judgement it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.'

The focus is on God

In today's gospel, as Jesus sent His disciples on mission, He told them to take no gold or silver, no haversack, no spare tunic or footwear or staff. He did not want His disciples to be distracted by worldly possessions and over-dependent on their human strengths and resources. Like Jesus, the disciples are meant to live simply, trust God to supply their needs and serve Him alone.

In this grand mission of proclaiming the good news of God's love, Jesus invites us to give room to allow God to work in us and through us because we often tend to put Him aside. Today, we are called to rely on God more and serve Him wholeheartedly. Let us ask for the grace to trust God more so that we can witness that He is truly a God who provides and that He can work powerfully in us and through us.

Question for reflection:

Do I give God room to work in and through me?

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

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

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as snakes and yet innocent as doves. Be prepared for people to hand you over to sanhedrins and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as evidence to them and to the gentiles. But when you are handed over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes, because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will come forward against their parents and have them put to death. You will be universally hated on account of my name; but anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved. If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next; and if they persecute you in that, take refuge in another. In truth I tell you, you will not have gone the round of the towns of Israel before the Son of man comes.'

Entrusted with God's mission

We are God's missionaries who have been entrusted with the gift of sharing the joy of our faith. We need to be courageous and go out of our comfort zones to freely offer the gift of faith. Though the mission is not easy, we must never give up. Instead, we need to count more on Jesus and less on our own strengths and capabilities.

There will always be people, a family member or a friend, who will retaliate when we speak to them about Jesus because they do not understand or welcome our faith. Yet, Jesus continues to send us out like sheep among wolves. Yes, we are sheep who are constantly being guided and loved by the Good Shepherd. Thus, we do not need to be afraid. Jesus invites us to be shrewd as a serpent and discern how to deal with people and situations. He also calls us to be like a dove and learn to be peaceful, even in the face of rejection and opposition.

Question for reflection:

Is there anything that prevents me from being God's missionary and sharing the gift of faith with others?

**Saturday, 9th July, SS. Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions.
Isaiah 6:1-8, Matthew 10:24-33**

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

God cares

"Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows...". Let us pause and allow these words of Jesus to give us the peace and joy we need. Jesus assures us that God cares for us and He is always watching over us. Each one of us is precious in God's sight.

The reality of our lives is that God loves us. Therefore, we need to enter into an intimate relationship with Him. His presence in us gives us the daily strength we need to face the uncertainties and problems that come our way. Let us listen attentively to Jesus as He tells us, "*There is no need to be afraid*". We can indeed entrust ourselves to God, who loves us.

Question for reflection:

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

Sunday, 10th July, 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Deuteronomy 30:10-14, Colossians 1:15-20, Luke 10:25-37

There was a lawyer who, to test Jesus, stood up and asked, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?' 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.' Jesus said to him, 'You have answered right, do this and life is yours.' But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' In answer Jesus said, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, 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 on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, "Look after him, 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 bandits' hands?' He replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

Go and do the same yourself

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one about making choices. Every day, we are faced with choices about whether to walk away or get involved. In today's parable, both the priest and Levite chose to look away and pass by on the other side. However, the Samaritan was the one who decided to stop, look and get involved by helping the wounded man. What made the Samaritan get involved? He had every reason to look away because the Jews were the enemies of the Samaritans. Yet, this Samaritan saw the wounded person on the road, not by his race or nationality, but as a fellow human person, a brother who needed help. Thus, he was moved with compassion and took on the suffering of the wounded man as his own.

Today, we need to ask ourselves, "*Who is my neighbour?*" and allow Jesus to show us the people around us who need our help as our "*neighbour*" to whom we can offer our words of consolation, friendship, and gestures of love. We are faced with the choice to walk away or get involved. May we continue the good work of the Good Samaritan each day.

Question for reflection:

How can I continue the good work of the Good Samaritan today?

Monday, 11th July, St. Benedict.

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

*Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set son against father, daughter against mother, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law; a person's enemies will be the members of his own household. No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me. No one who prefers son or daughter to me is worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes an upright person because he is upright will have the reward of an upright person. If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then in truth I tell you, he will most certainly not go without his reward.'*When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.

Following Jesus by living His values

Jesus said that He came to bring sword, not peace. Why is Jesus, known as the Prince of Peace, bringing division? Jesus was speaking about the consequences of His presence rather than stating the purpose of His mission. Choosing to follow Jesus sometimes leads us to face rejections and confrontations by people who have not embraced the ways of Jesus.

As Christians, we are called to readily choose the gospel values and strive for His same sense of justice and truth, His same heart of unconditional love.

"If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple..." The world showers attention and gives service to those with great power and wealth. However, Jesus came to love and serve the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Thus, this is also the path that we are called to take. Through the little ways of love we express to others, especially the "*little ones*" around us, we can make Jesus present in our midst.

Question for reflection:

Do I love Jesus enough to take on the consequences of following Him?

Tuesday, 12th July, 15th Week in Ordinary Time.

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

Jesus began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles had been worked, because they refused to repent. 'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Still, I tell you that it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on Judgement Day than for you. And as for you, Capernaum, did you want to be raised as high as heaven? You shall be flung down to hell. For if the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have been standing yet. Still, I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on Judgement Day than for you.'

Love never gives up

Jesus' words against the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum seem severe to us. Yet, Jesus spoke those harsh words out of His intense love for the people. He had dedicated His time and energy to serving the people in these towns, but they were not open to receiving His message of God's love and peace. He sowed seeds of love but yielded little fruit. Yet, Jesus did not give up but continued to give Himself to love and serve the people.

We can identify with Jesus' disappointment too. We give ourselves to help the parish, but we are met with criticism. We do something nice for the family to express our love, but nobody appreciates it. We organise an event that can benefit our faith community, but we see poor responses. Like Jesus, we must not give up but continue to work for the good of others. We trust that God is the one working in and through our acts of love.

Question for reflection:

Have I experienced disappointment in my efforts to love others?

Wednesday, 13th July, St. Henry.

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

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

To become like little children and enter into God's love

In today's gospel, Jesus rejoiced that the simple ones, the uneducated ones, like the tax collectors and sinners, were open to welcome the good news of God's love. On the other hand, he lamented over the educated ones, like the religious leaders, who refused to accept Him and His message because they considered themselves the experts of God and the laws.

Today, Jesus calls us to have child-like faith to allow Him to lead us into a deeper intimate relationship with God. Through Jesus, we can come to know God as our loving Father who loves us unconditionally. Let us never get tired of drawing close to Jesus and allowing Him to speak to us, constantly revealing to us about God and bringing us into a personal relationship with Him.

Question for reflection:

What prevents me from knowing and loving God more?

Thursday, 14th July, St. Camillus de Lellis.

Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19, Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Come to me, and I will give you rest

Are you stressed and tired by the many things we have to do each day? Today, let us listen to the gentle voice of Jesus to us who are burdened with loads of responsibility we have and the demands of others, "*Come to me...*". Jesus, our Friend and Companion, invites us to a personal and intimate relationship with Him. When we draw close to Him, He will give us the rest we need. "*I will give you rest*"- This is His promise to us. However, "*rest*" does not mean that Jesus will remove the works and activities we have to do. Instead, His presence gives us the rest, the peace we need. With Him in us, we can face the daily tasks with renewed strength.

We need to trust that we are never alone as we walk through each happy and sad moment of life. As we draw close to Jesus in this quiet time of prayer, let us allow His presence to comfort us and give us the inner rest and peace we truly need.

Question for reflection:

How do I respond to Jesus' gentle invitation, "*Come to me*"?

Friday, 15th July, St. Bonaventure.

Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8, Matthew 12:1-8

Jesus went through the cornfields one Sabbath day. His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them. The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath.' But he said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry- how he went into the house of God and they ate the loaves of the offering although neither he nor his followers were permitted to eat them, but only the priests? Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath day the Temple priests break the Sabbath without committing any fault? Now here, I tell

you, is something greater than the Temple. And if you had understood the meaning of the words: Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the blameless. For the Son of man is master of the Sabbath.'

The face of God is mercy

In today's Gospel, the Pharisees saw that Jesus' disciples were picking ears of corn and eating them on a Sabbath. Immediately, they turned to Jesus and criticized Him for allowing His disciples to do something that was forbidden by the Sabbath law. The religious leaders, adhering rigidly to the Sabbath law, threw judgment instead of mercy at others. They had forgotten that God wanted mercy and love, not external sacrifices and inflexible following of laws.

Jesus reminded them that King David and his followers ate the loaves meant only for priests because they were hungry. For Jesus, feeding the hungry and fulfilling the needs of the people must always be the top priority. True obedience to the law should be motivated by the spirit of mercy. *"And if you had understood the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the blameless."* Today, Jesus invites us to know what God wants from us, i.e. to show mercy and work for the good of others.

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus' invitation for me today?

Saturday, 16th July, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

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

The Pharisees went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him. Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he cured them all but warned them not to make him known. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: Look! My servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul delights, I will send my Spirit upon him, and he will present judgement to the nations; he will not brawl or cry out, his voice is not heard in the streets, he will not break the crushed reed, or snuff the faltering wick, until he has made judgement victorious; in him the nations will put their hope.

To be courageous like Jesus

The Pharisees started to plot how to destroy Jesus because they had already deep-seated hatred for Him. Nothing He did or said would change their hardened hearts against Him. In the gospel passage, Jesus knew this and chose to withdraw from the district. He could have tried to justify His actions or directly confront the Pharisees. Instead, he decided to carry on loving and putting Himself at the humble service of those who needed Him. Jesus' decision to withdraw does not mean resignation but courage and determination.

We, too, must learn to have this attitude in our own lives. Regardless of the opposition from others, we must never stop doing good. With Jesus, we courageously choose to love and do good, even in the face of opposition and misunderstandings.

Question for reflection:

Do I dare choose to reflect Jesus' presence of love even in the face of opposition?

Sunday, 17th July, 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Genesis 18:1-10, Colossians 1:24-28, 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, came to him and 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, and it is not to be taken from her.'

To be Martha-Mary

We often think that Jesus preferred Mary to Martha because He chided her for being busy and praised Mary for choosing the "*better part*", of sitting by His feet and listening to Him. On the contrary, Jesus loved Martha and Mary equally and valued their friendships. However, He saw that Martha was harassed by all the work she had to do for Him that she had forgotten to be with Him. Thus, He invited Martha to place Him at the centre of her life and not be consumed by worries and anxieties.

Many of us would identify ourselves with busy Martha. We have so much work to do each day, and we are consumed with many worries and distractions. Jesus invites us to put Him at the centre of our lives by allowing Him to direct our thoughts, calm our anxieties, and renew our strength. Each day, there is time to work hard like Martha. There is also time to focus our attention on Jesus like Mary. Today, let us serve and work but with hearts set on Jesus.

Question for reflection:

How can I open myself to include Jesus more in my daily life?

Monday, 18th July, 16th Week in Ordinary Time.

Micah 6: 1-4, 6-8, Matthew 12:38-42

Some of the scribes and Pharisees spoke up. 'Master,' they said, 'we should like to see a sign from you.' He replied, 'It is an evil and unfaithful generation that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah remained in the belly of the sea-monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. On Judgement Day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and they will be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented; and look, there is something greater than Jonah here. On Judgement Day the Queen of the South will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and look, there is something greater than Solomon here.'

Jesus is with us and among us today!

In today's Gospel, some scribes and Pharisees approached Jesus and asked for a sign. They wanted Jesus to prove by displaying extraordinary signs to show that He was indeed from God. Despite seeing all the good He did, their hardened hearts could not accept Jesus. Their stubborn pride blinded them from recognizing God's presence in Jesus. Jesus knew that no matter how many impressive miracles or wonderful teachings He gave, these people would remain sceptical.

Jesus is intimately present with us and among us. Let us not miss His presence. We need to ask for a simple faith to perceive and recognize Jesus in our situations, in the quiet time of prayer, and in the people we meet each day. May we know that there is indeed someone greater than Solomon, greater than ourselves, present here, i.e. Jesus. Let us approach Him with open and humble hearts today!

Question for reflection:

How can I be more open to recognize Jesus today?

Tuesday, 19th July, 16th Week in Ordinary Time.

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20, Matthew 12:46-50

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

The one who does God's will is a child of God

Jesus stretched out His hand towards His disciples and 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.*" Jesus was not rejecting His family, but He wanted to make a point to those listening to Him that they were part of God's family because of their desire to do His will. What is God's will? God's will is for us to live a life of love. Thus, though not united by blood ties, God's new family is intrinsically bonded by His love and their love for one another and humanity.

As Christians, we belong to God's family, and we choose to root ourselves firmly and deeply in His love. From His love, we love others. By loving, we are doing God's will. Today, let us be aware that we are God's beloved children and have been entrusted to build relationships of trust, honesty, faithfulness, compassion, kindness, truthfulness, peace with others around us. May we seek to do God's will today!

Question for reflection:

How can I seek to do God's will today?

Wednesday, 20th July, St. Apollinaris.**Jeremiah 1:1,4-10, Matthew 13:1-9**

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

The persistent sower

In today's parable, Jesus spoke of a sower who went out to the field and sowed the seed anywhere and everywhere, not knowing what soil it would fall on. Likewise, through Jesus, God sowed the seed of His word to all. Out of love, He wanted to reach out to all people regardless of how they would accept and receive it. Today, God continues to sow His life-giving word to us. How open are we to welcome the seed of God's word? No matter what kind of soil we find ourselves to be at this point in our lives, God is always at work. He never gives up on us.

Jesus constantly invites us to sow God's word by giving His word of comfort, hope and encouragement to those around us. We keep on sowing regardless of the little or no response we receive. Let us not settle for anything less but strive always to be good soil and, at the same time, sowers of God's Word.

Question for reflection:

How can I strive to be the good soil that listens to God's Word and puts it into practice?

Thursday, 21st July, St. Lawrence of Brindisi.

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

The disciples went up to Jesus and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' In answer, he said, 'Because to you is granted to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not granted. Anyone who has will be given more and will have more than enough; but anyone who has not will be deprived even of what he has. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah is being fulfilled: Listen and listen, but never understand! Look and look, but never perceive! This people's heart has grown coarse, their ears dulled, they have shut their eyes tight to avoid using their eyes to see, their ears to hear, their heart to understand, changing their ways and being healed by me. But blessed are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! In truth I tell you, many prophets and upright people longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.'

To see and hear God today

"You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive." Jesus knew that people, like the religious leaders, heard His teaching and saw the good deeds He did, but they could not understand and perceive God behind His words and actions. As a result, these people lacked the faith to experience God present in their midst.

Do we really look and listen with attention? *".. blessed are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear!"* Today, Jesus invites us to look and listen with faith so as to be aware that God is always with us in the daily events of life. Let us ask Jesus to open our hearts to listen and understand how loving our God is as well as to see and perceive how He is at work in and through us. God is not just present in us, but He can be seen and heard through people in our lives. Thus, we also pray for eyes to see and ears to hear God in those around us.

Question for reflection:

What makes my ear dull from hearing Jesus and my eyes shut from seeing Him?

Friday, 22nd July, St. Mary Magdalene.

Song of Songs 3:1-4 or 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, John 20:1-2, 11-18

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

Jesus is with us, and thus, we are never alone

Mary Magdalene stood outside the empty tomb, weeping because she thought someone had taken Jesus' body away. "...she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not realise that it was Jesus". Completely absorbed in her sadness, she could not recognize Jesus standing there with her and thought He was the gardener instead. Imagine the joy when she heard Jesus' voice calling her "Mary" and recognizing His presence with her.

Today's feast of Mary Magdalene invites us to recognize Jesus' living presence with us in our moments of grief and in our times of suffering. We are never alone. Often overwhelmed with sadness and fear, we are not aware of His presence in our lives. Today, the risen Jesus continues to be present with us and never stops calling us by our names and

drawing close to us, especially when we face challenging times of loss and struggle. May the story of Mary Magdalene inspire us to keep on seeking to encounter the loving presence of Jesus in our daily lives.

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus' invitation for me today?

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

Jeremiah 7:1-11, Matthew 13:24-30

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

The darnel and the wheat together

In today's gospel, the man who sowed good seed in his field did not want to remove the darnel, the weed, because the wheat might be removed in the process too. Thus, he allowed the darnel and the wheat to grow together.

Like the labourers, we too would like to go and weed out all the darnels that we see. We often look at some people in church or our faith community and want to weed them out because we consider them to be "darnels". Today, Jesus calls us to be patient and not be too quick to exclude the "darnels" we see. Jesus never gives up on any of us despite our flaws. Thus, we must be patient and not exclude anyone because we see their limitations and faults. By the grace of God, we keep hoping that the 'darnels' can somehow be transformed into life-giving "wheat". On our part, we must choose to be good wheat so that through our examples, we may bring people to Christ and Christ to people.

Question for reflection:

How can I look at those I tend to judge negatively with patience and love?

Sunday, 24th July, 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time.**Genesis 18: 20-32, Colossians 2: 12-14, Luke 11:1-13**

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, this is what to say: Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test.' He also said to them, '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 are with me in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it to him for friendship's sake, persistence will 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 everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened. What father among you, if his son asked for a fish, would hand him a snake? Or if he asked for an egg, hand him a scorpion? If you then, evil as you are, 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!'

Abba Father

In today's gospel Jesus taught His disciples to pray by addressing God as "*Father*". Today, Jesus also invites us to call God in this intimate way, "*Father*", "*Abba*", and allow this word to lead us deeper into a renewed personal relationship with God.

In the Our Father prayer, there are two sets of petitions. Jesus started by saying: "*May your holy name be honoured, may your Kingdom come.*" Jesus focussed on God first. His first desire was for God's name to be known and loved by all people and His loving presence in us today. The

first set of petitions leads to the second set of petitions. When God is present, we will then live in trust that He will give us our daily bread of strength, He will help us put forgiveness into practice, and He will guide us in times of trials. God is our loving Father. Thus, we dare to ask, seek and knock because we trust that He will give us what we truly need.

Question for reflection:

Is God as my Father a mere idea that I have or is He my loving Father whom I trust?

Monday, 25th July, St. James.

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

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

Earthenware jars

"We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7) In the first reading, St. Paul reminds us that we are earthenware jars - simple and ordinary. What makes our life extraordinary is Jesus, the treasure we carry within.

As we celebrate the feast of St. James, we also rejoice at him being so ordinary. He, however, did not want to be just an ordinary earthenware

jar but desired to be great and influential in the eyes of the world. Yet, he was humbled to allow Jesus His Master to correct him and teach him what true greatness meant. For Jesus, what counts for greatness is when we love others by placing ourselves to be at their service. Today, let us learn from St. James and take the step to be great in God's sight.

Question for reflection:

How can I serve God and others with more love and humility today?

Tuesday, 26th July, SS. Joachim and Anne.

Ecclesiasticus 44:1, 10-15, Matthew 13:16-17

Jesus said to his disciples, 'But blessed are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! In truth I tell you, many prophets and upright people longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.'

Blessed are you who see and hear!

In today's gospel, Jesus rejoiced over the eyes of faith that see and ears of faith that hear. Many people went to hear His teachings and saw His actions of love, but few people truly perceived God's living presence in all He said and did.

Today, we are blessed when we have eyes and ears of faith to recognize Jesus' presence with us. Today, as we celebrate the feast of SS. Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary and grandparents of Jesus, we also give thanks to all the people, be it our grandparents, parents, teachers, friends, who have shared their faith with us and helped us in our journey of knowing and loving God. SS. Joachim and Anne were people of faith whose lives inspired Mary and Jesus to live a life fully dedicated to God. Like them, may our faith inspire others to come to know God more and live their lives for Him.

Question for reflection:

What strikes me as I pray with the passage today?

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

Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21, Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus said to the crowds: 'The kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off in his joy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.'

God, our greatest treasure, our precious pearl

In today's gospel, Jesus told two parables to His listeners. In the first parable, a man stumbled across a treasure hidden in a field. He was not actively seeking the treasure but accidentally found it and joyfully kept it. On the other hand, in the second parable, a merchant actively searched for fine pearls. Due to his active and persistent searching, he found one of great value. God is the treasure in the field and the pearl of great worth. Like the man who unexpectedly found the treasure, God can surprise us and takes the initiative to come and grace our lives with His presence of love. Thus, when we least expect it, God comes to seek us out. Like the merchant with the finest pearl, we are also called to seek God through prayer and day-to-day life situations.

Our relationship with God consists of His initiative to come to us and our search for more of Him. Like both men in the parables, we need to hold onto this treasure joyfully because God is our treasure, our finest pearl.

Question for reflection:

Is God my greatest treasure?

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

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

Jesus said to the crowds: 'Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet that is cast in the sea and brings in a haul of all kinds of fish. When it is full, the fishermen bring it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in baskets and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the upright, to throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. 'Have you understood all these?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe

who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom new things as well as old.' When Jesus had finished these parables he left the district.

In God's love

When a net is cast into the sea, it catches every fish of all kinds. The kingdom of God is like a net cast into the sea of humanity. God welcomes everyone: the good and the bad, the sinner and the saints. He wants all to have a personal, loving relationship with Him. Jesus used another image to express the same idea: "*For He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous*" (Matthew 5:45). Though God calls all to be with Him, He gives us the freedom to respond to Him. Whether we respond positively or negatively, He continues to love us and never gives up on us.

Today, let us also reflect on the first reading from the prophet Jeremiah who portrayed God as the potter patiently at work with the clay. We are clay in the Potter's hands. God is constantly shaping and reshaping us, tirelessly working for our good.

Question for reflection:

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

Friday, 29th July, Sts Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

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

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

Lord, I believe

Today, we celebrate the memorial of Sts. Martha, Mary and Lazarus, who were Jesus' beloved friends from Bethany. Their faith in Jesus flowed from their deep love for Him and their personal friendship with Him. Let us examine our own relationship with Jesus in this time of prayer. Is He our friend?

A firm relationship with Jesus is the basis of a living faith that sustains us during moments of difficulties, hardships, doubts, sufferings or the monotonous routine of life. Today, Jesus asks us, "*Do you believe this? Do you believe in me?*" Like Martha in today's gospel, can we have the faith to respond, "*Yes, Lord, I believe in you, I trust in you. You are the Christ, the one who has come into my life, into this world?*" Let us strengthen our friendship with Him so that our faith may become strong and life-giving.

Question for reflection:

How can I strengthen my relationship with Jesus today?

Saturday, 30th July, St. Peter Chrysologus.

Jeremiah 26:11-16,24, Matthew 14:1-12

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the reputation of Jesus and said to his court, 'This is John the Baptist himself; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.' Now it was Herod who had arrested John, chained him up and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. For John had told him, 'It is against the Law for you to have her.' He had wanted to kill him but was afraid of the people, who regarded John as a prophet. Then, during the celebrations for Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and so delighted Herod that he promised on oath to give her anything she asked. Prompted by her mother she said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head, here, on a dish.' The king was distressed but, thinking of the oaths he had sworn and of his guests, he ordered it to be given her, and sent and had John beheaded in the prison. The head was brought in on a dish and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. John's disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went off to tell Jesus.

To become courageous witnesses

In today's gospel, John the Baptist was cruelly and unjustly killed because he dared to stand up and speak against the wrongs that Herod did. He knew that speaking out against Herod and standing up for God's values would lead him to suffer, yet he courageously did so. Throughout centuries, many people have been speaking out for what is just and true. Today, may John the Baptist's life and death inspire us to have the courage to also stand up for what we truly believe.

As Christians, we must continue to bear witness to the Gospel values, even if it means walking the path of the cross. Often we are tempted to keep quiet because we are afraid to have confrontations with others and would rather please them and live according to their expectations. Let us be courageous in living out our faith and be faithful witnesses of God's love.

Question for reflection:

What prevents me from standing up for what I truly believe in?

Sunday, 31st July, 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23, Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11, Luke 12:13-21

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.' He said to him, 'My friend, 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 life does not consist in possessions, even when someone 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 someone stores up treasure for himself instead of becoming rich in the sight of God.'

Our life is hidden in Christ

In today's first reading, the words from the book of Ecclesiastes cry out to us, "*Vainity of vainties. All is vanity!*". All things in this world are temporal and transitory. Death will come to us one day, and all our earthly treasures that we work hard to accumulate will disappear. In today's gospel, Jesus told a parable about a rich man, who had a good harvest from his land, and started to plan for his own future. Little did he know that he would die that very night. This rich fool failed to recognize the shortness of his life and that his worldly achievements and richness could never satisfy him.

Today, Jesus invites us to live our lives by setting our hearts not on the accumulation of riches and power but God alone. When God is at the centre of our lives, He will direct us to live our lives in loving service for the good of others. Love is what will make us live life fully and meaningfully here, now and forever.

Question for reflection:

Am I living a meaningful and purposeful life as God has intended for me?

