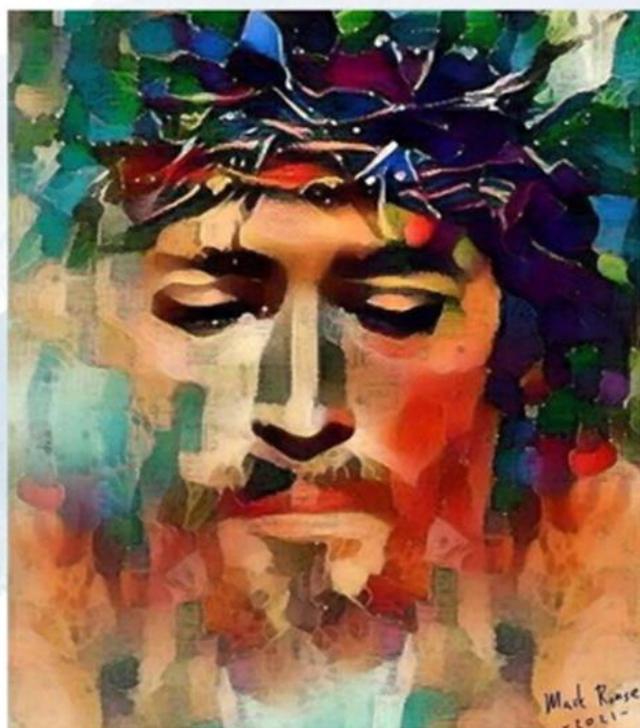


Jesus, the King of our lives



PRAYER FOR LIVING

DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR
LITURGICAL YEAR C~
NOVEMBER 2022

Sr. Sandra Seow

PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR C

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Tuesday, 1st November, All Saints.

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

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went onto the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance. Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness: they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

The way of happiness, the way of holiness

Today, we celebrate the Feast of All Saints' Day. The word, "All", reminds us that we remember and celebrate not only the canonised saints but also those hidden and unknown saints who have not received formal recognition from the Church. We too are called to be living saints of today by living the path of the beatitudes.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we strive to put the qualities articulated in the beatitudes into practice: being simple and depending on God; being gentle instead of dominating others; empathising with the suffering of others; committing to work for justice and peace; bringing God's mercy to this broken world; having a pure heart that dedicated to bring God's will to fruition; becoming instruments of peace and reconciliation and by suffering rejection and persecution for the sake of God's kingdom. Living as people of the beatitudes, we will experience happiness, not just in the next life but also in this life.

Reflective question:

Do I live the beatitudes?

Wednesday, 2nd November, All Souls' Day.
Isaiah 25:6-9, Romans 5:5-11, Luke 7:11-17

Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. Now when he was near the gate of the town there was a dead man being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople was with her. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her and said to her, 'Don't cry.' Then he went up and touched the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you: get up.' And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.' And this view of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

Love is stronger than suffering and death

As we celebrate the Feast of All Souls' day, we remember our family members and friends who have died. Yet, with faith, we know that they are with God, and we will one day be reunited with them. Today's gospel tells us that Jesus brought the widow's son back to life. The action of Jesus restoring the dead man to life comforts us that our God is the God of the living, not the dead.

"*Don't cry*": These are Jesus' words to the bereft mother. In our moments of hopelessness and grief, Jesus comes close to us and tells us the same, "*Don't cry. Don't be afraid. I am here with you*". Jesus is with us to comfort us in our sorrow. May we allow Jesus' compassionate love to touch our wounds so that we can face life with strength and peace.

Reflective question:

Can I remember moments in life when I experienced God's comforting presence?

Thursday, 3rd November, St. Martin de Porres.
Philippians 3:3-8, Luke 15:1-10

The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to Jesus, and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you with a hundred sheep, if he lost one, would fail to leave the ninety-nine in the desert 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, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine upright people 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, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, 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.'

God's love never gives up

Why would the shepherd risk losing ninety-nine sheep and go off to search for one lost sheep? Why would the woman spend so much time looking for one lost coin? Through these parables, Jesus reveals who God is. God never gives up on anyone, like the shepherd and the widow. For Him, one person, one sinner, is precious. This indeed is good news for us. Let us find joy in being deeply loved by God.

Jesus invites us to identify also with the shepherd and the woman. As Jesus' disciples today, we are called to imitate the heart of God- i.e. to open our hearts to welcome someone whom we may have considered as "hopeless" or "insignificant" and show compassionate love to them.

Reflective question:

What do the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin tell me about God?

Friday, 4th November, St. Charles Borromeo.

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," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," he said. 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.'

To live as children of light

Reading through it, we might disagree with the action of the dishonest steward. There is, however, something that Jesus wants us to learn from him. This man knew he was about to lose his job, and so, without wasting time, he set out to make sure that he would be able to survive and live the life he wanted.

"For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light". As a child of this world, the dishonest steward took necessary actions to reap benefits for himself. What about us, as children of the light, as children of God? Do we take steps to follow Christ and live the gospel values? It is so easy for us to be caught up in the busyness of life that we forget to be proactive in living a meaningful Christian life. Today is a new opportunity to live with the determination to truly be the children of light we are called to be.

Reflective question:

How can I live as a child of light, as a disciple of Christ?

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

Philippians 4:10-19, Luke 16:9-15

Jesus said to his disciples, 'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings. Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great; anyone who is dishonest in little things is dishonest in great. If then you are not trustworthy with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you are not trustworthy with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own? No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the

first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.' The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and jeered at him. He said to them, 'You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as upright in people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed in human eyes is loathsome in the sight of God.'

Use what we have for the good of others

"You cannot be the slave both of God and of money". Jesus reminds us today that we cannot allow ourselves to be slaves to material wealth. Instead, our financial resources, time, experiences in life and talents are to be used for the good of others. God has entrusted us with gifts so that we, as His good stewards, can share them with those around us, especially the poor and the needy. Thus, we need to be generous to use the little or much we have to serve others.

In the first reading of today, St. Paul acknowledged the generosity of the Philippians for sharing their resources with them when no other churches were willing to help him. He said, *"In return my God will fulfill all your needs, in Christ Jesus, as lavishly as only God can"*. Today, let us not let anything distract us from serving God and His people.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus inviting me to live my life as God's faithful steward?

Sunday, 6th November, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5, Luke 20:27-38

Some Sadducees -- those who argue that there is no resurrection -- approached Jesus and they put this question to him, 'Master, Moses prescribed for us, 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, whose wife will she be, 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 children 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 everyone is alive.'

The resurrected life

In today's gospel, some Sadducees, who did not believe in life beyond death, presented to Jesus a scenario to test Him. For the Sadducees, life after death meant a continuation of life here on earth. Jesus, however, declared that though life continued for those who had died, it would not be the same life they had on earth. Instead, life after death would be an experience of a relationship without any taints of pride and selfish interest but one of deep loving communion with God and each other. Thus, while we are alive, let us always work for communion with God and the people around us.

"Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him everyone is alive". We find comfort in these words of Jesus. Death does not have the power to separate us from God. Our dearly departed loved ones continue to live in God's eternal love. We will one day be reunited with them when we reach the end of our earthly pilgrimage.

Reflective question:

How do I see my life here, now and in eternity as a child of God?

Monday, 7th November, 32nd Week in Ordinary Time.

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

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Causes of falling are sure to come, but alas for the one through whom they occur! It would be better for such a person to be thrown into the sea with a millstone round the neck than to be the downfall of a single one of these little ones. Keep watch on yourselves! 'If your brother does something wrong, rebuke him and, if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says, "I am sorry," you must forgive him.' The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith like a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you.'

The wonders of a mustard seed faith

In today's gospel, Jesus told the disciples that they would surely stumble in their following of Him. Likewise, He tells us today that we would struggle in our efforts to love and do good. It is ok as long as we stand up and walk on again. However, what is important is that we must not be an obstacle to the faith of others. Instead, we need to be a good influence on others through our words, actions and attitudes. He goes on to call us to put forgiveness into practice by never stopping to extend forgiveness to those who offend us.

"*Increase our faith*". We, like the disciples, might feel that we do not have faith great enough to live out all that Jesus had said. However, Jesus comforts us that faith as tiny as the mustard seed is enough for us to live the path He is calling us to take. With a bit of faith we have, God can work wonders in us and through us.

Reflective question:

How can I be a good support to others so that they can come to know and love God more?

Tuesday, 8th November, 32nd Week in Ordinary Time.

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 at once"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty."

Loving service without counting the cost

As Christians, we are here to serve God faithfully. This is Jesus' invitation for us in today's gospel. He used the image of a servant to highlight the need for us to serve without expecting gratitude and reward from God our Master.

Today, we are called to serve God faithfully by supporting others with our prayers, forgiving those who offend us, speaking words of comfort to

others, putting efforts to work for communion, etc. We do all these without any strings attached. We work and serve and leave everything else in God's hands. At the end of each day, our service of love is its own reward.

Reflective question:

When I serve God by loving others, do I seek rewards?

Wednesday, 9th November, The Dedication of The Lateran Basilica. Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12, 1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17, John 2:13-22

When the time of the Jewish Passover was near 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 'as 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.

Zeal for You, O Lord

Zealous passion for His Father's house was why Jesus did what He did. In the gospel, Jesus was angry at the sight of the people treating God's house with disrespect with all the commercial transactions. Instead of being a place of encounter with God, the Temple had become a marketplace. Thus, Jesus wanted the people to reassess the uncomfortable truth: They needed to get back the passion for their faith in God once more.

Today, Jesus calls us back to love God with all our heart, mind and strength. Passion for God implies that we love Him in those we meet. When we care for the poor in our society, strive to be patient with an

unlovable person, or take time to be with our families instead of at work, these are moments when our hearts are with God.

Reflective question:

How can I love God concretely today?

Thursday, 10th November, St Leo the Great.

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, it is here! Look, it is there!" For look, 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, it is there!" or, "Look, it is 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 is destined to suffer grievously and be rejected by this generation.'

The kingdom in your midst

In today's gospel, the Pharisees asked Jesus about the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus told them, "*For look, the kingdom of God is among you*". The kingdom of God was already present among them in the person of Jesus. As He healed the sick, taught in the synagogues, reached out to the most vulnerable, forgave sinners, and called the outcasts to be part of His community, He made visible the reign of God's unconditional love to them.

Jesus calls us to recognise that the kingdom of God, i.e. God's loving presence, is among us today when our words and actions build up communion and bring love and forgiveness. In the first reading, St. Paul asked Philemon to welcome back his runaway slave, Onesimus, as a fellow brother. This would be one concrete way for Philemon to make the kingdom a reality in his life when he chose to love, forgive and welcome. Now is our turn to make God's kingdom visible in our words and actions.

Reflective question:

How can I make the kingdom of God a reality in my life today?

Friday, 11th November, St. Martin of Tours.

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, it 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, no one on the housetop, with his possessions in the house, must come down to collect them, nor must anyone in the fields turn back. 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, when two are in one bed, one will be taken, the other left; when two women are grinding corn together, one will be taken, the other left.' The disciples spoke up and asked, 'Where, Lord?' He said, 'Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather.'

Look at life and see God

In today's gospel, Jesus told his disciples not to be so caught up with the daily busyness of eating and drinking, marrying wives and husbands, buying and selling, planting and building; to the point that they forgot to live for what mattered, i.e. to recognise God's presence in their midst and lived with Him and for Him.

Often, we are so caught up in the busyness of doing activities and going through daily routines that we forget to contemplate life on a deeper level. Today, let us recognise that Jesus is present in our daily activities, in our relationships with others, in our struggles, etc. Each day is a new opportunity to live in a relationship with Him. If we are open to living with Him each day, then His coming to us at the end of our earthly life will not take us by surprise. Instead, we will be ready to meet God face to face.

Reflective question:

Do I allow the busyness of life to overshadow my relationship with God?

Saturday, 12th November, St. Josaphat.

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 anyone. In the same town there was also 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, "Even though I have neither fear of God nor respect for any human person, I must give this widow her just rights since she keeps pestering me, or she will come and slap me in the face." And the Lord said, 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now, will not God see justice done to his elect if they keep calling to him day and night even though he still 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?'

Pray continually with a lot of trust

Though the widow in today's parable was poor and powerless, she had the power of persistence and determination that kept her going to the corrupted judge until He listened and did as she requested.

This widow teaches us a lesson to pray consistently and never lose heart. Jesus wants us to keep on praying despite all the obstacles we face. God is not like the judge in the parable. Instead, the God to whom we pray is a God who loves us and cares for us. He will answer our prayers, maybe not in the way we want or expect, but He will always respond in a way that benefits us.

Reflective question:

Do I give up easily on God, especially when He is not answering my prayer?

Sunday, 13th November, Sixth World Day of the Poor.

Malachi 3:19-20, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12, Luke 21:5-9

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 it is about to take place?' But he said, 'Take care not to be deceived, because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the one" and "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven. But before all this happens, you will be seized and persecuted; you will be handed over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and brought before kings and governors for the sake of my name -and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Make up your minds not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated universally on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your perseverance will win you your lives.'

The light of faith

In today's gospel, the disciples admired the beauty of the Temple. Jesus, however, told them that one day the Temple most cherished by the Jews, the place where God dwelled, would be destroyed. He added that the disciples would also face persecution. He painted a dark picture of what was to come because He wanted the disciples to have a strong and persevering faith that would withhold them in the face of trials and suffering.

In our lives, we will experience events that will put our faith to the test. Often, when we face darkness, such as failure, sickness, broken relationships, betrayal, and death, we struggle to make sense of the situations. Yet, in traumatic moments like these, our faith in God has to be steady and unwavering. The good news is that we are not alone in life. "*I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom*". He promises us that He will be with us and provide us with the necessary resources we need to stand firm in our faith.

Reflective question:

In the face of suffering, do I live with the light of faith?

Monday, 14th November, 33rd Week of Ordinary Time.

Apocalypse 1:1-4, 2:1-5, Luke 18:35-43

As Jesus drew near to Jericho there was a blind man sitting at the side of the road begging. When he heard the crowd going past he asked what it was all about, and they told him that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by. So he called out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.' The people in front scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only 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.

Let me see again!

Today, let us allow Jesus to personally ask us this question, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" Do we know what our deepest desire is? Can we say it out with determination to Jesus and know He will give us what we need?

In one way or another, we are like the blind beggar. We have some needs in us. Let us go to Jesus and present our deepest needs, not our greatest wants. The blind man neither asked Jesus for a load of cash so that he could be rich nor to give him a cloak to keep warm. Instead, he told Jesus, "*Let me see again*". In this time of prayer, let us listen to Jesus asking us, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" What will our answer be? What do we desire most in our life now?

Reflective question:

What is my deepest need? (e.g. need for peace, patience, strength to do God's will)

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

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

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town and suddenly a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He kept trying to see which 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 am to 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.'

Hurry, I must stay in your house today

Jesus looked at Zacchaeus with mercy and not condemnation. He took the initiative to call out to Zacchaeus, "*Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today*". Zacchaeus, with great joy, welcomed Jesus into His house. From that day onwards, his life was no longer the same. What can we learn from Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus?

The mercy of Jesus always gives us a second chance to change, have a new life, and believe in ourselves again. His mercy reaches out to forgive. His mercy always gives hope. Today, Jesus calls us by our names and wants us to come into our house, our hearts. There, He desires to be with us. Life will never be the same when we allow ourselves to be encountered, loved, and forgiven by Jesus. He does not make demands, but in His loving presence, we are moved to change something in ourselves. In this time of prayer, let us open our hearts and welcome Jesus with great joy.

Reflective question:

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

Wednesday, 16th November, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Gertrude. Apocalypse 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 thought 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 then return. He summoned ten of his servants and gave them ten pounds,

telling them, "Trade with these, 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 it happened that 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 by trading. The first came in, "Sir," he said, "your one pound has brought in ten." He replied, "Well done, my good servant! Since you have proved yourself trustworthy in a very small thing, you shall have the government of ten cities." Then came the second, "Sir," he said, "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, "Sir," he said, "here is your pound. I put it away safely wrapped up in a cloth because I was afraid of you; for you are an exacting man: you gather in what you have not laid out and reap what you have not sown." He said to him, "You wicked servant! Out of your own mouth I condemn you. So you knew that I was an exacting man, gathering in what I have not laid out 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 anyone who has not will be deprived even of what he has. "As for my enemies who did not want me for their king, bring them here and execute them in my presence." ' When he had said this he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

Faithfulness to very small things

Today's parable challenges us to examine our attitudes towards the seemingly insignificant, hidden acts of love in our lives, such as visiting a sick relative, writing a message of encouragement to a friend who is depressed, praying for the needs of others, etc. Let us not be like the servant who did nothing with his one pound. Instead, we want to do little things with a lot of love so that we can deepen our daily faithfulness to Jesus, our king.

"Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies" (St. Teresa of Calcutta). Therefore, as we spend this time in prayer, let us ask ourselves honestly: Have I been faithful in the very small things entrusted to me? Have I done my best in completing insignificant tasks that would not earn me any praise and attention from others?

Reflective question:

How faithful am I to the small things entrusted to me by God?

Thursday, 17th November, St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

Apocalypse 5:1-10, Luke 19: 41-44

As Jesus drew near and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it and said, 'If you too had only recognised on this day the way to peace! But in fact it is hidden from your eyes! Yes, a time is coming when your enemies will raise fortifications all round you, when they will encircle you and hem you in on every side; they will dash you and the children inside your walls to the ground; they will leave not one stone standing on another within you, because you did not recognise the moment of your visitation.'

Jesus wept

In today's gospel, Jesus cried over the city of Jerusalem because the people did not recognise that God had come to visit them in the person of Jesus. In front of their rejection, Jesus felt vulnerable and powerless.

Jesus continues to come into our lives and wants us to have a loving relationship with Him. He never demands but always invites. He needs us to respond freely to His invitation. The good news is that Jesus always patiently waits for our response. Even if we choose to reject Him, He will not close His heart to us because He loves us with unconditional and faithful love.

Reflective question:

Can I hear Jesus' invitation for me to be with Him today?

Friday, 18th November, Dedication of the Basilicas of St. Peter & St. Paul.

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

Jesus went into the Temple and began driving out those who were busy trading, saying to them, 'According to scripture, my house shall be a house of prayer but you have turned it into a bandits' den.' He taught in the Temple every day. The chief priests and the scribes, in company with the leading citizens, tried to do away with him, but they could not find a way to carry this out because the whole people hung on his words.

House of prayer, not den of bandits

At times, our hearts are like robber's dens full of selfishness, pride, anger and laziness that steal our joy and enthusiasm for living our faith. Instead, these 'robbers' harden our hearts towards God and make us indifferent towards others.

Today, Jesus invites us to let Him remove everything that robs us from living our faith fully. He wants to make our hardened hearts docile to love again, to be merciful again, to forgive again. We are not meant to become robbers' den but a house of prayer where God dwells.

Reflective question:

Is God the centre of my life?

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

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

Some Sadducees -- those who argue that there is no resurrection -- approached Jesus and they put this question to him, 'Master, Moses prescribed for us, 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, whose wife will she be, 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 children 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 everyone is alive.' Some scribes then spoke up. They said, 'Well put, Master.' They did not dare to ask him any more questions.

God of the living, not of the dead

"Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him everyone is alive". What does Jesus mean by saying this? God is the God of life.

Therefore, our death is not the end of life but the beginning of a life fully with God. It is the threshold we cross to meet God face-to-face.

How much longer will we live? None of us can know for sure. All we know is that we must enter into communion with God here and now and make each present moment as good as any moment in eternity.

Reflective question:

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

Sunday, 20th November, Solemnity of Christ the King.

2 Samuel 5:1-3, Colossians 1:12-20, Luke 23:35-43

The people stayed there watching before the cross watching Jesus. As for the leaders, they jeered at him with the words, 'He saved others, let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers mocked him too, coming up to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.' Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews'. One of the criminals hanging there abused him: 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He answered him, 'In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

Jesus, the king of love

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. In the 2nd reading, St. Paul states that Jesus "*is the image of the unseen God*". When we see Jesus, we see God. Jesus made God visible through His words and actions. He revealed the true face of God as a God of love who seeks communion with each person, even those who society regarded as outcasts and sinners.

In today's gospel, Jesus, on the cross, offered mercy to the good thief and brought him into communion with God. He told the criminal, "*In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise*". Jesus is our crucified king whose power is expressed in His merciful love. Like the good thief,

may we recognise Jesus as our king who loves us unconditionally and with unfailing love, and tell Him, "*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom*". Jesus will always draw us close to Himself, not just in eternity, but in the here and now.

Reflective question:

As I reflect on the gospel passage, what does it mean for me to celebrate this Feast of Christ the King?

Monday, 21st November, Presentation of Mary.

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

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

Following the footsteps of Mother Mary: To do God's will

In today's gospel, Jesus' family was trying to speak to Him, but Jesus took the opportunity to redefine who He considered His family to be. He 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 is my brother and sisters and mother*". Today, we are part of Jesus' family when we seek to do God's will and make His kingdom a reality in our lives.

It must not be easy for Mary to hear what Jesus had to say. However, it was a concrete moment for Mary to do God's will by loving Jesus selflessly and letting Him live His life according to God's purpose. Mary, the model disciple, was always open to doing the Father's will, even though she did not fully understand. Let us ask Mother Mary to accompany us and help us to seek to do God's will and become brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Reflective question:

What does it mean for me to be a member of Jesus' family?

**Tuesday, 22nd November, St Cecilia.
Apocalypse 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 it is about to take place?' But he said, 'Take care not to be deceived, because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the one" and "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven.'

Love remains

What is Jesus' message to us today? Too many times, like the people in today's gospel passage, we admire earthly gadgets, buildings, inventions, etc., and we forget that all these are temporal. However, the time will come when all that is temporal will end, and all that is eternal will remain.

"*Love is eternal*" (1 Corinthians 13:8). The greatest security is not the money in our bank account or properties but in the love we give to others. The love we give continues to bear fruit even after our mortal life ends. Let us love and keep loving even when we face rejection and suffering because God, who is love (1 John 4:16), is with us, and He remains with us forever. Thus, we are not afraid.

Reflective question:

How can I bear the eternal fruit of love in my life?

**Wednesday, 23rd November, St. Clement I, St. Columban.
Apocalypse 15:1-4, Luke 21:12-19**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'But before all this happens, you will be seized and persecuted; you will be handed over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and brought before kings and governors for the sake of

my name -and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Make up your minds not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated universally on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your perseverance will win you your lives.'

Go and be a witness for Christ

In today's gospel, Jesus presented to His disciples a terrifying picture of persecution, imprisonment, betrayal and even death. Yet, He promised them that not a hair of their head would be lost because He would be with them and give them the eloquence and wisdom they needed.

Today, we are called to be His living witnesses. Though our relationship with God is personal, it must also be lived in the public sphere. Thus, we are invited to go and publicly live our faith by living the gospel values, even when it is not easy for us. Jesus is with us. His loving presence makes it possible for us to persevere and endure.

Reflective question:

How can I bear witness to Christ to others today?

Thursday, 24th November, SS. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions. Apocalypse 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, then you must realise that it 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 retribution 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 retribution on this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to every gentile country; and Jerusalem will be trampled down by the gentiles until their time is complete. There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the turmoil of the ocean and its waves; men fainting away with terror and fear at 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.'

Take courage

When we experience suffering in life, the temptation is to have our heads bowed down and shoulders slumped as we brace ourselves for pain. Yet, faith tells us that Jesus is there; He is always there in the midst of our struggles and anxieties. By standing firm in our faith, we too can help others, bound by fears and anxieties, find new hope and courage. In Jesus.

We need to live with faith and hope, not fear. Let us draw close to Him and have the courage to lean on Him today!

Reflective question:

Where is Jesus in the midst of my suffering?

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

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

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

Jesus' words, the rock on which we securely stand

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away, but my words will never pass away". All created things, even heaven and earth, will come and go, but Jesus' life-giving words remain. His words will never pass away because He, the Alpha and the Omega, will never pass away. His words are the light that shines in the darkness and guides us to walk on. His words provide us with the daily strength and peace to face the uncertain future.

Today, let us keep reminding ourselves of the promise of Jesus, "... *my words will never pass away*". Jesus' love is faithful and will never let us down.

Reflective question:

How do I respond to the promise of Jesus that His words will never pass away?

Saturday, 26th November, 34th Week in Ordinary Time.**Apocalypse 22:1-7, Luke 21:34-36**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened by debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will come upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come down on all those living on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to hold your ground before the Son of man.'

Stay awake and pray

In today's gospel, Jesus invites us to stay awake and pray at all times. By saying this, Jesus calls us to live constantly with an attitude of awareness and contemplation of His presence, who is with us at all times. Often, the pleasures and cares of this life distract us from perceiving God's presence in us and around us. As we start the Advent season, let us ask Jesus to help us journey inward and encounter Him within.

We pray, using the words of St. Patrick, "...*Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me, Christ in the eye that sees me, Christ in the ear that hears me...*". Today, let us live and move and have our being in this awareness that Jesus is with us.

Reflective question:

Am I open to the call of Jesus to stay awake and pray at all times?

Sunday, 27th November, First Sunday of Advent.**Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:37-44**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and

swept them all away. This is what it will be like when the Son of man comes. Then of two men in the fields, one is taken, one left, of two women grinding at the mill, one is taken, one left. 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Stay awake

Advent is a season for drawing closer to Jesus and allowing Him to lead us into a deeper relationship with Him. We listen to Prophet Isaiah in the 1st reading as he tells us, "*Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord*". Jesus is our light that shines in our darkness, and He is why we can walk on with hope amid uncertainty and troubles.

In today's gospel, Jesus calls us to stay awake by living in the present so that we can recognise His presence with us. He comes to us through the Scripture, the Eucharist, good and bad events we experience, the people around us, and nature. However, like the people in Noah's day, we can be so caught up with the busyness and worries of life that we fail to see His presence. Jesus comes to us everyday. He always brings us to deeper faith, hope and peace. As we start this Advent season, let us be Advent people who are watchful of God's presence and live each day as He wants it to be.

Reflective question:

How can I welcome Jesus into my life this Advent season?

Monday, 28th November, 1st Week of Advent.

Isaiah 2:1-5, Matthew 8:5-11

When Jesus went into Capernaum a centurion came up and pleaded with him. 'Sir,' he said, 'my servant is lying at home paralysed and in great pain.' Jesus said to him, 'I will come myself and cure him.' The centurion replied, 'Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be cured. For I am under authority myself and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, "Go," and he goes; to another, "Come here," and he comes; to my servant, "Do this,"

and he does it.' When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, 'In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this. And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of Heaven.'

A faith that amazes Jesus

In today's gospel, the Roman centurion's humble faith amazed Jesus. He, a man of authority, was in touch with the suffering of his servant and was moved to seek help from Jesus, an itinerant preacher from Galilee. He recognised Jesus as a man of God and felt unworthy to have Him enter his home. Thus, he believed that Jesus could utter a word and that his servant would be healed.

In this Advent season, we are called to spend time praying with the Scripture, listen to Jesus as He speaks to us through His word, and allow it to shape us. Like the Roman centurion, let us have the humble faith to trust in the power of Jesus' life-giving word that can make us fully alive.

Reflective question:

How is my faith?

Tuesday, 29th November, 1st Week of Advent.

Isaiah 11:1-10, Luke 10:21-24

Filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it has pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.' Then turning to his disciples he spoke to them by themselves, 'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.'

Blessed are the eyes that see

In today's gospel, Jesus rejoiced, and the cause of His joy was that the disciples were receptive to God and His ways. Looking at His disciples, Jesus said, "*Blessed are the eyes that see what you see...*". The simple

child-like faith of the disciples enabled them to be drawn into knowing God through Jesus His Son. On the other hand, “*the learned and the clever*” of this world hardened their hearts because they thought they already knew God and what He wanted from them.

Advent is a time to journey closer to God. In this journey, we must be humble to have the same child-like openness as the disciples and ready to listen to Jesus and be open to what He wants to show us. When we do so, we will experience Jesus rejoicing over us.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus’ message as I spend this time listening to Him as He speaks to me through today’s gospel passage?

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

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

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

Jesus calls in the midst of our ordinary life

In today’s Gospel, Jesus walked past Simon, Andrew, James and John. They were busy with their nets and boats as they were professional fishermen. In the middle of what they were doing their daily chores, Jesus went to them and said, “*Follow me*”. Immediately, they left everything and followed Jesus in complete trust.

Jesus comes to us and calls out to us in the midst of daily routines and work. He calls us to step out of our comfort zones and involve ourselves in the service of God’s kingdom. We do so by simple gestures of caring for others, sharing our faith with those searching for God, being honest in working hard in the tasks entrusted to us, being patient with those whom we find hard to love, etc. When we put our trust in Jesus and

respond to His call, we will discover the joy of experiencing God working in us and through us for the good of others.

Reflective question:

Jesus says, "*Follow me*". Do I trust Jesus enough to follow Him?

