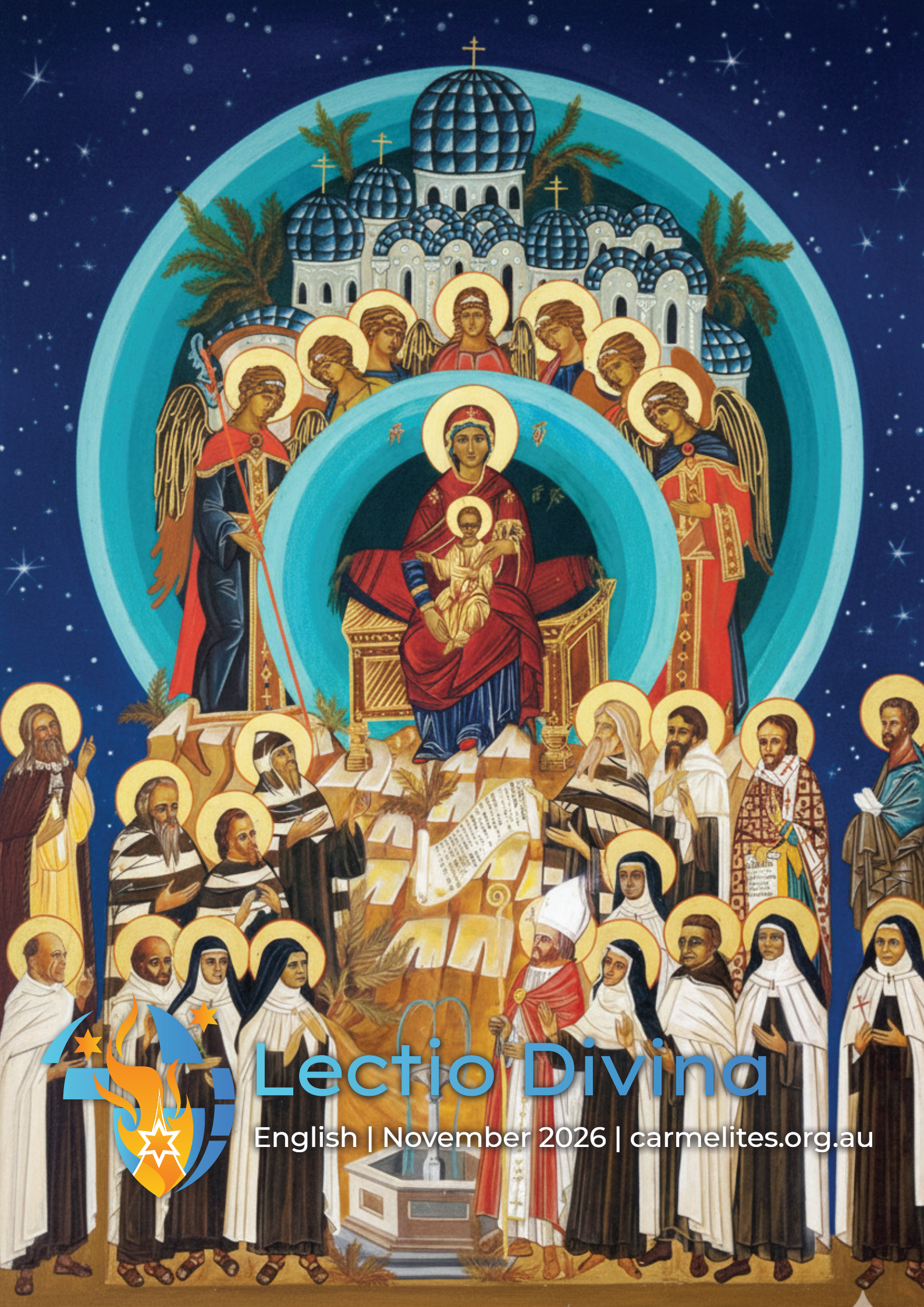

Lectio Divina

English | November 2026 | carmelites.org.au

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[1] *Cover Image: All Carmelite Saints. To learn more,* click here.

Sunday, November 1, 2026

Solemnity: All Saints

Listening to the Text

Opening Prayer:

Lord, the meaning of our life is to seek your Word, which came to us in the person of Christ. Make me capable of welcoming what is new in the Gospel of the Beatitudes, so that I may change my life. I would know nothing about you were it not for the light of the words spoken by your Son Jesus, who came to tell us of your marvels. When I am weak, if I go to Him, the Word of God, then I become strong. When I act foolishly, the wisdom of his Gospel restores me to relish God and the kindness of his love. He guides me to the paths of life. When some deformity appears in me, I reflect on his Word and the image of my personality becomes beautiful. When solitude tries to make me dry, my spiritual marriage to him makes my life fruitful. When I discover some sadness or unhappiness in myself, the thought of Him, my only good, opens the way to joy. Therese of the Child Jesus has a saying that sums up the desire for holiness as an intense search for God and a listening to others: «If you are nothing, remember that Jesus is all. You must therefore lose your little nothing into his infinite all and think of nothing else but this uniquely lovable all… (*Letters, 87, to Marie Guérin*).

Reading the Gospel – Matthew 5: 1-12a

Seeing the crowds, he 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 recognized 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; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

A Moment of Prayerful Silence:

It is important to be able to listen in deep silence so that the word of Christ may speak to us and so that the Word made flesh may dwell in us and us in him. It is only in silent hearts that the Word of God can take root and, on this Solemnity of All Saints, become flesh in us.

Light Shed on the Word (Lectio)

The Context:

Jesus" words on the Beatitudes that Matthew drew from his sources, were condensed in short and isolated phrases, and the Evangelist has placed them in a broader context, which Biblical scholars call the "*sermon on the mount*" (Chapters 5-7). This sermon is considered like the statutes or *Magna Carta* that Jesus gave to the community as a normative and binding word that defines a Christian.
The many themes contained in this long sermon are not to be seen as collection of exhortations, but rather as a clear and radical indication of the new attitude of the disciples towards God, oneself and the brothers and sisters. Some expressions used by Jesus may seem exaggerated, but they are used to stress reality and thus are realistic in the context although not so in a literary sense: for instance, in vv. 29-30: "*If your right eye should be your downfall, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of yourself than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should be your downfall, cut it off and throw it away, for it will do you less harm to lose one part of yourself than to have your whole body go to hell*." This manner of speaking indicates the effect desired to be created in the reader, who must understand correctly Jesus" words so as not to distort their meaning.
Our focus, for liturgical reasons, will be on the first part of the "*sermon on the mount,*" that is the part dealing with the proclamation of the beatitudes (Mt 5: 1-12).

Some Details:

Matthew invites the reader to listen to the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus with a rich concentration of details. First, he indicates the place where Jesus proclaims his sermon: "*Jesus went onto the mountain*" (5: 1). That is why exegetes call this the "*sermon on the mount*" even though Luke places this sermon on level ground (Lk 6: 20-26). The geographic location of the "*mountain*" could be a veiled reference to an episode in the OT quite like ours: that is, when Moses proclaims the Decalogue on mount Sinai. It is possible that Matthew wishes to present Jesus as the new Moses who proclaims the new law.
Another detail that strikes us is the physical posture of Jesus as he proclaims his words: "*when he was seated.*" This posture confers upon him a note of authority in the legislative sense. The disciples and the "crowd" gather around him: this

detail shows what Jesus had to say was for all to hear. We note that Jesus' words do not present impossible matters, nor are they addressed to a special group of people, nor do they mean to establish a code of ethics exclusively for his inner circle. Jesus" demands are concrete, binding and decisively radical.
Someone branded Jesus" sermon as follows: «For me, this is the most important text in the history of humankind. It is addressed to all, believers and non, and after twenty centuries it is still the only light still shining in the darkness of violence, fear and solitude in which the West finds itself because of its pride and selfishness» (Gilbert Cesbron).

The word "*blessed*" (in Greek *makarioi*) in our context does not say "softly" but cries out happiness found throughout the Bible. For instance, in the OT, those called "*blessed*" are those who live out the precepts of Wisdom (Sir 25: 7-10). The prayerful person of the Psalms defines "*blessed*" as those who "*fear*", or more precisely those who love the Lord, expressing this love in the observance of the precepts contained in the word of God (Ps 1: 1; 128: 1).

Matthew's originality lies in adding a secondary phrase that specifies each beatitude: for instance, the main assertion "*blessed are the poor in spirit*" is clarified by an added phrase "*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Another difference with the OT is that Jesus' words proclaim a saving blessedness here and now and without any limitations. For Jesus, all can attain happiness on condition that they remain united to Him.

The First Three Beatitudes

- The first cry concerns the poor: "*How blessed are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.*" The reader may be shocked: how can the poor be happy? In the Bible, the poor are those who empty themselves of themselves and above all renounce the presumption of building their own present and future alone, and thus leave room for and focus on God's project and his Word. The poor, always in the biblical sense, is not someone closed in on himself, miserable, negative, but someone who nurtures being open to God and to others. God is all his/her treasure. We could say with St. Teresa of Avila: happy are those who experience that "*God alone suffices,*" meaning that they are rich in God.

  A great modern spiritual author described poverty as follows: "*As long as one does not empty one's heart, God cannot fill it with himself. As you empty your heart, so does the Lord fill it.*

  Poverty is emptiness, not only in what concerns the future but also the past. Not a regret or memory, not a worry or wish! God is not in the past. God is not in the future: He is in the present! Leave your past to God, leave your future to God. Your poverty is to live the present, the Presence of God who is Eternity" (Divo Barsotti).

  This is the first beatitude, not just because it is the first of many, but because it seems to encapsulate all the others in their diversity.

- "*Blessed are those who mourn; they shall be comforted.*" One can mourn because of a great pain or suffering. This underlines the fact that we are dealing with a serious situation even though the motives or the cause are not mentioned. If we wish to identify today "those who mourn" we could think of all the Christians who hold dear the demands of the kingdom and suffer because of many negative aspects in the Church; rather than focus on holiness, the Church presents divisions and lacerations. They may also be those who suffer because of their sins and inconsistencies and who, in some way, slow down their conversion. To these, only God can bring the news of "consolation."
- "*Blessed are the gentle, they shall have the earth as inheritance.*" The third beatitude is about gentleness. This is a quality that is not so popular today. Rather, for many it has a negative connotation and is taken for weakness or the kind of imperturbability that knows how to control calculatingly one's own emotions. What does the word "gentle" mean in the Bible? The gentle are remembered as those who enjoy great peace (Ps 37: 10), are happy, blessed and loved by God. They are also contrasted with evildoers, the ungodly and sinners. Thus, the OT gives us a wealth of meanings that do not allow for one single definition.

  In the NT the first time we meet the word is in Matthew 11: 29: "*Learn from me because I am gentle and humble of heart.*" A second time is in Mt 21: 5, when Matthew describes Jesus" entry into Jerusalem and cites the prophet Zechariah 2: 9: "*Behold your servant comes to you gentle.*" Truly, Matthew's Gospel may be described as the Gospel of gentleness.

  Paul too says that gentleness is an identifying quality of the Christian. In 2 Corinthians 10: 1 he exhorts believers "*I urge you by the gentleness and forbearance of Christ*". In Galatians 5: 22 gentleness is considered one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the heart of believers and consists in being meek, moderate, slow to punish, kind and patient towards others. Again, in Ephesians 4: 32 and Colossians 3: 12 gentleness is an attitude that is part of the Christian and a sign of the new man in Christ.

  Finally, an eloquent witness comes from 1 Peter 3: 3-4: "*Your adornment should be not an exterior one, consisting of braided hair or gold jewelry or fine clothing, but the interior disposition of the heart, consisting in the imperishable quality of a gentle and peaceful spirit, so precious in the sight of God.*"

  How does Jesus use the word "gentle"? A truly enlightening definition is the one given by the gentle person of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini "*The gentle person, according to the beatitudes, is one who, in spite of the fervor of his/her feelings, remains docile and calm, not possessive, interiorly free, always extremely respectful of the mystery of freedom, imitating God in this respect who does everything with respect for the person, and urges the person to obedience without ever using violence. Gentleness is opposed to all forms of material or moral arrogance, it gains the victory of peace over*

war, of dialogue over imposition."

To this wise interpretation we add that of another famous exegete: "*The gentleness spoken of in the beatitudes is none other than that aspect of humility that manifests itself in practical affability in one's dealings with the other. Such gentleness finds its image and its perfect model in the person of Jesus, gentle and humble of heart. Truly, such gentleness seems to us like a form of charity, patient and delicately attentive towards others*" (Jacques Dupont).

The Word Enlightens Me (Meditatio)

- Am I able to accept those little signs of poverty in my regard? For instance, the poverty of poor health and little indispositions? Do I make exorbitant demands?
- Am I able to accept some aspect of my poverty and fragility?
- Do I pray like a poor person, as one who asks with humility the grace of God, his pardon and his mercy?
- Inspired by Jesus" message concerning gentleness, do I renounce violence, vengeance and a vengeful spirit?
- Do I encourage, in families and in my place of work, a spirit of kindness, gentleness and peace?
- Do I pay back any small malice, insinuations or offensive allusions with evil?
- Do I look after the weakest who cannot defend themselves? Am I patient with old people? Do I welcome lonely strangers who are often exploited at work?

To Pray

Psalm 23:

The Psalm seems to rotate around the title "The Lord is my shepherd". The saints are the image of the flock on the way: they are accompanied by the goodness and loyalty of God, until they finally reach the house of the Father (L. Alonso Schökel, I salmi della fiducia, Dehoniana libri, Bologna 2006, 54)
Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
In grassy meadows he lets me lie. By tranquil streams he leads me to restore my spirit.
He guides me in paths of saving justice as befits his name. Even were I to walk in a ravine as dark as death I should fear no danger, for you are at my side.
Your staff and your crook are there to soothe me.
You prepare a table for me under the eyes of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup brims over.
Kindness and faithful love pursue me every day of my life.
I make my home in the house of Yahweh for all time to come.

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you show us the way of the beatitudes so that we may come to that happiness that is fullness of life and thus holiness. We are all called to holiness, but the only treasure of the saints is God. Your Word, Lord, calls saints all those who in baptism were chosen by your love of a Father, to be conformed to Christ. Grant, Lord, that by your grace we may achieve this conformity to Jesus Christ. We thank you, Lord, for the saints you have placed on our way and who manifest your love. We ask for your pardon if we have tarnished your face in us and denied our calling to be saints.

Monday, November 2, 2026

All Souls Day

LECTIO

Opening Prayer

Spirit of God, come from the four corners of the earth and breathe on these dead persons so that they may rise again (Ez 37: 9). Come Holy Spirit, breathe on our minds, hearts and souls so that we may become a new creation in Christ, firstborn into life eternal. Amen.

Gospel Reading – John 6: 37-39

Jesus said to them, "All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Prayerful Silent Time

That the Word of God may enter into our hearts and enlighten our life.

MEDITATIO

A Key to the Reading

In John's Gospel, the basic perspective concerning Jesus and his mission is that the Word made flesh is sent by the Father into the world to give us life and to save that which was lost. The world, however, rejects the Word incarnate.
The prologue of the Gospel presents us with this thought (Jn 1: 1-18), which the Evangelist will gradually elaborate in the Gospel story. The synoptic Gospels also, in their own way, proclaim the same news. One need only think of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost drachma (Lk 15: 1-10); or the declaration: I did not come to call the just, but sinners (Mk 2: 17).
This thought is also found in this passage: I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent (Jn 6: 38). This is the will of my

Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life (Jn 6: 40). The key words in John's Gospel are see and believe. To see, implies and automatically means to believe in the Son sent by the Father. This attitude of faith brings the believer to possess eternal life. In John's Gospel, the salvation of the world is already fulfilled by the first coming of Christ through the incarnation and the resurrection of the one who allows himself to be lifted up on the cross. The second coming of Christ on the last day will be a completion of this mystery of salvation.

Today's Gospel is taken from the section that speaks of the mystery of Jesus (Jn 1-12). The text takes us, for the second time in John's Gospel, to Galilee, at the time of the Passover: After this, Jesus went across the sea of Galilee... it was near the Passover, the feast of the Jews (Jn 6: 1, 4). A great crowd followed him, (Jn 6: 2) and Jesus seeing the crowd that followed him, multiplies the loaves. The crowd want to proclaim him king, but Jesus disappears and goes up to the mountain alone (Jn 6: 15). After a brief pause that allows us to contemplate the Lord walking on the waters (Jn 6: 16-21), the story continues the next day (Jn 6: 22), and the crowd goes on waiting for and seeking out Jesus. Then comes the discourse on the bread of life and Jesus" warning to obtain the food that will last forever (Jn 6: 27). Jesus defines himself as the bread of life and makes reference to the manna given to the people of God through Moses, as a figure of the true bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (Jn 6: 30-36). This is the context within which the words of Jesus are pronounced and that we are using for our Lectio (Jn 6: 37-40). In this context, too, we come across a new kind of opposition and a new rejection of the revelation of the Christ as the bread of life (Jn 6: 41-66).

Jesus' words concerning everyone who goes to him, echo God's invitation to takepart in the benefits of the banquet of the covenant (Is 55: 1-3). Jesus does not reject those who come to him, rather he gives them eternal life. In fact, his mission is to seek and save the lost ones (Lk 19: 27). We are reminded of this in the story of the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well (Jn 4: 1-42). Jesus does not reject the Samaritan woman, but, begins a "pastoral" dialogue with the woman who comes to the well to draw material water and there finds the man, the prophet and the Messiah who promises to give her the water of eternal life (Jn 4: 13-15). In our passage we find the same structure: on the one hand the people seek material bread and on the other Jesus gives them a long spiritual discourse on the bread of life. The witness of Jesus who eats the bread of God's will (Jn 4: 34) echoes the teaching of the Master in this Gospel passage (Jn 6: 38).

At the last supper, Jesus takes up this discourse again in chapter 17. It is he who gives eternal life (Jn 17: 2), preserves and watches over all those whom the Father has given to him. Of these none is lost except the son of perdition (Jn 17: 12-13).

A Few Questions to Guide Our Meditation and Practice.

- The Word made flesh is sent into the world by the Father to give us life, but the world rejects the incarnate Word. Do I welcome into my life the Divine Word who gives eternal life? How?

- I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me (Jn 6: 38). In Jesus we see obedience to the will of the Father. Do I internalize this virtue in my life and live it out daily?
- Anyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life (Jn 6: 40). Who is Jesus for me? Do I try to see him with the eyes of faith, listen to his words, contemplate his way of being? What does eternal life mean for me?

ORATIO

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anoints my head with oil, my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Closing Prayer

O God, who at the table of your word and of the bread of life nourish us so that we may grow in love, grant that we may welcome your message into our heart so that we may become yeast and instruments of salvation in the world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen

CONTEMPLATIO

Contemplation is knowing how to adhere with one's mind and heart to the Lord who by his Word transforms us into new beings who always do his will.
"Knowing these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (Jn 13: 17)

Tuesday, November 3, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.
May we live the faith we profess and trust your promise of eternal life.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 14: 15-24

One of those gathered round the table said to Jesus, “Blessed is anyone who will share the meal in the kingdom of God!” But he said to him, “There was a man who gave a great banquet, and he invited a large number of people. When the time for the banquet came, he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come along: everything is ready now.’ But all alike started to make excuses.”
The first said, "I have bought a piece of land and must go and see it. Please accept my apologies."
Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and am on my way to try them out. Please accept my apologies."
Yet another said, "I have just got married and so am unable to come."
The servant returned and reported this to his master. Then the householder, in a rage, said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame."
"Sir," said the servant, "your orders have been carried out and there is still room."
Then the master said to his servant, "Go to the open roads and the hedgerows and press people to come in, to make sure my house is full; because, I tell you, not one of those who were invited shall have a taste of my banquet."

Reflection

The Gospel today continues the reflection around themes linked to the table and the invitation. Jesus tells the parable of the banquet. Many people had been invited, but the majority did not go. The master of the feast was indignant because of the absence of those who had been invited and then sent his servants to call the poor, the crippled the blind and the lame. And even after that, there was still place. Then he ordered his servant to invite everybody, until his house was full. This parable was a light for the communities of the time of Luke.
In the communities at the time of Luke there were Christians, who had come from Judaism and Christians who came from the Gentiles, called pagans. Notwithstanding the difference in race, class and gender, they lived profoundly the ideal of sharing and of communion (Acts 2: 42; 4: 32; 5: 12). But there were many difficulties because some norms of legal purity prevented the Jews to eat with the pagans. And even after they had entered into the Christian community, some of them kept this old custom of not sitting at table with a pagan. This is the reason why Peter had a conflict with the community of Jerusalem because he entered into the house of Cornelius, a pagan and for having eaten with him (Acts 11: 3). Before these problems of the communities, Luke kept a series of words of Jesus regarding the banquet. (Lk 14: 1-24). The parable on which we are meditating is an image of what was happening in the communities.

- Luke 14: 15: Blessed are those who will eat the bread of the Kingdom of God. Jesus had finished telling two parables: one on the choice of places (Lk 14: 7-11), and the other on the choice of the guests who were invited (Lk 14: 12-14). While listening to this parable someone who was at table with Jesus must have picked up the importance of the teaching of Jesus and must have said: "Blessed are those who eat the bread of the Kingdom of God!" The Jews compared the future time of the Messiah to a banquet, characterized by gratitude and communion (Is 25: 6; 55: 1-2; Ps 22: 27). Hunger, poverty and the lack of so many things made the people hope that in the future they would obtain what they were lacking and did not have at present. The hope of the Messianic goods, usually experienced in banquets, was a perspective of the end of time.
- Luke 14: 16-20: The great banquet is ready. Jesus responds with a parable. There was a man who gave a great banquet and he invited a great number of people". But the duty of each one prevents the guests from accepting the invitation. The first one says: "I have bought a piece of land and must go and see it!" The second "I have bought five yoke of oxen and am on my way to try them out!" The third one: "I have just got married and so am unable to come!" In the limits of the law those persons had the right not to accept the invitation (cf. Dt 20: 5-7).
- Luke 14: 21-22: The invitation remains, it is not cancelled. The master of the banquet was indignant in seeing that his invitation had not been accepted. In last instance, the one who is indignant is precisely Jesus because the norms of the strict observance of the law, reduced the space for people to be able to live the gratuity of an invitation to the house of friends, an invitation characterized by the fraternal spirit and by sharing. Thus, the master of the feast orders the servants to invite the poor, the blind, the crippled, the lame. Those who were normally excluded because they were considered unclean, are now invited to sit around the table of the banquet.
- Luke 14: 23-24: There is still place. The room is not full. There is still place. Then, the master of the house ordered the servants to invite those passing on the street. Those are the pagans. They are also invited to sit around the table. Thus, in the banquet of the parable of Jesus, everybody sits around the same table, Jews and pagans. At the time of Luke, there were many problems which prevented the realization of this ideal of the common banquet. By means of the parable; Luke shows that the practice of the banquet came precisely from Jesus.
- After the destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 70, the Pharisees took over the government in the Synagogues, demanding the rigid fulfilment of the norms which identified them as the Jewish people. The Jews who converted to Christianity were considered a threat, because they destroyed the walls which separated Israel from other people. The Pharisees tried to oblige them to abandon the faith in Jesus. And because they did not succeed, they drove them away from the Synagogues. All this brought about a slow and progressive separation between the Jews and the Christians, which was a

source of great suffering, especially for the converted Jews (Rm 9: 1-5). In the parable, Luke indicates very clearly that these converted Jews were not unfaithful to their people. All the contrary! They are the ones who are invited and accept the invitation. They are the true continuators of Israel. Those who were unfaithful were those who did not accept the invitation and did not want to recognize Jesus the Messiah (Lk 22: 66; Acts 13: 27).

Personal Questions

- In general, which are the persons who are invited and which are the persons who in general are not invited to our feasts?
- Which are the reasons which today limit the participation of persons in society and in the Church? And which are the reasons that some give to exclude themselves from the community? Are they just reasons?

Concluding Prayer

Full of splendor and majesty his work, his saving justice stands firm forever.
He gives us a memorial of his great deeds; Yahweh is mercy and tenderness. (Ps 111: 3-4)

Wednesday, November 4, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.
May we live the faith we profess and trust your promise of eternal life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 14: 25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way, and he turned and spoke to them. "Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, cannot be my disciple. No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple." "And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, anyone who saw it would start making fun of him and saying, 'Here is someone who started to build and was unable to finish.'"
"Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the

other who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So, in the same way, none of you can be my disciple without giving up all that he owns."

Reflection

The Gospel today speaks about discipleship and presents the conditions to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem, where he will die soon on the Cross. This is the context in which Jesus speaks about discipleship.

- Luke 14: 25: An example of catechesis. The Gospel today is a beautiful example of how Luke transforms the words of Jesus into catechesis for the people of the communities. He says: "Great crowds accompanied him. He turned and spoke to them." Jesus speaks to the great crowd, that is, he speaks to all, also to the persons of the communities at the time of Luke, and today he speaks for us. In the teaching which follows, Jesus gives the conditions for those who want to be his disciples.
- Luke 14: 25-26: First condition: to hate father and mother. Some diminish the force of the word to hate and translate it as "to prefer Jesus to one's own parents." The original text uses the expression "to hate one's parents." In another place Jesus orders to love and respect parents (Lk 18: 20). How can this contradiction be explained? But is it a contradiction? At the time of Jesus the social and economic situation led the families to close themselves up in self and this prevented them to fulfil the law of ransom or liberation (*goel)*, that is to help the brothers and sisters of the community (clan) who were threatened to lose their land or to become slaves (cf. Dt 15: 1-18; Lev 25: 23-43). Closed up in themselves the families weakened the life in the community. Jesus wants to reconstruct the life in community. This is why he asks to put an end to the restricted vision of the small family which closes up in itself and asks the family to open itself and to be united among themselves in a large family, in community. This is the sense of hating father and mother, and wife, sons, sisters and brothers. Jesus himself, when his parents of his small family wanted to take him back to Nazareth, he does not respond to their request. He ignores or hates their petition and extends his family saying: "Behold, my mother and my brothers! Anyone who does the will of God, is my brother, sister and mother" (Mk 3: 20-21, 31-35). The family bonds of union cannot prevent the formation of the Community. This is the first condition.
- Luke 14: 27: Second condition: to carry the cross. "No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple." In order to understand well the importance of this second requirement we have to look at the context in which Luke places this word of Jesus. Jesus is going toward Jerusalem to be crucified and to die. To follow Jesus and to carry the cross means to go with him up to Jerusalem to be crucified with him. This recalls the attitude of the women who "followed and served him when he was still in Galilee and many others who went up to Jerusalem with him" (Mk 15: 41). This also reminds us

of Paul's phrase in the Letter to the Galatians: "But as for me, it is out of the question that I should boast at all, except of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal 6:14)

- Luke 14: 28-32: Two parables. Both of these parables have the same objective: that persons may think well before taking a decision. In the first parable he says: "Which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, anyone who saw it would start making fun of him and saying: Here is someone who started to build and was unable to finish!" This parable needs no explanation. It speaks for itself: let each one reflect well on his/her way of following Jesus and ask him/herself if he/she values well the conditions before taking the decision to become a disciple of Jesus.
- The second parable: Or again, which king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace." This parable has the same purpose of the one before. Some ask: "How is it that Jesus uses an example of war?" The question is a pertinent one for us who today know the wars. The Second World War (1939-1945) caused the death to about 54 million persons! At that time, though, the wars were as commercial concurrence between enterprises which today struggle among themselves to obtain the greatest profit or gain.
- Luke 14: 33: Conclusion for discipleship. The conclusion is only one: to be Christian, to follow Jesus. Is something serious. For many people today, to be Christian is not a personal choice, and neither is it a decision for life, but a simple cultural phenomenon. They do not even think of making a choice. Anyone who is born a Brazilian is a Brazilian. He who is born Japanese is Japanese. He does not have to choose. He is born like that and will die like that. Many people are Christians because they were born like that and they die like that, without ever having had the idea of choosing or of assuming that which they are already by birth.

Personal Questions

- To be a Christian is something serious. I have to think out well my way of following Jesus. How does this take place in my life?
- "To hate one's parents," community or family! How do I put together these two things? Am I capable to harmonize them?

Concluding Prayer

Yahweh is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear? Yahweh is the fortress of my life, whom should I dread? (Ps 27: 1)

Thursday, November 5, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.
May we live the faith we profess and trust your promise of eternal life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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 neighbors, 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 neighbors, 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.

Reflection

The Gospel today presents the first one of three parables united among themselves by one same word. It is a question of three things which were lost: the lost sheep (Lk 15: 3-7), the lost drachma (Lk 15: 8-10), and the lost son (Lk 15: 11-32). The three parables are addressed to the Pharisees and to the Doctors of the Law who criticized Jesus (Lk 15: 1-3). That is, they are addressed to the Pharisee and to the Scribe or doctor of the Law which is in each one of us.

- Luke 15: 1-3: Those to whom the parables are addressed. The first three verses describe the context in which the three parables were pronounced: “At that time, the tax collectors and sinners were all crowding round to listen to him. The Pharisees and Scribes complained.” On one side there were the tax collectors and the sinners; on the other the Pharisees and the Doctors of the Law. Luke speaks exaggerating somewhat: “The tax collectors and the sinners were all crowding round to listen to Jesus.” There was something in Jesus

which attracted them. It is the word of Jesus which attracts them (cf. Is 50: 4). They want to listen to him. This is a sign that they do not feel condemned, but rather they feel accepted by him. The criticism of the Pharisees and the Scribes is the following: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them!" When sending out the seventy-two disciples (Lk 10: 1-9), Jesus had ordered them to accept the excluded, the sick, the possessed (Mt 10: 8; Lk 10: 9) and to gather them for the banquet (Lk 10: 8)."

- Luke 15: 4: The Parable of the lost sheep. The parable of the lost sheep begins with a question: "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?" Before giving a response, Jesus must have looked around to see who was listening to him to see how they would have answered. The question is formulated in such a way that the response can only be a positive one: "Yes, he will go after the lost sheep!" And you, how would you answer? Would you leave the ninety-nine in the field to go and look for the only one which got lost? Who would do this? Probably, the majority would have answered: "Jesus, who among us? Nobody would do such an absurd thing. The proverb says: "Better one bird in the hand than one hundred flying around!"
- Luke 15: 5-7: Jesus interprets the parable of the lost sheep. Now, in the parable the shepherd does that which nobody would do: to leave everything and to go and look for the lost sheep. God alone can assume such an attitude! Jesus wants that we become aware, conscious of the Pharisee or the Scribe which is in each one of us, The Pharisees and the Scribes abandoned the sinners and excluded them. They would have never gone to look for the lost sheep. They would have allowed it to get lost in the desert. They preferred the ninety-nine. But Jesus places himself in the place of the sheep which got lost and, which in that context of the official religion, would fall into despair, without the hope of being accepted. Jesus makes them and us know: "If you feel that you are a lost sinner, remember that for God you are worth more than the other ninety-nine sheep. And in case that you are converted, know that there will be "greater joy in heaven for a sinner who is converted, than for ninety-nine just who do not need conversion.
- Luke 15: 8-10: Parable of the lost drachma. The second Parable: 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 neighbors 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 rejoices with us. The angels rejoice with us. The parable serves to communicate hope to those who were threatened with despair because of the official religion. This message recalls what God tells us in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: "Look, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands!" (Is 49: 16). "Since I regard you as precious, since you are honored and I love you!" (Is 43: 4).

Personal Questions

- Would you go out to look for the lost sheep?
- Do you think that today the Church is faithful to this parable of Jesus?

Concluding Prayer

Seek Yahweh and his strength, tirelessly seek his presence! Remember the marvels he has done, his wonders, the judgements he has spoken. (Ps 105: 4-5)

Friday, November 6, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.
May we live the faith we profess and trust your promise of eternal life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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.”

Reflection

Today the Gospel presents a parable that concerns administration of goods which is found only in Luke’s Gospel. It is called the parable of the dishonest steward. It is a disconcerting parable. Luke says: “The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness.” The master is Jesus himself and not the administrator or steward. How is that Jesus praises a corrupt employee?

- Luke 16: 1-2: The steward is threatened to lose his job. “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 anymore.’” This example taken from the world of business and of work speaks for itself. It refers to the existing corruption. The master discovers the corruption and decides to send away the dishonest steward. The steward, unexpectedly, finds himself in an emergency situation, obliged by the unforeseen circumstances to find a way out in order to be able to survive. When God becomes present in the life of a person, unexpectedly everything changes and the person finds himself/herself in an emergency situation. The person has to take a decision and find a way out.
- Luke 16: 3-4: What to do? Which is the way out? “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.’” He begins to reflect to find a way out. He analyses, one by one, the possible alternatives: to dig or work the land in order to survive, he feels that he does not have the strength to do this, and to beg, he would feel ashamed. He analyses things and calculates well the possible alternatives. “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.” It is a question of trying to guarantee his future. The steward is coherent with his way of thinking and living.
- Luke 16: 5-7: Execution of the solution he found. “Then he called his master’s debtors, one by one, and said to the first one: ‘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.’ Then he said to another one, ‘And you, sir, how much do you owe?’ ‘One hundred measures of wheat,’ he answered. The steward said, ‘Here take your bond and write eighty.’” In his total lack of ethics, the steward was coherent. The criteria of his action are not honesty and justice, nor the good of the master whom he depends on to live and to survive, but it is his own interest. He wants to have the guarantee that there will be someone who will receive him in his house.
- Luke 16: 8: The Master praises the dishonest steward. And look this is the disconcerting conclusion: “The Master praises 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.” The word Master or Lord indicates Jesus and not the rich man. The latter would never praise a dishonest employee working with him in the service and that now he robs even more, 50 measures of oil and 20 sacks of wheat! In the parable the one who extends the praise is Jesus. He certainly does not praise the theft, but the presence of spirit of the steward. He knew how to calculate things well and finds a way out, when unexpectedly he finds himself without a job. In this way the children of this world know how to be experts in their own things, and in the same way, the children of light should learn from them to be experts in the solution to their problems, using the criteria of the Kingdom and not the

criteria of this world. “Be cunning as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10: 16).

Personal Questions

- Am I coherent?
- Which criteria do I use in the solution of my problems?

Concluding Prayer

One thing I ask of Yahweh, one thing I seek: to dwell in Yahweh's house all the days of my life, to enjoy the sweetness of Yahweh, to seek out his temple. (Ps 27: 4)

Saturday, November 7, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.
May we live the faith we profess and trust your promise of eternal life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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.

Reflection

The Gospel today presents some words of Jesus concerning goods. They are words and loose phrases and, we do not know in which context they were said. Luke puts them here so as to form a small unity around the correct use of the goods of this life and to help us to understand better the sense of the parable of the dishonest steward (Lk 16: 1-8).

- Luke 16: 9: Use well the unjust money. "Use money tainted as it is, to win friends, and then make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings." In the Old Testament, the more ancient word to indicate the poor (*ani*) means impoverished. It comes from the verb ana, to oppress, to lower. This affirmation recalls the parable of the dishonest steward, whose richness was unjust, dreadful. Here we have the context of the communities at the time of Luke, that is, of the years 80s after Christ. At the beginning the Christian communities arose among the poor (cf. 1 Cor 1: 26; Gal 2: 10). Little by little persons who were richer joined the communities. The entrance of the rich caused some problems which appear in the advice given in the Letter of James (James 2: 1-6; 5: 1-6), in the Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 11: 20-21) and in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 6: 24). These problems became worse toward the end of the first century, as it is said in the Apocalypse in its letter to the community of Laodicea (Rev 3: 17-18). The phrases of Jesus kept by Luke are a help to clarify and solve this problem.
- Luke 16: 10-12: To be faithful in small as well as in great things. "Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great; and 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?" This phrase clarifies the parable of the dishonest steward. He was not faithful. That is why he was taken away from the administration. This word of Jesus also suggests how to give life, to put into practice the advice of making friends with unjust money. Today something similar takes place. There are persons who speak well of liberation, but at home they oppress the wife and their children. They are unfaithful in small things. Liberation begins in the small world of the family, of daily relationships among persons.
- Luke 16: 13: You cannot serve God and money. Jesus is very clear in his affirmation: 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." Each one of us should make a choice, and ask himself/herself: "Whom do I put in the first place in my life: God or money? "In the place of the word money each one can put any other word: auto, employment, prestige, goods, house, image, etc. From this choice will depend the understanding of the advice on Divine Providence which follow (Mt 6: 25-34). It is not a question of a choice made only with the head, but of a very concrete choice of life which includes attitudes.
- Luke 16: 14-15: Criticism of the Pharisees who like 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". On another occasion Jesus mentions the love of some Pharisees toward money: "You devour the property of widows, and rob in their houses and, and in appearance you make long prayers" (Mt 23: 14; Lk 20: 47; Mk 12: 40). They allowed themselves to be dragged by the wisdom of the world, of which Paul says: "Consider, brothers, how you were called; not many of you are wise by human standards, not many influential, not many from noble families. But God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, those who by common standards are common and contemptible indeed those who count for nothing - to reduce to nothing all those who do count for something" (1 Cor 1: 26-28). Some Pharisees liked money, just like today some priests like money. The advice of Jesus and of Paul is valid for them.

Personal Questions

- You and money: what choice do you make?
- Faithful in small things. How do you speak of the Gospel and how do you live the Gospel?

Concluding Prayer

How blessed is anyone who fears Yahweh, who delights in his commandments! His descendants shall be powerful on earth, the race of the honest shall receive blessings. (Ps 112: 1-2)

Sunday, November 8, 2026

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, send your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that you read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, you helped them to discover the presence of God in the disturbing events of your sentence and death. Thus, the cross that seemed to be the end of all hope became for them the source of life and of resurrection.
Create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples from Emmaus, may experience the force of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace. We ask this of you, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed to us the Father and sent us your Spirit. Amen.

Reading

A Key to Guide the Reading:

Our meditation is on the parable of the ten virgins. In His parables, Jesus loves to make use of well-known facts in the life of the people as a means of comparison to clarify some unknown aspect of the Realm of God. In the parable of the ten virgins, He builds a story around the different attitudes of the girls who accompany the bridegroom on the feast day of his wedding. Jesus uses this fact, which is well known to all, in order to shed light on the event of the sudden coming of the Realm of God in people's lives. Generally, Jesus does not explain His parables but says: "Let him who has ears to hear, understand!" Or "So it is. You have heard! Now try to understand." He provokes people, so that known facts of daily life might help them discover God's promptings in their lives. He involves His listeners in the discovery of the meaning of the parable. The experience that each person has of the facts of life as told in the parable, contributes to the discovery of the meaning of Jesus' parable. This shows that Jesus trusted in people's ability to understand. They become co-owners of the meaning. At the end of the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus says, "Watch, therefore, because you do not know the day or the hour". This final warning serves as a key to the reading. It shows the direction of Jesus' thinking. In this reading we should seek to discover the central point of this parable that Jesus uses as a comparison for the Realm of God.

A Division of the Text to Help with the Reading:

Mt 25:1-4: The different attitudes of the girls who accompany the bridegroom: five wise and five foolish.
Mt 25: 5-6: The delay in the coming of the bridegroom and his sudden arrival in the night.
Mt 25: 7-9: The different attitudes of the wise and the foolish.
Mt 25: 10-12: The different outcome for the wise and the foolish.
Mt 25: 13: The conclusion of the parable.

Gospel Text – Matthew 25: 1-13

1-4: Then the kingdom of Heaven will be like this: ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones, though they took their lamps, took no oil with them, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. **5-6:** The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him."**7-9:** Then all those virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves."**10-12:** They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other attendants arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "In truth I tell you, I do not

know you."**13:** So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.

A Moment of Prayerful Silence

so that the Word of God may enter into us and enlighten our life.

Some Questions

to help us in our personal reflection.

- What did you like best in the parable and what caught your attention? Why?
- What is the context of people's daily life that Jesus stresses in this parable?
- From the start, Jesus distinguishes between "wise" and "foolish". What is the meaning of wisdom and of foolishness?
- How can we interpret the bridegroom's harsh reply: "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you"?
- Of what day and which hour is Jesus speaking at the end of the parable?

A Key to the Reading

for those who wish to go deeper into the text.

The Context Within which Matthew Records Jesus' Words

Matthew's Gospel has two kinds of parables. Those that help in the understanding of the Realm of God as present in Jesus' activities, and those that help us prepare for the future coming of the Realm. The first are more frequent in the early apostolic life of Jesus. The latter are more frequent in the second half when it is clear that Jesus will be persecuted, apprehended, and killed by the civil and religious authorities. In other words, both dimensions of the Realm are to be found in the parables:

1) the Realm already present, here and now, hidden in the daily events of life and which may be discovered and appreciated by us, and

2) the future Realm still to come and for which each one of us must prepare starting now. The tension between the already and the not yet pervades the life of the Christian.

Christmas is at once a celebration of the Realm already present and the anticipation of the Realm that is still to come.

A Commentary on Jesus' Words as Recorded in Matthew

- Matthew 25: 1-4: The different attitudes of the girls who accompany the bridegroom: five wise and five foolish. Jesus begins the parable with the

words: "The kingdom of heaven will be like this..." This means that the parable of the ten virgins is about the future coming of the Realm for which we must prepare starting now. In order to shed light on this dimension of the Realm, Jesus uses the well-known custom of inviting some young girls of the village to accompany the bridegroom to the wedding feast. They had to accompany the bridegroom with lighted lamps. But the lamps were small and the oil they contained was sufficient only for a limited time. That is why it was prudent for each to take with her a little oil in reserve since the journey with the bridegroom could take longer than the limited time the oil in the lamps would last.

The following is what is implied in this story of the ten virgins: those who accept an assignment must prepare themselves according to the requirements of that assignment. The young girl, who accepts to be lady in waiting at a wedding must do what is required for this function. She must be far-sighted and carry the oil needed for the lamp. Those who undertake a trip of 100 kilometers on a road that has no petrol stations, and who know that, and leave with petrol for only 50 kilometers, are neither prudent nor far-sighted. People will say: "Silly, they have no brains".

- Matthew 25: 5-6: The delay of the bridegroom and his sudden arrival in the night. The sequence of events told by Jesus is quite normal. It is night and the bridegroom is delayed. The girls, with every good intention and without meaning to fall asleep. They try to stay awake because the bridegroom might come at any moment. Suddenly a cry goes up! "The bridegroom is coming!" It is the signal they were all awaiting. It is at this critical moment that a person's values are revealed. The things that happen to us suddenly, independent of our will, show whether we are far-sighted or foolish.
- Matthew 25: 7-9: The different attitudes of the wise and the foolish. When they awake, the girls begin to prepare the lamps they need to make light on the road. It was time to add some oil because the lamps were running low. The girls who did not bring oil with them in reserve ask to borrow some from those who had brought oil. These reply that they cannot give them any oil, because then both of them would not have enough. If it was just a question of making light for the road, the wise ones could have said: walk beside us and you will be able to see where you go. But it was not a question of just making light for the road. The lamps were also a festive sign and to make light for the bridegroom on his arrival. This was the task of these ladies in waiting. Each would hold a lamp in her hand. At the critical moment, the foolish girls ask for a share. They ask that the wise share the oil with them. Often, a parable makes only one point.

  Sharing was a very important and fundamental practice among the people of God. But in this case, it was not a question of sharing, because had the wise ones shared their oil, they would have caused harm to the bridegroom and spoiled the wedding feast. Neither they nor the others would have fulfilled the function which they had accepted. That is why the wise meet the request of the foolish negatively and offer realistic advice: "Buy some yourselves!"

However, it was already midnight and it would have been difficult to find a shop open.

- Matthew 25: 10-12: The different outcome for the wise and the foolish. While the foolish girls went to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived and those who were prepared went into the wedding feast with him and the door was closed. In the parable, the foolish girls found a shop open and bought some oil. Late as they were, they come and cry: "Open the door for us!" The bridegroom (at least, it seems that it is he) answers harshly: "In truth I tell you, I do not know you.
- Matthew 25: 13: Conclusion: Watchfulness. The conclusion applied by Jesus Himself at the end of the story is a phrase that may be seen as the key to the whole parable: "Stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour!" God can come at any time during our lives. Everyone must be prepared. Like the young girls at the wedding feast, everyone must be prudent and show foresight and carry sufficient oil. There is a personal responsibility, even within the context of community.

  One cannot “borrow” good works from the community when the time comes. Everyone must stay on guard in the service of God and neighbor because you know not the time the bridegroom will arrive.

To round off: How can we explain the harsh phrase: "I do not know you!"? We suggest two possible answers:-- Many parables contain something strange: the father who does not scold the prodigal son, the shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to look for the one, the Samaritan who behaves better than the priest and the Levite, etc. Usually, these strange or surprising aspects hide an important key for the discovery of the central point of the parable. In the parable of the ten virgins there are some strange things that do not usually happen: 1) There are no shops open at night, 2) The door is not usually closed at a wedding feast, 3) Normally, the bridegroom would never say: I do not know you. It is through these strange matters that the central thread of the teaching of the parable runs through. What is that? "Listen! Anyone who has ears."-- The bridegroom in the parable is Jesus Himself who arrives late at night. It is what the context of other texts in the Gospels and in the Old Testament implies. In His conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus says that she had five husbands and the one she had now, the sixth, is not her true husband. The *seventh* is Jesus, the real spouse (Jn 4: 16-18). While the bridegroom is with His disciples they need not fast (Mk 2: 19-20). From the time of the prophet Hosea, in the 8th century before Christ, there grew in the people a hope of being able to one day come to an intimacy with God like that between bridegroom and bride (Hos 2: 19-20). Isaiah says clearly: God wishes to be the husband of the people (Is 54: 5; Jer 3: 14), to rejoice with His people as a bridegroom rejoices in the presence of His bride (Is 62: 5). This hope is realized in the coming of Jesus. When Jesus enters the life of a person, all else must withdraw because He is the bridegroom. This view of the story and the centuries long hope of the people helps us to understand the meaning of the harsh phrase of the bridegroom: "I do no know you!" Jesus also uses denial as a means to differentiate those not

prepared for the Kingdom, as in Mt 10: 33, *whoever will have denied me before men, I also will deny before my Father, who is in heaven*. Because of the lack of commitment and seriousness, the five foolish girls clearly show that they were not ready yet to commit themselves definitively to wed God. They needed some more time to prepare themselves: "Watch, because you do not know the day or the hour".

Psalm 63: 2-9

God's Desire

O God, thou art my God, I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee; my flesh faints for thee, as in a dry and weary land where no water is. So I have looked upon thee in the sanctuary, beholding thy power and glory. Because thy steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise thee.

So I will bless thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on thy name. My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat, and my mouth praises thee with joyful lips, when I think of thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the watches of the night; for thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy.

My soul clings to thee; thy right hand upholds me.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice that which your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, your mother, not only listen to, but also practice the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.
Amen.

Monday, November 9, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm. Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do Your work on earth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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 was His body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the scripture and what He had said.

Reflection

Context. Our passage contains a clear and unmistakable teaching of Jesus in the temple. Previously John the Baptist had given witness of Jesus saying that He was the Messiah (Jn 1: 29). The first disciples, on the indication of the Baptist, have recognized Him as the Lamb of God. A quality of the Messiah: to inaugurate a new Passover and covenant and bring about the definitive liberation of mankind (Jn 1: 35-51) In Cana, Jesus works a first sign to show His glory (Jn 2: 1-12). The glory becomes visible. It can be contemplated, and, therefore it manifests itself. It is the glory of the Father present in the person of Jesus which manifests itself at the beginning of His activity in this way, anticipating His “hour” (Jn 17: 1).
In what way is His glory manifested? God gratuitously restores a new relationship with mankind. He unites mankind intimately to Him giving mankind the capacity to love as He loves, through the Spirit who purifies the human heart and makes him son of God. But, it is necessary to recognize the immutable love of God, manifested in Jesus, responding with faith, with a personal adherence.• Jesus and the Temple. Now Jesus is in the temple in Jerusalem fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi (Mal 3: 1-3). He proclaims Himself Messiah. His teaching produces tension.
Now the reader understands why the great disputes with the Jews always take place in the temple, where Jesus pronounces His substantial denunciations. His task is to lead the people outside the temple (2: 15; 10: 4). In the last instance Jesus was condemned because He represented a danger to the temple and for the people. Jesus goes to Jerusalem on the occasion of the Passover of the Jews to manifest Himself in public and to reveal to all that He is the Messiah. During that feast Jerusalem is full of pilgrims who have come from all parts, and therefore His actions would have had a great effect on the whole of Palestine. When He arrives in Jerusalem, He immediately is seen in the temple where there are a number of people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there. The encounter in the temple is not with people who seek God but dealers of the sacred. The amount paid to be able to open a stand in order to be able to sell was given to the high priest. Jesus chooses this occasion (the Passover) this place (the temple) to give a sign. He takes a whip, an instrument which was a symbol of the Messiah who punishes vices and evil

practices, and He drives out these people from the temple, together with the cattle and sheep. It is worthy to note His act against those selling the doves (v. 15). The dove was an animal used for the propitiatory holocausts (Lev 9: 14-17), in the sacrifices of expiation and of purification (Lev 12: 8; 15: 14, 29), and especially if those who offered it were poor (Lev 5: 7; 14: 22, 30 ff). The sellers, those who sold the doves, sold reconciliation with God for money. The house of my Father.
The expression wants to indicate that Jesus in His actions behaves as a Son. He represents the Father in the world. They have transformed the worship of God into a market, a place for trading. The temple is no longer the place of encounter with God, but a market where the presence of money is in force. Worship has become the pretext to gain more. Jesus attacks the central institution of Israel, the temple, the symbol of the people and of the election. He denounces that the temple has been deprived of its historical function, to be the sign of the dwelling of God in the midst of His people.
The first reaction to Jesus' action comes from the disciples who associate this with Psalm 69: 10: "I am eaten up with zeal for your house". The second reaction comes from the high priests who respond in the name of those selling in the temple: "What sign can you show us that you should act like this?" (v.18). They have asked Him for a sign and He gives them that of His death. "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up" (v. 19).
Jesus is the Temple that is an assurance of the presence of God in the world. The presence of His love and the death on the cross will make of Him the only and definitive Temple of God. The temple constructed by human hands has fallen into decay. Jesus will be the one to replace it, because He is now the presence of God in the world as the Father is present in Him.

Personal Questions

- Have you understood that the sign of love of God for you is no longer the temple but a Person: Jesus crucified?
- Do you not know that this sign is given to you personally to bring about your definitive liberation?

Concluding Prayer

God is both refuge and strength for us, a help always ready in troubles o we shall not be afraid though the earth be in turmoil, though mountains tumble into the depths of the sea. (Ps 46: 1-2)

Tuesday, November 10, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm. Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do your work on earth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 17: 7-10

Jesus said: "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.'"

Reflection

The Gospel today narrates the parable which is found only in Luke's Gospel and has no parallel in the other Gospels. The parable wants to teach that our life has to be characterized by an attitude of service. It begins with three questions and at the end Jesus himself gives the answer.

- Luke 17: 7-9: The three questions of Jesus. It treats of three questions taken from daily life, and therefore, the auditors have to think each one on his own experience to give a response according to that experience. The first question: "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?" All will answer: "No!" Second question: "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?" All will answer: "Yes! Certainly!" Third question: "Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told?" All will answer "No!" The way in which Jesus asks the questions, people become aware in which way he wants to orientate our thought. He wants us to be servants to one another.

- Luke 17: 10: The response of Jesus. At the end Jesus himself draws a conclusion which was already implicit in the questions: "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." Jesus himself has given us example when he said: "The Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve" (Mk 10: 45).

  Service is a theme which Luke likes. Service represents the form in which the poor in the time of Jesus, the *anawim*, were waiting for the Messiah: not like a king and glorious Messiah, high priest or judge, but rather as the Servant of Yahweh, announced by Isaiah (Is 42: 1-9). Mary, the Mother of Jesus, says to the Angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word!" (Lk 1: 38). In Nazareth, Jesus presents himself as the Servant described by Isaiah (Lk 4: 18-19 and Is 61: 1-2). In Baptism and in the Transfiguration, he was confirmed by the Father who quotes the words

addressed by God to the Servant (Lk 3: 22; 9: 35 and Is 42: 1). Jesus asks his followers: “Anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave” (Mt 20: 27). Useless servants! This is the definition of the Christian. Paul speaks about this to the members of the community of Corinth when he writes: “I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God gave growth. In this neither the planter nor the waterer counts for anything, only God who gave growth” (1Cor 3: 6-7). Paul and Apollos are nothing; only simple instruments, “Servants.” The only one who counts is God, He alone! (1Cor 3: 7).

- To serve and to be served. Here in this text, the servant serves the master and not the master the servant. But in the other text of Jesus the contrary is said: “Blessed those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. In truth, I tell you, he will do up his belt, sit them down at table and wait on them” (Lk 12: 37). In this text, the master serves the servant and not the servant the master. In the first text, Jesus spoke in the present. In the second text, Jesus is speaking in the future. This contrast is another way of saying: the one who is ready to lose his life out of love for Jesus and the Gospel will find it (Mt 10: 39; 16: 25). Anyone who serves God in this present life will be served by God in the future life!

Personal Questions

- How do I define my life?
- Do I ask myself the three questions of Jesus? Do I live, perhaps, like a useless servant?

Concluding Prayer

The lives of the just are in Yahweh's care, their birthright will endure forever. Yahweh guides a strong man's steps and keeps them firm; and takes pleasure in him. (Ps 37: 18, 23)

Wednesday, November 11, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm. Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do your work on earth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 17: 11-19

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

Reflection

In today’s Gospel, Luke gives an account of the cure of the ten lepers, of whom only one thanked Jesus. And he was a Samaritan! Gratitude is another theme which is very typical of Luke: to live in an attitude of gratitude and to praise God for everything which we receive from Him. This is why Luke says many times that people were admired and praised God for the things that Jesus did (Lk 2: 28, 38; 5: 25, 26; 7: 16; 13: 13; 17: 15: 18; 18: 43; 19: 37; etc). The Gospel of Luke gives us several canticles and hymns which express this experience of gratitude and of thanksgiving (Lk 1: 46-55; 1: 68-79; 2: 29-32).

- Luke 17: 11: Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. Luke recalls that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, passing through Samaria to go to Galilee. From the beginning of his journey (Lk 9: 52) up until now (Lk 17: 11), Jesus walks through Samaria. It is only now that he is leaving Samaria, passing through Galilee in order to reach Jerusalem. That means that the important teachings given in these last chapters from the 9th to the 17th were all given on a territory which was not Jewish. To hear that must have been a great joy for Luke’s communities, which were from Paganism. Jesus the pilgrim continues his journey toward Jerusalem. He continues to eliminate the differences or inequalities which men have created. He continues on the long and painful road of the periphery toward the capital city, from a religion closed up in itself toward an open religion which knows how to accept others as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Father. This openness is manifested also in the acceptance given to the ten lepers.
- Luke 17: 12-13: The calling out of the lepers. Ten lepers went close to Jesus; they stopped at a distance and called out: “Jesus, Master! Take pity on us!" The leper was a person who was excluded; was marginalized and despised; and had no right to live with the family. According to the law of purity, lepers had to go around with torn clothes and uncombed hair, calling out: “Impure! Impure!” (Lev 13: 45-46). For the lepers to look for a cure meant the same thing as to seek purity in order to be able to be integrated again into the

community. They could not get close to others (Lev 13: 45-46). Anyone who was touched by a leper became unclean and that prevented him from being able to address himself to God. By means of crying out they expressed their faith in Jesus who could cure them and give them back purity. To obtain purity meant to feel again accepted by God and be able to address him to receive the blessings promised to Abraham.

- Luke 17: 14: The response of Jesus and the cure. Jesus answered: "Go and show yourselves to the priest!" (cf. Mk 1: 44). The priest had to verify the cure and bear witness to the purity of the one who had been cured (Lev 14: 1-32). The response of Jesus demanded great faith on the part of the lepers. They had to go to the priest as if they had already been cured, when in reality their bodies continued to be covered with leprosy. But they believed in Jesus' word and went to the priest. And it happened that, along the way, the cure took place. They were purified. This cure recalls the story of the purification of Naaman from Syria (2 Kgs 5: 9-10). The prophet Elisha orders the man to go and wash in the Jordan. Namaan had to believe in the word of the prophet. Jesus orders the ten lepers to present themselves to the priests. They should believe in the word of Jesus.

- Luke 17: 15-16: Reaction of the Samaritan. "One of them, seeing himself cured, turned back praising God at the top of his voice; and threw himself prostrate at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan." Why did the others not return? Why only the Samaritan?

  According to the opinion of the Jews of Jerusalem, the Samaritan did not observe the law as he should. Among the Jews there was the tendency to observe the law in order to be able to merit or deserve or acquire justice. Thanks to the observance, they already had accumulated merits and credit before God. Gratitude and gratuity do not form part of the vocabulary of the persons who live their relationship with God in this way. Perhaps this is the reason why they do not thank God for the benefits received. In the parable of yesterday's Gospel, Jesus had formulated the same question: "Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told?" (Lk 17: 9) And the answer was: "No!" The Samaritan represents the persons who have a clear conscience that we, human beings, have no merits or rights before God. Everything is grace, beginning from the gift of one's own life!

- Luke 17: 17-19: The final observation of Jesus. Jesus observes: "Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God except this foreigner?" For Jesus, to thank the others for the benefit received is a way of rendering praise that is due to God. On this point, the Samaritans gave a lesson to the Jews. Today the poor are those who carry out the role of the Samaritan, and, help us to rediscover this dimension of gratuity of life. Everything that we receive should be considered as a gift from God who comes to us through the brother and the sister.

  The welcome given to the Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke. For Luke, the place which Jesus gave to the Samaritans is the same as that which the communities had to reserve for the pagans. Jesus presents a Samaritan as a

model of gratitude (Lk 17: 17-19) and of love toward neighbor (Lk 10: 30-33). This must have been quite shocking, because for the Jews, the Samaritans or pagans were the same thing. They could have no access inside the Temple of Jerusalem, nor participate in the worship. They were considered as bearers of impurity, they were impure from birth, from the cradle. For Luke, instead the Good News of Jesus is addressed in the first place to the persons of these groups who were considered unworthy to receive it. The salvation of God which reaches us through Jesus is purely a gift. It does not depend on the merits of anyone.

Personal Questions

- And you, do you generally thank persons? Do you thank out of conviction or simply because of custom? And in prayer: do you give thanks or do you forget?
- To live with gratitude is a sign of the presence of the Kingdom in our midst. How can we transmit to others the importance of living in gratitude and in gratuity?

Concluding Prayer

Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing. In grassy meadows he lets me lie.
By tranquil streams he leads me. (Ps 23: 1-2)

Thursday, November 12, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm. Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do your work on earth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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."

Reflection

Today's Gospel gives us the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees on the coming of the Kingdom. The Gospel today and that of the following days deal with the coming of the end of time.

- Luke 17: 20-21: The Kingdom is among you. "Asked when the Kingdom of God was to come?" Jesus answered: "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!'" The Pharisees thought that the Kingdom could come only after people would have reached the perfect observance of the Law of God. For them, the coming of the Kingdom would be the reward of God for the good behavior of people, and the Messiah would have come in a very solemn way as a king, received by his people. Jesus says the contrary. The coming of the Kingdom cannot be observed as the coming of an earthly king is observed. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God has already come! It is already among us, independently of our effort or merit. Jesus sees things in a different way. He has another way of reading life. He prefers the Samaritan who lives with gratitude to the nine who think that they merit the good that they receive from God (Lk 17: 17-19).
- Luke 17: 22-24: The signs to recognize the coming of the Son of Man. "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 lightening flashing from one part of heaven lights up the other, so will be the Son of Man when his Day comes." In this affirmation of Jesus there are elements that are taken from the apocalyptic vision of history, quite common in the first centuries and after Jesus. The apocalyptic vision of history has the following characteristic: in the time of great persecutions and of oppression, the poor have the impression that God loses control of history. They feel lost, without a horizon and without any hope of liberation. In those moments of apparent absence of God, prophecy assumes the form of apocalypse. The apocalyptic, seek to enlighten the desperate situation with the light of faith to help the people not to lose hope and to continue to have courage on the way. To show that God does not lose control of history, they describe the different stages of the realization of the project of God through history.

  Begun in a determinate significant moment in the past, this project of God advances, stage after stage, through the situations lived by the poor, until the final victory is obtained at the end of history. In this way, the apocalyptic place the present moment like a stage which has already been foreseen in the overall project of God. Generally, the last stage, before the coming of the end is represented like a moment of suffering and of crisis, of which many have tried to profit to deceive people saying: "They will tell you: Look it is here, or look it is there; do not move, do not follow them. Because like lightening

flashing from one part of heaven lights up the other, so will be the Son of man when his Day comes." Having the eyes of faith which Jesus communicates, the poor can perceive that the Kingdom is already among them (Lk 17: 21), like lightening, without any doubt. The coming of the Kingdom brings with it its own evidence and does not depend on the forecast or prediction of others.

- Luke 17: 25: By the Cross up to the Glory. "But first he is destined to suffer grievously and be rejected by this generation." Always the same warning: the Cross, scandal for the Jews and foolishness for the Greek, but for us the expression of the wisdom and the power of God (1 Cor 1: 18-23). The path toward the glory passes through the Cross. The life of Jesus is our canon, it is the canonical norm for all of us.

Personal Questions

- Jesus said: "The Kingdom is in your midst!" Have you already found some sign of the Kingdom in your life, in the life of your nation or in the life of your community?
- The cross in our life. Suffering. How do you consider or see suffering? What do you do about it?

Concluding Prayer

He keeps faith forever, gives justice to the oppressed, gives food to the hungry; Yahweh sets prisoners free. (Ps 146: 6-7)

Friday, November 13, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm. Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do your work on earth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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."

Reflection

Today's Gospel continues the reflection on the coming of the end of time and presents to us the words of Jesus about how to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Kingdom. This was an affair which produced much discussion at that time. God is the one who determines the hour of the coming of the end of time. But the time of God (*kairós*) is not measured according to the time of our clock (*chronos*). For God one day can be equal to one thousand years, and one thousand years equal to one day (Ps 90: 4; 2 Pt 3: 8). The time of God goes by invisibly in our time, but independently of us and of our time. We cannot interfere in time, but we have to be prepared for the moment in which the hour of God becomes present in our time. It could be today; it could be in one thousand years. What gives us security is not to know the hour of the end of the world, but the certainty of the presence of the Words of Jesus present in our life. The world will pass, but the word of God will never pass (cf. Is 40: 7-8).

- Luke 17: 26-29: "As it was in the day of Noah and of Lot. Life goes by normally: eating, drinking, getting married, buying, selling, sowing, harvesting. Routine can include so much that we do not succeed to think about anything else. And the consumerism of the neo-liberal system contributes to increase in many of us that total lack of attention to the more profound dimensions of life. We allow the moths to enter into the beam of faith which holds up the more profound dimensions of life. When the storm destroys the house, many of us blame the carpenter: "It was badly made!" In reality, it crumbled down due to our continual lack of attention. The reference to the destruction of Sodom, as a figure of what will happen at the end of time, is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the years 70s AD (cf. Mk 13: 14).
- Luke 17: 30-32: So, it will also be in the days of the Son of Man. "So, it will be in the days when the Son of Man will reveal himself." It is difficult for us to imagine the suffering and the trauma that the destruction of Jerusalem caused in the communities, both of the Jews and of the Christians. In order to help them to understand and to face this suffering Jesus uses a comparison taken from life: "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." The destruction will take place so rapidly that it is not worthwhile to go down to look for something in the house (Mk 13: 15-

16). “Remember Lot’s wife” (cf. Gn 19: 26), that is do not look back, do not lose time, decide and advance, go ahead: it is a question of life or death.

- Luke 17: 33: To lose one’s life in order to save it. “Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose it, and anyone who loses it will keep it safe.” Only the person who has been capable of giving himself/herself completely to others will feel totally fulfilled in life. Anyone who preserves life for self alone loses it. This advice of Jesus is the confirmation of the most profound human experience: the source of life is found in the gift of life. In giving one receives. “In all truth I tell you: unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain, but if it dies it yields a rich harvest” (Jn 12: 24). The motivation which Mark’s Gospel adds is important: “for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel” (Mk 8: 35). Saying that no one is capable of preserving his life by his own efforts, Jesus recalls the Psalm in which it is said that nobody is capable of paying the price for the ransom of his life: “No one can redeem himself or pay his own ransom to God. The price for himself is too high, it can never be that he will live on forever and avoid the sight of the abyss.” (Ps 49: 8-10).
- Luke 17: 34-36: Vigilance. “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.” This recalls the parable of the ten Virgins. Five were prudent and five were foolish (Mt 25: 1-11). What is important is to be prepared. The words “One will be taken and the other left” recall the words of Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Th 4: 13-17), when he says that with the coming of the Son of Man, we will be taken to Heaven at the side of Jesus. These words “left behind” furnished the title of a terrible and dangerous romance of the fundamentalist extreme right of the United States: “Left Behind! This is a romance which has nothing to do with the real sense of the words of Jesus.
- Luke 17: 37: Where and when? “The disciples asked: Where, Lord?” “And Jesus answered: body is, there too will the vultures gather.” This is an enigmatic response. Some think that Jesus recalled the prophecy of Ezekiel, taken up in the Apocalypse, in which the prophet refers to the final victorious battle against the force of evil. The birds of prey or the vultures will be invited to eat the flesh of the bodies (Ez 39: 4, 17-20; Rev 19: 17-18). Others think that it is a question of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where the final judgment will take place according to the prophecy of Joel (Gal 4: 2-12). Others think that it is simply a question of a popular proverb which meant more or less what our proverb says: “Where there is smoke, there is also fire!”

Personal Questions

- Am I from the time of Noah or from the time of Lot?
- A Romance of the extreme right. How do I place myself before this political manipulation of the faith in Jesus?

Concluding Prayer

How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of Yahweh! Blessed are those who observe his instructions, who seek him with all their hearts. (Ps 119: 1-2)

Saturday, November 14, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm.
Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do your work on earth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 18: 1-8

Jesus said to 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?"

Reflection

Today's Gospel presents an element which is very dear to Luke: Prayer. This is the second time that Luke gives us the words of Jesus to teach us to pray. The first time (Lk 11: 1-13), he taught us the Our Father and, by means of comparisons and parables, he taught that we have to pray insistently, without getting tired. Now, this second time, (Lk 18: 1-8), again he has recourse to a parable taken from life so as to teach us insistence in prayer. It is the parable of the widow who pestered the judge who was unscrupulous. The way in which he presents the parable is very didactic. In the first place, Luke presents a brief introduction which serves as the key for the reading. Then he narrates the parable. At the end, Jesus himself explains it:

- Luke 18: 1: The introduction. Luke presents the parable with the following phrase: "Then he told them a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart". The recommendation "to pray without losing heart"

appears many times in the New Testament (1 Th 5: 17; Rm 12: 12; Eph 6: 18; etc). And it is a characteristic of the spirituality of the first Christian communities.

- Luke 18:2-5: The parable. Then Jesus presents two personages of real life: a judge who had no consideration for God and no consideration for others, and a widow who struggles to obtain her rights from the judge. The simple fact of indicating these two personages reveals the critical conscience which he had regarding the society of his time. The parable presents the poor people who struggle in the tribunal to obtain their rights. The judge decides to pay attention to the widow and to do justice. The reason is the following: in order to free himself from the widow who is pestering him and to get rid of her. This is a quite interesting reason. But the widow obtained what she wanted! This is a fact of daily life, which Jesus uses to teach to pray.
- Luke 18: 6-8: the application. Jesus applies the parable: "You notice what the unjust judge has said. 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? Will he make them wait long? I tell you he will see justice done to them and done speedily". If it had not been Jesus we would not have had the courage to compare Jesus to an unjust judge! And at the end Jesus expresses a doubt: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Or rather, will we have the courage to wait, to have patience, even if God delays in doing what we ask him?
- Jesus in prayer. The first Christians had an image of Jesus in prayer, in permanent contact with the Father. In fact, the breathing of the life of Jesus was to do the Will of the Father (Jn 5: 19). Jesus prayed very much and insisted, in order that people and his disciples also pray. And this because it is in confronting oneself with God that truth emerges and the person finds himself/herself in his/her whole reality and humility. Luke is the Evangelist who gives us more information on the life of prayer of Jesus. He presents Jesus in constant prayer. The following are some moments in which Jesus appears praying. You, all of you can complete the list:
    - When he was twelve years old and goes to the Temple, to the House of the Father (Lk 2: 46- 50).
    - He prays when he is baptized and in assuming his mission (Lk 3: 21).
    - At the beginning of the mission, he spends forty days in the desert (Lk 4: 1-2).
    - At the hour of temptation, he faces the devil with the texts from Scripture (Lk 4: 3-12).
    - Jesus used to participate in the celebration in the Synagogue on Saturday (Lk 4: 16).
    - He seeks solitude in the desert to pray (Lk 5: 16; 9: 18).
    - Before choosing the twelve Apostles, he spends the night in prayer (Lk 6: 12).
    - He prays before meals (Lk 9: 16; 24: 30).

    - He prays before the Passion and when facing reality (Lk 9: 18).
    - In time of crises, he goes up to the mountain and is transfigured when he prays (Lk 9: 28)
    - When he revealed the Gospel to the little ones he says: "Father, I thank you!" (Lk 10: 21).
    - In praying, he arouses in the Apostles the desire to pray (Lk 11: 1).
    - He prays for Peter so that he does not lose his faith (Lk 22: 32).
    - He celebrates the Paschal Supper with his disciples (Lk 22: 7-14).
    - In the Garden of Olives, he prays, even when sweating blood (Lk 22: 41-42).
    - In the anguish of the agony, he asks his friends to pray with him (Lk 22: 40, 46).
    - At the moment when he was being nailed to the Cross, he asks pardon for the murderers (Lk 23: 34).
    - At the hour of death, he says: "Into your hands I commend my spirit!" (Lk 23: 46; Ps 31: 6)
    - Jesus dies crying out with the cry of the poor (Lk 23: 46).
- This long list indicates everything which follows. For Jesus prayer is intimately linked to life, to concrete facts, to the decisions which he had to take. In order to be able to be faithful to the project of the Father, he sought to remain alone with Him. He listened to Him. In difficult and decisive moments in his life, Jesus recited Psalms. Just as any devout Jew, he knew them by heart. The recitation of the Psalms did not take away his creativity. Rather, Jesus himself created a Psalm which he transmitted to us: the Our Father. His life is a permanent prayer: "I always seek the will of the one who sent me!" (Jn 5:1 9, 30) To him is applied what the Psalm says: "I am prayer!" (Ps 109: 4)

Personal Questions

- There are people who say that they do not know how to pray, but they speak with God the whole day! Do you know any such persons? Tell us. There are many ways in which today people express their devotion and pray. Which are they?
- What do these two parables teach us on prayer? What do they teach me regarding the way of seeing life and persons?

Concluding Prayer

How blessed is anyone who fears Yahweh, who delights in his commandments! His descendants shall be powerful on earth, the race of the honest shall receive blessings. (Ps 112: 1-2)

Sunday, November 15, 2026

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, send your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that you read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, you helped them to discover the presence of God in the disturbing events of your sentence and death. Thus, the cross that seemed to be the end of all hope became for them the source of life and of resurrection.
Create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples from Emmaus, may experience the force of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace. We ask this of you, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed to us the Father and sent us your Spirit. Amen.

Reading

The Division of the Text to Help in the Reading:

- Matthew 25: 14-15: The master distributes his goods among his servants
- Matthew 25: 16-18: The way of acting of each servant
- Matthew 25: 19-23: The rendering of account of the first and second servant
- Matthew 25: 24-25: The rendering of account of the third servant
- Matthew 25: 26-27: Response of the master to the third servant
- Matthew 25: 28-30: The final word of the master which clarifies the parable

Key for the Reading:

In this 33rd Sunday of the Ordinary Time we shall meditate on the Parable of the Talents which deals with two very important themes and very up to date: (i) The gifts which each person receives from God and the way in which he receives them. Each person has qualities, talents, with which he can and should serve others. Nobody is only a pupil, nobody is only a professor. We learn from one another. (ii) The attitude with which persons place themselves before God who has given us his gift. During the reading, we shall try to be very attentive to these two points: which is the attitude of the three servants regarding the gifts received and which is the image of God that this parable reveals to us?

Gospel Text – Matthew 25: 14-30

“It is like a man about to go abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one, each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out on his journey. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.
Now a long time afterwards, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.’
Next the man with the two talents came forward. ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.’
Last came forward the man who had the single talent. ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you had not sown and gathering where you had not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back.’
But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have got my money back with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.’"

A Moment of Prayerful Silence

so that the Word of God may penetrate and enlighten our life.

Some Questions

... to help us in our personal reflection.

- Which is the point of this text which has pleased me the most and which has struck me more? Why?
- In the parable the three servants receive according to their capacity. Which is the attitude of each one of them concerning the gift received?
- Which is the reaction of the master? What does he demand from his servants?

- How should the following phrase be understood: “To everyone who has will be given more and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not will be deprived even of what he has”?
- What image of God does the parable reveal to us?

For Those Who Wish to Deepen the Theme

Context of our Text in the Gospel of Matthew:

The “Parable of the Talents” (Mt 25: 14-30) forms part of the 5th Sermon of the New Law (Mt 24: 1-25: 46). These three parables clarify the context relative to the time of the coming of the Kingdom. the parable of the Ten Virgins insists on vigilance: The Kingdom of God can arrive from one moment to the next. The parable of the talents orientates on the growth of the Kingdom: the Kingdom grows when we use the gifts received to serve. The parable of the Final Judgment teaches how to take possession of the Kingdom: the Kingdom is accepted, when we accept the little ones.
One of the things which exercise greater influence in our life is the idea that we have of God. Among the Jews of the class of the Pharisees, some imagined God as a severe Judge who treated the persons according to the merits acquired by the observance of the law. That caused fear and prevented the persons from growing. It prevented them from opening a space within themselves to accept the new experience of God which Jesus communicated. To help these persons, Matthew narrates the parable of the talents.

Commentary on the Text:

- Matthew 25: 14-15: A door to enter into the story of the parable

  The parable tells the story of a man, who before setting out on a journey, distributes his goods to his servants, giving five, two and one talent, according to the capacity of each one of them. A talent corresponds to 34 kilos of gold, which is not a small amount! In the last instance, all receive the same thing, because each one receives “according to his capacity,” The one who has a big cup he fills it, the one who has a small cup, he also fills it. Then the master goes abroad and remains there a long time. The story leaves us a bit perplexed! We do not know why the master distributed his money to the servants, we do not know which will be the end of the story. Perhaps the purpose is that all those who listen to the parable must begin to confront their life with the story told in the parable.

- Matthew 25: 16-18: The way of acting of each servant.

  The first two servants worked and doubled the talents. But the one who received one talent buries it, to keep it well and not lose it. It is a question of the goods of the Kingdom which are given to persons and to communities according to their capacity. All receive some goods of the Kingdom, but not all respond in the same way!

- Matthew 25: 19-23: The rendering of account of the first and second servant

After a long time, the master returns to take an account from the servants. The first two say the same thing: "Sir, you gave me five / two talents. Here are other five / two which I have gained!"

And the master responds in the same way to both: "Well done, good and trustworthy servant, you have shown that you are trustworthy in small things, I will trust you with greater, come and join in your master's happiness."

- Matthew 25: 24-25: Rendering of an account of the third servant

  The third servant arrives and says: "Sir, I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you had not sown and gathering where you had not scattered, so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is, it was yours, you have it back!" In this phrase there is an erroneous idea of God which is criticized by Jesus. The servant sees in God a severe master. Before such a God, the human being is afraid and hides himself behind the exact and meticulous observance of the law. He thinks that acting in this way he will avoid the judgment and that the severity of the legislator will not punish him. This is how some Pharisees thought. In reality, such a person has no trust in God, though he trusts in himself and in his observance of the law. It is a person closed up in himself, far from God and does not succeed to be concerned about others. This person becomes incapable of growing like a free person. This false image of God isolates the human being, kills the community, does not help to live in joy and impoverishes life.

- Matthew 25: 26-27: Response of the master to the third servant

  The response of the master is ironic. He says: "You wicked and lazy servant! So, you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well, then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have got my money back with interest!" The third servant was not coherent with the severe image which he had of God. If he had imagined God so severe, he would, at least, have deposited the money in the bank. This is why he was condemned not by God, but by the wrong idea which he had of God and which left him more terrified and immature than he was. It was not possible for him to be coherent having the image of God which he had, because fear paralyses life.

- Matthew 25: 28-30: The final word of the master which clarifies the parable

  The master asks that the talent be taken away from him and given to the one who already has: For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has." This is the key which clarifies everything. In reality, the talents, "the money of the master," the goods of the Kingdom, are the love, service, sharing, the gratuitous gift. A talent is everything that makes the community grow and which reveals the presence of God. When one is closed in oneself out of fear of losing the little that one has, one loses even that little that one has, because love dies, justices is weakened, sharing disappears. Instead, the person who does not think in self and gives himself to others, grows and, surprisingly, receives everything which he has given and much more.

"Because anyone who finds his life will lose it, but anyone who loses his own life for my sake will find it." (Mt 10: 39)

Deepening:

The Different Currency of the Kingdom:
There is no difference between those who receive more and those who receive less. All receive according to their capacity. What is important is that the gift is placed at the service of the Kingdom and that it makes the goods of the Kingdom grow, which are love, fraternity, sharing. The principal key of the parable does not consist in producing talents but indicates the way in which it is necessary to live our relationship with God.
The first two servants ask for nothing, they do not seek their own well-being, they do not keep the talents for themselves, they make no calculations, they do not measure. Very naturally, almost without being aware and without seeking any merit for themselves, they begin to work, in order that the gift received bears fruit for God and for the Kingdom.
The third servant is afraid and, because of this, does nothing. According to the norms of the ancient law, he acts in a correct way. He remains within the established exigencies. He loses nothing, but neither does he gain anything. Because of this he loses even what he had. The Kingdom is a risk. The one who does not want to run risks, loses the Kingdom!

Psalm 62

In God Alone There is Rest for My Soul

In God alone there is rest for my soul, from him comes my safety:
he alone is my rock, my safety,
my stronghold so that I stand unshaken. How much longer will you set on a victim, all together, intent on murder,
like a rampart already leaning over, a wall already damaged? Trickery is their only plan, deception their only pleasure,
with lies on their lips they pronounce a blessing, with a curse in their hearts.
Rest in God alone, my soul! He is the source of my hope.
He alone is my rock, my safety, my stronghold, so that I stand unwavering. In God is my safety and my glory, the rock of my strength.
In God is my refuge;
trust in him, you people, at all times. Pour out your hearts to him, God is a refuge for us.
Ordinary people are a mere puff of wind, important people a delusion; set both on the scales together,
and they are lighter than a puff of wind. Put no trust in extortion, no empty hopes in robbery;
however, much wealth may multiply, do not set your heart on it. Once God has spoken, twice have I heard this:
Strength belongs to God, to you, Lord, faithful love; and you repay everyone as their deeds deserve.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice that which your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, your mother, not only listen to but also practice the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Monday, November 16, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Father of all that is good,
keep us faithful in serving you, for to serve you is our lasting joy.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 18: 35-43

Now it happened that 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.

Reflection

The Gospel today describes the arrival of Jesus to Jericho. It is the last stop before going up to Jerusalem, where the “Exodus” of Jesus will take place, according to what he announced in his Transfiguration (Lk 9: 31) and along the way up to Jerusalem (Lk 9: 44; 18: 31-33).

- Luke 18: 35-37: The blind man sitting on the side of the road. “Now it happened that as Jesus drew near to Jericho, there was a blind man sitting on the side of the road begging. When he heard the crowd going past he asked what it was all about. They told him that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by”. In the Gospel of Mark, the blind man is called Bartimaeus (Mk 10: 46). Since he was blind, he could not participate in the procession which accompanied Jesus. At that time, there were many blind people in Palestine, because the strong

sun which hit the whitened rocky earth hurt the eyes which were not protected.

- Luke 18: 38-39: The cry of the blind man and the reaction of the people. “Then he began to cry out: Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!” He calls Jesus using the title “Son of David”. The catechism of that time taught that the Messiah would be of the descent of David, “Son of David”, a glorious Messiah. Jesus did not like this title. In quoting the Messianic Psalm, he asks himself: “How is it that the Messiah can be the son of David if even David calls him “My Lord?” (Lk 20: 41-44) The cry of the blind man bothers the people who accompany Jesus. Because of this, “The people in front scolded him and told him to keep quiet. They tried to stop him but he only shouted all the louder, Son of David have pity on me!” Even up to our time the cry of the poor bothers the established society: migrants, beggars, refugees, sick with AIDS, and so many!
- Luke 18: 40-41: The reaction of Jesus before the cry of the blind man. And what does Jesus do? “Jesus stopped and ordered them to bring the man to him.” Those who wanted to stop the blind man from shouting because this bothered them, now asked by Jesus, are obliged to help the poor man to get to Jesus. The Gospel of Mark adds that the blind man left everything and went to Jesus. He did not have too much; only his mantle. That is what he possessed to cover his body (cf. Es 22: 25-26). That was his security! That was his land! Today, also, Jesus listens to the cry of the poor which, we, many times do not want to hear. “When he came up to Jesus, he asked him: What do you want me to do for you?” It is not sufficient to shout or cry out, it is necessary to know why he is shouting! The blind man answers: “Lord that I may see again”.
- Luke 18: 42-43: Go! Your faith has saved you! “And Jesus says: Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you.” Immediately he recovered his sight and began to follow Jesus praising God. And all the people, when they saw that, praised God.” The blind man had called Jesus with an idea which was not totally correct, because the title “Son of David” was not completely correct. But he had greater faith in Jesus than in his ideas about Jesus. He did not demand anything like Peter did (Mk 8: 32-33). He knew how to give his life accepting Jesus without imposing any conditions. Healing is the fruit of his faith in Jesus. Once he was cured, he follows Jesus and walks along with Him toward Jerusalem. In this way he becomes a model disciple for all of us who want “to follow Jesus along the road” toward Jerusalem: to believe more in Jesus and not so much in our ideas about Jesus! In this decision to walk with Jesus is found the source of courage and the seed of the victory on the cross. Because the cross is not something fatal, but it is an experience of God. It is the consequence of the commitment of Jesus, in obedience to the Father, to serve the brothers and not to accept privileges!
- Faith is a force which transforms the person. The Good News of the Kingdom announced by Jesus was a sort of fertilizer. It made the seed of life hidden in people to grow; that seed hidden like the fire under the ashes of observance without life. Jesus blew on the ashes and the fire lit up. The Kingdom appears and the people rejoice. The condition was always the same: to believe in Jesus.

The cure of the blind man clarifies a very important aspect of our faith. Even calling Jesus with ideas which are not completely correct, the blind man had faith and he was cured. He was converted; he left everything behind and followed Jesus along the road toward Calvary! The full understanding of the following of Jesus is not obtained from a theoretical instruction, but rather from a practical commitment, walking together with Him along the way of service, from Galilee to Jerusalem. Anyone who insists in keeping the idea of Peter, that is, of the glorious Messiah without a cross, will understand nothing of Jesus and will not succeed in attaining the attitude of a true disciple of Jesus. Anyone who knows how to believe in Jesus and gives himself (Lk 9: 23-24), anyone who knows how to accept to be last (Lk 22: 26), who knows how to drink the chalice and to carry his/her own cross (Mt 20: 22; Mk 10: 38), this one, like the blind man, even not having ideas completely correct, will succeed "to follow Jesus along the way" (Lk 18: 43). In this certainty of walking together with Jesus is found the source of courage and the seed of victory on the cross.

Personal Questions

- How do I see and hear the cry of the poor: migrants, Negroes, sick of AIDS, beggars, refugees, and so many others?
- How is my faith: am I more fixed on my ideas about Jesus or on Jesus?

Concluding Prayer

How blessed is anyone who rejects the advice of the wicked and does not take a stand in the path that sinners tread,
nor a seat in company with cynics,
but who delights in the law of Yahweh
and murmurs his law, day and night. (Ps 1: 1-2)

Tuesday, November 17, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Father of all that is good,

keep us faithful in serving you, for to serve you is our lasting joy.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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."

Reflection

In today's Gospel we are reaching the end of the long journey which began in chapter 9 (Lk 9: 51). During the journey, it was not easy to know the way Jesus was following. It was only known that he was going toward Jerusalem! Now at the end, the geography was clear and definite. Jesus reaches Jericho, the city of the palm trees, in the Valley of Jordan. The last stop of the pilgrims, before going up toward Jerusalem! He went to Jericho where the long road of exodus of 40 years in the desert ended. The exodus of Jesus was also ended. In entering into Jericho, Jesus meets a blind man who wanted to see him (Lk 18: 35-43). Now in going out of the city, he meets Zacchaeus, a tax collector: he also wants to see him. A blind man and a Publican. Both of them were excluded. Both of them bothered and disturbed the people: the blind man because he was shouting out to Jesus, the Publican because of the taxes. Both are accepted by Jesus, each one in his own way.

- Luke 19: 1-2: The situation. Jesus enters into Jericho and crosses the city. "And behold a man whose name was Zacchaeus, head of the tax collectors and a rich man." The tax collector was the person who collected the public taxes on selling and buying of merchandise. Zacchaeus was the head of the tax collectors in the city. He was very rich and closely linked to the system of domination of the Romans. The more religious Jews argued in this way: "The king of our people is God. Therefore, the dominion of the Romans on us is against God. Anyone who collaborates with the Romans, sins against God!" Thus, the soldiers who served in the Roman army and the tax collectors, like Zacchaeus, were excluded and avoided because they were considered sinners and impure.
- Luke 19: 3-4: The attitude of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus. But being small, he ran ahead and climbed on a tree and waited for Jesus to go by. He really had a great desire to see Jesus! Before in the parable of the poor Lazarus and of the rich man who has no name (Lk 16: 19-31), Jesus had said that it was truly very difficult for a rich person to be converted and to open the door that separates him from accepting poor Lazarus. Here we have a rich

man who does not close himself up in his riches. Zacchaeus wants something more. When an adult, a person who is prominent in the city, climbs up on a tree, it is because he does not care much about the opinion of others. Something more important moves him inside. He wants to open the door for poor Lazarus.

- Luke 19: 5-7: Attitude of Jesus, reaction of the people and of Zacchaeus. Getting and seeing Zacchaeus on the tree, Jesus does not ask nor does he demand anything. He only responds to the desire of the man and says: "Zacchaeus come down, hurry because I am to stay at your home today!" Zacchaeus gets down and receives Jesus, in his house, with great joy, "All complained: He has gone to stay at a sinner's house!" Luke says that all complained! That signifies that Jesus was remaining alone in his attitude of accepting the excluded, especially the collaborators of the system. But Jesus does not care about the criticism. He goes to the house of Zacchaeus and defends him from the criticism. Instead of calling him sinner, he calls him "son of Abraham" (Lk 19: 9).
- Luke 19: 8: Decision of Zacchaeus. "Look, Lord, I am going to give half of my property to the poor; and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount!" This is the conversion produced in Zacchaeus because of the acceptance that he received from Jesus. To give back four times was what the law prescribed to do in certain cases (Ex 21: 37; 22: 3). To give half of my possessions to the poor was the novelty which the contact with Jesus produced in him. In fact, sharing was taking place
- Luke 19: 9-10: Final word of Jesus. "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham." The interpretation of the Law by means of the ancient Tradition excluded the tax collectors from the race of Abraham. Jesus says that he comes to seek and save what was lost. The Kingdom is for all. Nobody can be excluded. The choice of Jesus is clear, and also his call: It is not possible to be Jesus' friend and continue to support a system which marginalizes and excludes so many people. By denouncing the unjust divisions, Jesus opens the space to a new way of living together, directed by the new values of truth, of justice and of love.
- Son of Abraham. "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham!" Through being a descendant of Abraham, all nations of earth will be blessed (Gn 12: 3; 22: 18). It was very important for Luke's communities, formed by Christians, both of Jewish and of Pagan origin, the affirmation that Jesus calls Zacchaeus "son of Abraham". In this we find the confirmation of the fact that in Jesus, God was fulfilling the promises made to Abraham, addressed to all nations, both to Jews and to gentiles. They are also sons of Abraham and heirs of the promises. Jesus accepts those who were not accepted. He offers a place to those who do not have it. He receives as brothers and sisters the persons whom the religion and the government excluded and considered:
    - immoral: the prostitutes and the sinners (Mt 21: 31-32; Mk 2: 15; Lk 7: 37-

50; Jn 8: 2-11),

- heretic: pagans and Samaritans (Lk 7: 2-10; 17: 16; Mk 7: 24-30; Jn 4: 7-42),
- impure: lepers and possessed (Mt 8: 2-4; Lk 17: 12-14; Mk 1: 25-26),
- marginalized: women, children and the sick (Mk 1: 32; Mt 8: 16; 19: 13-15; Lk 8: 2-3),
- fighters: publicans and soldiers (Lk 18: 9-14; 19: 1-10);
- the poor: the people of the place and the poor who had no power (Mt 5: 3; Lk 6: 20; Mt 11: 25-26).

Personal Questions

- How does our community accept the persons who are despised and marginalized? Are we capable, like Jesus to perceive the problems of persons and to give them some attention?
- How do we perceive salvation today entering into our house and into our community? The welcoming tenderness of Jesus produced a total change in the life of Zacchaeus. Is the tenderness of our community producing some change in the neighborhood? Which one?

Concluding Prayer

With all my heart I seek you, do not let me stray from your commandments. In my heart I treasure your promises, to avoid sinning against you. (Ps 119: 10-11)

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Father of all that is good,
keep us faithful in serving you, for to serve you is our lasting joy.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 19: 11-28

Jesus said the following 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.

Reflection

The Gospel today presents the parable of the talents, in which Jesus speaks of the gifts that persons receive from God. All persons have some qualities; they receive some gift or know something which they can teach to others. Nobody is only a pupil, nobody is only a professor. We all learn from one another.

- Luke 19: 11: The key to understand the story of the parable. To introduce the parable Luke says the following: “At that time Jesus went on to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem and the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God was going to show itself then and there”. In this initial information, Luke presents three reasons which led Jesus to tell this parable: (a) The acceptance, which is to be given to the excluded, referring to the episode of Zacchaeus, the excluded one whom Jesus accepts. (b) The getting closer to the Passion,

  Death and Resurrection, because he said that Jesus was near Jerusalem where shortly he would be condemned to death (c) The imminent coming of the Kingdom of God, because the persons who accompanied Jesus thought that the Kingdom of God would come later.

- Luke 19: 12-14: The beginning of the parable. “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.'" Some scholars think that in this Parable Jesus is referring to Herod who seventy years before (40 AD), went to Rome to receive the title and power of King of Palestine. People did not like Herod and did not want him to become king, because the experience that they had of him was one of commander to repress the rebellions in Galilee against Rome and it was tragic and painful. This is why they said: "We do not want this man to be our king!" To this same Herod they would apply the last phrase of the Parable: "As for my enemies who did not want me for their king, bring them here and execute them in my presence." In fact, Herod killed many people.

- Luke 19: 15-19: The account given by the first employees who received one hundred silver coins. The story also informs that Herod, after having obtained the title of king, returned to Palestine to take over the power. In the Parable, the king called his servants to whom he had given one hundred silver coins to know how much they had gained. The first one came in and said: "Sir, your talent has produced ten other talents." 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 one, and said, "Sir, your talent has brought five other talents." To this one also he said, "And you shall be in charge of five cities.".

  According to the story, Herod the Great and his son Herod Antipas, both knew how to deal with money and to promote the persons who helped them. In the parable, the king gave ten cities to the servant who multiplied by ten the talent he had received and five cities to the one who multiplied it by five.

- Luke 19: 20-23: The rendering of account by the servant who gained nothing. The third servant arrived and said: "Sir, here is your talent 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." In this phrase we have a mistaken idea of God which is criticized by Jesus. The servant considers God a severe master. Before such a God, the human being is afraid and hides himself behind the exact and poor observance of the law. He thinks that acting in this way, he will not be punished by the severity of the legislator. In reality, such a person does not believe in God, but believes only in self, in his observance of the law. He closes himself up in self; he draws away from God and is not able to be concerned about others. He becomes incapable to grow as a free person. This false image of God isolates the human being, kills the community, extinguishes the joy and impoverishes life. The king answers: "Out of your own mouth I condemn you, wicked servant! You knew that I was an exacting man, gathering 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." The servant is not coherent with the image he had of God. If he imagined God so severe, at least he should have put the money in the bank. He is not condemned by God, but by the mistaken idea that he had conceived of God and which renders him more immature and more fearful than what he should have been. One of the things which has more influences in the life

of the people is the idea that we have of God. Among the Jews of the line of the Pharisees, some imagined God as a severe judge who treated them according to the merit gained by the observance. That caused fear and prevented persons from growing. And above all, it prevented them from opening a space within themselves to accept the new experience of God which Jesus communicated.

- Luke 19: 24-27: Conclusion for all. "And he said to those standing by: Take the talent from him and give it to the man who has ten talents. And they answered: 'But, Sir, he already has ten!' 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." The man orders to take way the one hundred coins and to give them to the one who has one thousand, because "to everyone who has will be given more, but anyone who has not will be deprived even of what he has." In this last phrase is found the key which clarifies the Parable. In the symbolism of the parable, the silver coin of the king are the goods of the Kingdom of God, that is, all that which makes the person grow and which reveals God's presence: love, service, sharing. Anyone who closes self in self out of fear to lose what he has, he will lose even the little that he has. Therefore, the person who does not think only of self, but gives himself/herself to others, will grow and will receive super abundantly, all that he/she has given and much more: "one hundred times more, a hundred-fold" (Mk 10: 30). "Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it, anyone who has the courage to lose it, will save it" (Lk 9: 24; 17: 33; Mt 10: 39; 16: 25; Mk 8: 35). The third servant is afraid and does nothing. He does not want to lose anything and because of this he gains nothing. He loses even the little he had. The Kingdom is a risk. Anyone who does not run, runs a risk, he loses the Kingdom!
- Luke 19: 28: Return to the triple initial key. At the end, Luke closes this theme with the following information: "Having said these things Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem". This final information recalls the triple key given at the beginning: the acceptance to be given to the excluded, the closeness of the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem and the idea of the imminent coming of the Kingdom. To those who thought that the Kingdom of God was about to arrive, the parable orders to change the way of looking, the vision. The Kingdom of God arrives, yes but through the death and the Resurrection of Jesus which will take place within a short time in Jerusalem. And the reason for the death and resurrection is the acceptance which Jesus gives to the excluded, for example to Zacchaeus and to so many others. He disturbs the great and they eliminated him condemning him to death, and death on the cross.

Personal Questions

- In our community, do we try to know and to value and appreciate the gifts of every person? Sometimes, the gifts of others cause jealousy and competitiveness in others. How do we react?

- In our community, is there a space where persons can show or manifest their gifts?

Concluding Prayer

Praise God in his holy place, praise him in the heavenly vault of his power, praise him for his mighty deeds, praise him for all his greatness. (Ps 150: 1-2)

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Father of all that is good,
keep us faithful in serving you, for to serve you is our lasting joy.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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 recognized 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 recognize the moment of your visitation."

Reflection

The Gospel today tells us that Jesus when arriving close to Jerusalem, in seeing the city he began to shed tears and to pronounce words which made one foresee a very dark future for the city, the capital city of his people.

- Luke 19: 41-42 Jesus sheds tears over Jerusalem. "At that time, when Jesus was near Jerusalem, when he saw the city, he shed tears over it and said: 'If you too had only recognized on this day the way to peace! But in fact, it is hidden from your eyes!'" Jesus sheds tears because he loves his homeland, his people, the capital city of his land, the Temple. He sheds tears, because he knows that everything will be destroyed because of the fault of his people who were not aware of the call made by God through the facts of life. People were not aware of the way that could lead them to Peace, Shalom. But, in fact, it is hidden from your eyes! This affirmation recalls the criticism of Isaiah to the person who adored the idols: "He hankers after ashes, his deluded heart has led him astray; he will not save himself. He will not think. What I have in my hand is nothing but a lie!" (Is 44: 20). The lie was in their look and, because of this; they

became incapable to perceive the truth. As Saint Paul says: “But for those who out of jealousy have taken for their guide not truth but injustice, there will be a fury of retribution” (Rm 2: 8). It is the truth that remains the prisoner of injustice. On another occasion, Jesus complains that Jerusalem did not know how to become aware of God’s visit, nor of accepting it: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you refused! Look, your house will be left to you, it will be deserted” (Lk 13: 34-35).

- Luke 19: 43-44 Announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem. “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 your children inside your walls to the ground; they will leave not one stone standing on another within you, because you did not recognize the moment of your visitation.” Jesus describes what will happen to Jerusalem. He uses the images of war which were common at that time when an army attacked a city: trenches, killing of people and total destruction of the walls and of the houses. Thus, in the past this is the way Jerusalem was destroyed by Nabuchadnezzar. In this way, the Roman legions used to do with the rebellious cities, and this is what will be done again, forty years later, to the city of Jerusalem. In fact, in the year 70, Jerusalem was surrounded and invaded by the Roman army. Everything was destroyed. Before this historical background, the gesture of Jesus becomes a very serious warning for all those who pervert the sense of the Good News of Jesus. They should have listened to the final warning: “Because you did not recognize the moment of your visitation” In this warning, everything which Jesus does is defined as a “visitation from God.”

Personal Questions

- Do you weep over a world situation? Looking at the present-day situation of the world, would Jesus shed tears? The prevision is dark. From the point of view of Ecology, we have already gone beyond the limit. The prevision is tragic.
- In Jesus, God visits his people. In your life, have you received some visit from God?

Concluding Prayer

Sing a new song to Yahweh: his praise in the assembly of the faithful! Israel shall rejoice in its Maker, the children of Zion delight in their king. (Ps 149: 1-2)

Friday, November 20, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Father of all that is good,
keep us faithful in serving you, for to serve you is our lasting joy.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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.

Reflection

- Context. Luke after having described the journey of Jesus going up to Jerusalem (11-19, 28) now presents him while he is carrying out his activity in the context of the Temple. After the entrance of the one sent by the Lord into Jerusalem passing through the door on the East (19: 45), the Temple becomes the first place where Jesus carries out his activity: the controversies that are narrated take place in this place and they refer to this. Jesus‟ going to the Temple is not only a personal fact but also concerns the "multitude of his disciples" (v. 37) on their relationship with God (vv. 31-34). Luke above all, presents a first episode in which are presented the preparations for the entrance of Jesus into the Temple (vv. 29-36) and their realization (vv. 37-40); then follows a scene where we find the passage of today's liturgy: his installation in the Temple and driving out the sellers from the Temple (vv. 45-48).
- The gesture of Jesus. This does not have a political value but a prophetic significance. The reader thinks that the great purpose of Jesus‟ journey to Jerusalem is the entrance into the Temple. To recall the prophecy of Malachi is evident that is fulfilled at the entrance of Jesus into the Temple: "And suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his Temple..." (3: 1).

  The gesture of driving out the sellers from the Temple is accompanied by Jesus with two references to Scripture. Above all, Is 56: 7: "My house will be a house of prayer." The Temple is the place in which Jesus turns back to the Father. The commercial and business activity has made the Temple a den of bandits and has deprived it of its only and exclusive function: the encounter with the presence of God. The second reference from Scripture: is taken from Jeremiah 7: 11: "Do you look on this Temple that bears my name as a den of bandits?" The image of the den of bandits serves Jesus to condemn the material traffic on the one side and not only the dishonest traffic of trade or business that in a hidden and illegal way was carried out in the Temple.

Jesus demands a complete change: to purify the Temple from all that human negative things and to bring it back to its original function: to render an authentic service to God. And driving out those impostors of the trade and business the prophecy of Zechariah is fulfilled: «There will be no more traders in the Temple of Yahweh Sabaoth, when that Day comes" (14, 21). These words of Jesus on the Temple are not directed to a restoration of the purity of the cult or worship, as was the intention of the Zelots. The intention of Jesus goes beyond the purity of the cult; it is more radical, intransigent: the Temple is not a work done by human efforts; the presence of God is not bound to its material aspect; the authentic service of God is carried out by Jesus through his teaching. Because of this preaching "the high priests and the Scribes together with the leading citizens tried to do away with him" (v. 47).

Within this temporary place of the Temple Jesus carries out a highly significant teaching, in fact, it is precisely in this place that is so fundamental for the Jews that his teaching reaches the summit and it will be from here that the words of the Apostles will begin also (Acts 5: 1 2, 20, 25, 42). The diffusion of the Word of grace of which Jesus is the only bearer extends itself like an arch that begins with his opposition, when he was still only twelve years old in the Temple among the doctors of the Law; it is prolonged with his teaching when going across Galilee and during his journey to Jerusalem; until he entered the Temple where he takes possession of the house of God.

The bases for the future mission of the Church are placed in this place: the diffusion of the Word of God. The heads of the people do not intend to suppress Jesus for having ruined the progress of the economic affairs of that time, but the reasons go back to all his previous activity of teaching and now these are in his discourse against the temple. Jesus claims something and this causes the reaction of the high priests and of the Scribes to break out. In contrast with this hostile behavior, one can see the positive one of the people who "are hanging from his words." Jesus is considered as the Messiah who gathers around him with his Word of grace the people of God.

Personal Questions

- Does your prayer to the Lord consist in a simple relationship of father to son in which to find all the strength to communicate with God, or rather is it accompanied by uses and practices to gain over his goodness?
- When you listen to the Word of Jesus do you feel seized by his teaching like the crowds who hung from his words? Or rather are you sufficiently attentive to listen to the Gospel and do you adhere to Christ?

Concluding Prayer

The Law you have uttered is more precious to me than all the wealth in the world.
How pleasant your promise to my palate, sweeter than honey in my mouth! (Ps 119: 72, 103)

Saturday, November 21, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Father of all that is good,
keep us faithful in serving you, for to serve you is our lasting joy.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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.

Reflection

The Gospel today gives us the discussion of the Sadducees with Jesus on faith in the resurrection.

- Luke 20: 27: The ideology of the Sadducees. The Gospel today begins with the following affirmation: “The Sadducees affirm that there is no resurrection.” The Sadducees were an elite type of great landowners or large estates and traders. They were conservative. They did not accept faith in the resurrection. At that time, this faith was beginning to be valued, appreciated by the Pharisees and by popular piety. This urged the people to resist against the dominion of the Romans and of the priests, of the elders and of the Sadducees; the Messianic Kingdom was already present in the situation of well-being which they were living. They followed the so called “Theology of Retribution” which distorted reality. According to that Theology, God would pay with riches and well-being those who observed the law of God and would

punish with suffering and poverty those who do evil. Thus, one can understand why the Sadducees did not want any changes. They wanted religion to remain just as it was, immutable like God himself. And for this, to criticize and to ridicule faith in the resurrection, they told fictitious cases to indicate that faith in the resurrection would have led people to be absurd.

- Luke 20: 28-33: The fictitious case of the woman who married seven times. According to the law of the time, if the husband died without leaving any children, his brother had to marry the widow of the deceased man. And this was done in order to avoid that, in case someone died without any descendants, his property would go to another family (Dt 25: 5-6). The Sadducees invented the story of a woman who buried seven husbands, brothers among themselves, and then she herself also died without children. And they asked Jesus: "This woman, then, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be? because the seven of them had her as wife." This was invented in order to show that faith in the resurrection creates absurd situations.
- Luke 20: 34-38: The response of Jesus which leaves no doubts. In the response of Jesus there emerges irritation of one who cannot bear pretense or deceit. Jesus cannot bear hypocrisy on the part of the elite which manipulates and ridicules faith in God to legitimize and defend its own interests. The response contains two parts: (a) you understand nothing of the resurrection: 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" (vv. 34-36). Jesus explains that the condition of persons after death will be totally diverse from the actual condition. After death there will be no marriages, but all will be like angels in heaven. The Sadducees imagined life in Heaven the same as life on earth; (b) you understand nothing about God: "For the dead will rise, Moses has also indicated this in regard to the bush, when he calls the Lord: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not God of the dead, but of the living, because all live in him." The disciples are attentive and learn! Those who are on the side of the Sadducees find themselves on the opposite side of God!
- Luke 20: 39-40: The reaction of others before the response of Jesus. "Then some of the Scribes said: 'Master you have spoken well.' And they no longer dared to ask him any more questions." Most probably these doctors of the law were Pharisees, because the Pharisees believed in the resurrection (cf. Act 23: 6).

Personal Questions

- Today, how do the groups which have power imitate the Sadducees and prepare traps in order to prevent changes in the world and in the Church?

- Do you believe in the resurrection? When you say that you believe in the resurrection, do you think about something of the past, of the present or of the future? Have you ever had an experience of resurrection in your life?

Concluding Prayer

This I believe: I shall see the goodness of Yahweh, in the land of the living. Put your hope in Yahweh, be strong, let your heart be bold, put your hope in Yahweh. (Ps 27: 13-14)

Sunday, November 22, 2026

Solemnity – Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Opening Prayer

Spirit of truth, sent by Jesus to guide us to the whole truth, enlighten our minds so that we may understand the Scriptures. You who overshadowed Mary and made her fruitful ground where the Word of God could germinate, purify our hearts from all obstacles to the Word. Help us to learn like her to listen with good and pure hearts to the Word that God speaks to us in life and in Scripture, so that we may observe the Word and produce good fruit through our perseverance.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 25: 31-46

The Context:

Our text is part of a long eschatological discourse (Mt 24: 1-25, 46) given by Jesus on the Mount of Olives to His disciples privately (Mt 24: 3). The discourse begins with the proclamation of the destruction of Jerusalem in order to speak of the end of the world. The two events become confused as though they were one. This part of the discourse ends with the coming of the Son of man with great power and glory. He will send His angels to gather His elect (Mt 24: 30-31). Here the chronological flow of the events proclaimed is interrupted by the insertion of some parables on the need to watch so as not to be caught by surprise at the coming of the Son of man (Mt 24: 24-25, 30). The eschatological discourse comes to its literary and theological peak in our text. This text ties up with (Mt 24: 30-31) and speaks once more of the coming of the Son of man accompanied by His angels. The gathering of the elect here takes the form of a final judgment.

The Text:

When the Son of man comes in His glory, escorted by all the angels, then He will take His seat on His throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before Him and He will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on His right hand and the goats on

His left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to Him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Then He will say to those on His left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and His angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink, I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then He will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the upright to eternal life.

A Moment of Prayerful Silence

so that the Word of God may enter into us and enlighten our life.

Some Questions

to help us in our personal reflection.

- Which criterion does Jesus use for the separation?
- Who are the least of the brethren with whom Jesus identifies Himself?
- How did Jesus, in His life, show preference for the least?
- Who are the least of Jesus' brethren that I meet?
- Am I capable of seeing, loving and serving Jesus in them?

A Key to the Reading

for those who wish to go deeper into the text.

The Son of Man:

The Son of man is a Semitic expression that simply means a human being (see for instance the parallelism between "man" and "son of man" in Psalm 8:5). The book of Ezekiel often uses this term with this meaning when God addresses

Himself to the prophet as "son of man" (Mt 2: 1, 3, 6, 8; 3: 1, 2, 4, 10, 16+) in order to emphasize the distance between God who is transcendent and the prophet who is but a man. However, in Daniel 7: 13-14 the expression acquires a special meaning.
The prophet sees "coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man" who receives from God "sovereignty, glory and kingship". This text is still talking of a human being, however, who is introduced into the sphere of God. The text has been interpreted both in a personal and a collective sense, but always in a messianic sense. Thus, whether we are dealing with one person or with all of the People of God, the Son of man is the Messiah who gives rise to the Realm of God, an eternal and universal realm.
The application of the term "Son of man" to Jesus as it is used in Daniel 7: 13-14 is very common in the Gospels. We also find it in Acts 7: 56 and the Apocalypse 1: 13 and 14: 14. Scholars think that Jesus gave Himself this title. In the Gospel of Matthew this term is attributed to Jesus especially when He speaks of His passion (Mt 17: 12, 22; 20: 18, 28)), His resurrection as an eschatological event (Mt 17: 19; 26: 64) and His glorious return (Mt 24: 30 and 25: 31, the beginning of our text).

Jesus King, Judge, and Shepherd:

Matthew also gives Jesus the title of king (Mt 1: 23; 13: 41; 16: 28; 20: 21). The kingship of God is a theme very dear to the Bible. Because Jesus is the Son of God, He rules together with the Father. In our text, the king is Jesus, but He exercises His royal power in close relationship with the Father.
The elect are "blessed of my Father" and the realm to which they are invited is the realm prepared for them by God, as the passive form of the verb indicates. This form of the verb, called the divine passive, is often found in the Bible and always has God as its implicit subject. In this text, the realm points to eternal life. In Daniel 7 (see especially verses 22, 26 and 27) and in our text, the royal status of the Son of man is connected with the judgment. The king, especially in ancient times, was always considered the supreme judge. The judgment that Jesus exercises is a universal judgment, a judgment that involves all peoples (see v.32). And yet it is not a collective judgment. It is not the peoples that are judged but individual persons.
In the same way, the pastoral symbolism is connected with royal status. In ancient times, the king was often presented as shepherd of his people. The Old Testament also speaks of God, king of Israel, as shepherd (see for instance Psalm 23, Is 40: 11; Ez 34) and the New Testament applies the title to Jesus (Mt 9: 36; 26: 31; Jn 10) as well. The shepherds of the Holy Land, in the time of Jesus, shepherded mixed flocks of sheep and goats. However, at night they were separated because sheep sleep in the open while goats prefer to sleep under shelter. In our text the sheep represent the elect because of their valuation over goats and because of their white color that often stands for salvation in the Bible.

The Least of My Brethren:

Traditionally, this Gospel passage was interpreted to mean that Jesus identified Himself with the poor and marginalized. Jesus will judge everyone, and

especially those who have not had the chance to know His Gospel, according to the mercy they have shown towards the needy. All have the opportunity to welcome or reject him, if not personally, at least in the person of the needy with whom Jesus identifies Himself.
Modern exegesis tends to read the text in a more ecclesiastical sense. It is placed next to Matthew 10: 40-42 and exegetes insist that it is not a question of philanthropy but of a response to the Gospel of the Realm that is spread by Jesus' brethren, even the most insignificant of them, and not only by the leaders of the Church.
The nations (the pagans) are therefore invited to welcome the disciples of Jesus who preach the Gospel to them and suffer for its sake, as if they were welcoming Jesus Himself. Christians, on their part, are invited to practice generous hospitality towards their brothers who are itinerant preachers of the Gospel and who suffer persecution (see 2 Jn 5-8). In this manner, they would show the authenticity of their commitment as disciples.
In the context of Matthew's Gospel, this latter interpretation is probably more accurate. However, in the context of the whole of the Bible (see for instance Is 58: 7; Jer 2: 1-9; 1 Jn 3: 16-19) the first interpretation cannot be set aside entirely.

Psalm 72

The Messiah-King Promotes Justice and Peace

Give the king thy justice,
O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son! May He judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice!
Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!
May He defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor!
May He live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!
May He be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!
In His days may righteousness flourish,
and peace abound, till the moon be no more! May He have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth!
May His foes bow down before Him, and His enemies lick the dust!
May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render Him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!
May all kings fall down before Him, all nations serve Him!
For He delivers the needy when He calls, the poor and Him who has no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.
From oppression and violence He redeems their life; and precious is their blood in His sight.
Long may He live, may gold of Sheba be given to Him! May prayer be made for Him continually,

and blessings invoked for Him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon;
and may men blossom forth from the cities like the grass of the field! May His name endure for ever,
His fame continue as long as the sun! May men bless themselves by Him, all nations call Him blessed!
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be His glorious name for ever;
may His glory fill the whole earth! Amen and Amen!

Closing Prayer

Lord God, you have set Jesus, your Son, to be universal king and judge. He will come at the end of time to judge all the nations. He comes to us every day in a thousand ways and asks us to welcome Him. We meet Him in the Word and in the broken bread. But we also meet Him in our broken brothers and sisters, disfigured by hunger, oppression, injustice, sickness and the stigma of our society. Open our hearts that we may welcome Him today in our lives so that we may be welcomed by Him in the eternity of His realm.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday, November 23, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord,
increase our eagerness to do your will
and help us to know the saving power of your love. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 21: 1-4

Looking up, Jesus saw rich people putting their offerings into the treasury; and he noticed a poverty-stricken widow putting in two small coins, and he said, “I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than any of them; for these have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

Reflection

In today’s Gospel Jesus weaves the praise of a poor widow who knows how to share more than the rich. Many poor people today do the same. People say: “The poor do not let the poor starve to death.” But, sometimes, even this is not possible. A woman who went to live out in the country in the periphery of a city

in Brazil, in Paraiba, said: “In the country the people are poor, but they always have something to share with the poor who knock at their door. Now that I am here in the city, when I see a poor person who knocks on the door, I hide because I feel ashamed, because I have nothing in the house to share with him!” On one side, there are rich people who have everything but do not know how to share; on the other side, there are poor people who have hardly anything, but who want to share the little they have.
At the beginning, in the Church, the great majority the first Christian communities, were formed by poor people. (1 Cor 1: 26). After a short time, well-to-do people also entered these communities, and this caused several problems. The social tensions which were present in the Roman Empire began to appear also in the life of the communities. That manifested itself, for example, when they met together to celebrate the supper (1 Cor 11: 20-22), or when they held the meeting (James 2: 1-4). This is why, the teaching of the act of the widow was very actual, both for them as well as for us today.

- Luke 21: 1-2: The widow’s mite. Jesus was before the treasure in the Temple and observed people who put their offering into the treasury. The poor put in a few pennies, the rich offerings of great value. The Treasury of the Temple received much money. All gave something for the maintenance of the worship, to support the clergy and for the preservation of the building. Part of this money was used to help the poor, because at that time there was no social security. The poor lived at the mercy of public charity. The persons who had the greatest needs were the orphans and the widows. They depended for everything on the charity of others, but even in this way, they tried to share with others the little that they had. Thus, a very poor widow put her offering into the treasury of the Temple; just two pennies!

- Luke 21: 3-4: The comment of Jesus. Which is worth more: the few pennies of the widow or the great amount of the rich? According to the majority, the money of the rich was more useful for charity, than the few pennies of the widow. For example, the disciples thought that the problem of the people could be resolved only with much money. On the occasion of the multiplication of the loaves, they had suggested to buy bread to feed the people (Lk 9: 13; Mk 6: 37). Philip succeeded in saying: “Two-hundred denarii of bread are not sufficient even for everyone to have a piece of bread” (Jn 6: 7). In fact, for anyone who thinks like that, the two pennies of the widow do not serve for anything. But Jesus says: “I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than any of them.”

  Jesus has diverse criteria. Calling the attention of the disciples on the act of the widow, he teaches them and us where we have to look for the manifestation of God’s will: in the poor and in sharing. This is a very important criterion: “In fact all these have put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

  Alms, sharing, riches. The practice of giving alms was very important for the Jews. It was considered to be a “good work”, because the law of the Old Testament said: “Of course, there will never cease to be poor people in the

country, and that is why I am giving you this command: Always be open handed with your brother, and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor" (Dt 15: 11). The alms put into the treasury of the Temple, whether for the worship or for the needy, orphans or widows, were considered a pleasing act to God (Eccl 35: 2; cf. Eccl 17: 17; 29: 12; 40: 24). To give alms was a way to recognize that all goods of the earth belong to God and that we are only the administrators of these gifts. But the tendency to accumulate continues to exist and is very strong; it always arises anew in the human heart. Conversion is always necessary. This is why Jesus said to the rich young man: "Go, sell all you possess, give it to the poor!" (Mk 10: 21). In the other Gospels the same requirement is repeated: "Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Get yourselves purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and no moth destroy it" (Lk 12: 33-34; Mt 6: 9-20). The practice of sharing and of solidarity is one of the characteristics which the Spirit of Jesus wants to realize in the community. The result of the effusion of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was that: "None of the members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from the sale of them, to present it to the apostles" (Acts 4: 34-35; 2: 44-45). This money deposited at the feet of the Apostles was not accumulated but "it was then distributed to any who might be in need" (Acts 4: 35b; 2: 45). The entry of the rich into the Christian communities on the one side rendered possible the expansion of Christianity, providing better conditions for the missionary voyages. But on the other side, the tendency to accumulate blocked the movement of solidarity and of sharing. James helped people to become aware if they were following a mistaken path: "Well now you rich! Lament, weep for the miseries that are coming to you. Your wealth is rotting; your clothes are all moth-eaten." (James 5: 1-3). To undertake the way to the Kingdom, all need to become pupils of that poor widow, who shared with others that which was necessary for her living (Lk 21: 4).

Personal Questions

- Which are the difficulties and the joys that you find in your life in practicing solidarity and sharing with others?
- How is it that the two pennies of the widow can be worth more than the large amounts of the rich? Which is the message of this text for us today?

Concluding Prayer

Be sure that Yahweh is God, he made us, we belong to him, his people, the flock of his sheepfold. (Ps 100: 3)

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord,
increase our eagerness to do your will and help us to know the saving power of your love. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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."

Reflection

The Gospel today begins with the discourse of Jesus called the Apocalyptic Discourse. It is a long discourse, which will be the theme of the Gospels in the next days up to the last week of the ecclesial year. For us of the XXI century, the apocalyptic language is strange and confused. But for the poor and persecuted people of the Christian communities of that time these were the words that everybody understood and the principal purpose of which was to animate the faith and the hope of the poor and of the oppressed. The apocalyptic language is the fruit of the witness of faith of these poor people, who, in spite of the persecution and against all contrary appearances, continued to believe that God was with them and that he continued to be the Lord of history.

- Luke 21: 5-7: Introduction to the Apocalyptic Discourse. In the days previous to the Apocalyptic Discourse, Jesus had broken away from the Temple (Lk 19: 45-48), with the priests and the elders (Lk 20: 1-26), with the Sadducees (Lk 20:27-40), with the Scribes who exploited the widows (Lk 20: 41-47) and at the end, as we have seen in yesterday's Gospel, he ends by praising the widow who gave as alms all she possessed (Lk 21: 1-4). Now, in today's Gospel, listening that "while some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings," Jesus said: "The time will come when not a single stone will be left on another everything will be destroyed." In listening to this comment of Jesus, the disciples asked: "Master, when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that it is about to take place?" They ask for more information. The Apocalyptic Discourse which

follows is the response of Jesus to this question of the disciples on when and on how the destruction of the Temple will take place. The Gospel of Mark informs the following on the context in which Jesus pronounces this discourse. He says that Jesus had left the city and was now sitting on the Mount of Olives (Mk 13: 2-4). There, from the top of the mountain he had a majestic view of the Temple. Mark also says that there were only four disciples who listened to his last discourse. At the beginning of his preaching, three years before, there in Galilee, the crowds followed Jesus to listen to his words. Now, in the last discourse, there are only four who listen: Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mk 13: 3). Efficiency and a good result are not always measured by the quantity!

- Luke 21: 8: Objective of the discourse: "Take care not to be deceived!" The disciples had asked: "Master, when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that it is about to take place?" Jesus begins his response with a warning: "Take care not to be deceived. Many will come using my name and saying, 'I am the one' and 'the time is near at hand;' refuse to join them." At a time of changes and of confusion there are always persons who want to draw advantage from the situation deceiving the others. This happens today and it also happened in the years 80's, at the time when Luke wrote his Gospel. In the face of the disasters and the wars of those years, in the face of the destruction of Jerusalem of the year 70 and of the persecution of the Christians on the part of the Roman Empire, many thought that the end of time was close at hand. There were people who said: "God no longer controls the events! We are lost!" This is why the main concern of the Apocalyptic Discourses is always the same: to help the communities to discern better the signs of the times so as not to be deceived by the conversation of people concerning the end of the world: "Take care not to be deceived." Then follows the discourse which offers signs to help them discern and thus, increases their hope.
- Luke 21: 9-11: Signs to help them to read the facts. After this brief introduction, begins the discourse properly so called: "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." To understand these words well, it is well to recall what follows: Jesus lives and speaks in the year 33. The readers of Luke live and listen in the year 85. Now, in the 50 years between the year 33 and the year 85, the majority of things, mentioned by Jesus, had already taken place and were known by everybody. For example, in diverse parts of the world there were wars, false prophets arose, there were sicknesses and plagues and, in Asia Minor, the earthquakes were frequent. According to the apocalyptic style, the discourse lists all these events, one after the other, as signs or stages of the project of God in the history of the People of God, from the time of Jesus down to our time:

- 1st sign: the false Messiahs (Lk 21: 8);
- 2nd sign: war and revolutions (Lk 21: 9);
- 3rd sign: nations which fight against other nations, one kingdom against another kingdom (Lk 21: 10);
- 4th sign: earthquakes in different parts (Lk 21: 11);
- 5th sign: hunger, plagues and signs in the sky (Lk 21: 11).

Here ends the Gospel for today. That of tomorrow presents another sign: the persecution of the Christian communities (Lk 21: 12). The Gospel for day after tomorrow two signs: the destruction of Jerusalem and the beginning of the disintegration of creation. Thus, by means of these signs of the Apocalyptic Discourse, the communities of the years 80, the time when Luke wrote his Gospel, could calculate at what level the execution of God's plan was, and discover that history had not escaped from the hands of God. Everything happened according to what was foretold and announced by Jesus in the Apocalyptic Discourse.

Personal Questions

- What sentiment or feeling did you experience during the reading of today's Gospel? Peace or fear?
- Do you think that the end of the world is close at hand? What can we answer to those who say that the end of the world is close at hand? How can we encourage people today to resist and to have hope?

Concluding Prayer

Let the countryside exult, and all that is in it, and all the trees of the forest cry out for joy, at Yahweh's approach, for he is coming, coming to judge the earth; he will judge the world with saving justice, and the nations with constancy. (Ps 96: 12-13)

Wednesday, November 25, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord, increase our eagerness to do your will

and help us to know the saving power of your love. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 21: 12-19

Jesus said to his disciples: '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 defense, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict.
You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated universally on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost.
Your perseverance will win you your lives.

Reflection

In today's Gospel, which is the continuation of the discourse begun yesterday, Jesus lists the different signs to help the communities to place themselves in the events and not to lose faith in God, nor the courage to resist against the attacks of the Roman Empire. We will repeat the first five signs mentioned in yesterday's Gospel:

- 1st sign: the false Messiahs (Lk 21: 8);
- 2nd sign: war and revolutions (Lk 21: 9);
- 3rd sign: nations which fight against other nations, a kingdom against another kingdom (Lk 21:10);
- 4th sign: earthquakes in different places (Lk 21: 11);
- 5th sign: hunger, plagues and signs in the sky (Lk 21: 11);

The Gospel of yesterday ends here. Now, in today's Gospel another sign is added: 6th sign: the persecution of Christians (Lk 21: 12-19).

- Luke 21: 12. *The sixth sign is the persecution.* Various times, in the few years which he lived among us, Jesus had warned the disciples that they would be persecuted. Here, in the last discourse, he repeats the same warning and makes them know that the persecution has to be taken into consideration in discerning the signs of the times: *"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 of these, apparently very negative warnings, Jesus had said: *"Do not be terrified for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once."* (Lk 21: 9). And the Gospel of Mark adds that all these signs "*have only begun, this is the beginning of the birth pangs!*" (Mk 13: 8). Now, the birth pangs though being very painful for the mother are not a sign of death, but rather of life! They are not a reason to fear, but rather to hope! This way of reading the events brings peace to the persecuted communities. Thus, reading or hearing these signs, prophesized by Jesus in the year 33, the readers of Luke of the years 80 could conclude: "All these things already take place according to the plan foreseen and announced by Jesus! Therefore, the history has not escaped from God's hand! God is with us!"

- Luke 21: 13-15: *The mission of the Christians during the time of persecution.* Persecution is not something fatal, neither can it be a reason for discouragement or for despair, but it should be considered as a possibility offered by God, in a way that the communities may carry out the mission of witnessing to the Good News of God. God says: "*That will be your opportunity to bear witness.*

  Make up your minds not to prepare your defense because I myself shall give you eloquence and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict."

  By means of this affirmation Jesus encourages the persecuted Christians who lived anguished. He makes them know that, even if persecuted, they had a mission to carry out, that is: to give witness of the Good News of God and thus be a sign of the Kingdom (Acts 1:8). The courageous witness would lead the people to repeat what the magi in Egypt said before the signs and to have courage like Moses and Aaron: *"The finger of God is here"* (Ex 8: 15). Conclusion: if the communities should not be worried, if everything is in God's hands, if everything was already foreseen, if everything is nothing more than birth pangs, then there is no reason to worry.

- Luke 21: 16-17: *Persecution even within the family. "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."* Persecution does not only come from outside, from the Empire, but also from inside, on the part of one's own family. In one same family, some accepted the Good News, others did not. The announcement of the Good News caused divisions within families. There were even some persons, who basing themselves on the Law of God, denounced and killed their own relatives who declared themselves followers of Jesus (Dt 13: 7-12).

- Luke 21: 18-19: *the source of hope and of resistance. "But not a hair of your head will be lost. Your perseverance will win you your lives!"* This final observation of Jesus recalls the other word which Jesus had said: *"But not a hair of your head will be lost!"* (Lk 21: 18). This comparison was a strong call not to lose faith and to continue righteously in the community. And this also confirms what Jesus had said on another occasion: Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it, but anyone who will lose his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9: 24).

Personal Questions

- How do you usually read the stages of the history of your life or of your country?
- Looking at the history of humanity of the last years, has hope increased or diminished in you?

Concluding Prayer

Yahweh has made known his saving power, revealed his saving justice for the nations to see, mindful of his faithful love
and his constancy to the House of Israel. (Ps 98: 2-3)

Thursday, November 26, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord,
increase our eagerness to do your will and help us to know the saving power of your love. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 21: 20-28

Jesus said to his disciples: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must realize 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."

Reflection

In today's Gospel we have the continuation of the Apocalyptic Discourse which gives two signs, the 7th and the 8th, which should take place before the end of time or better before the coming of the end of this world in order to give place to the new world, to the "New Heavens and the New Earth" (Is 65: 17). The seventh sign is the destruction of Jerusalem and the eighth is the upsetting of the old creation.

- Luke 21: 20-24. The seventh sign: the destruction of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was for them the Eternal City. And now it was destroyed! How can this fact be explained? Is it possible that God is not aware of this? It is difficult for us to imagine the trauma and the crisis of faith that the destruction of Jerusalem

caused in the communities both of the Jews and of the Christians. Here it is possible to make an observation on the composition of the Gospel of Luke and of Mark. Luke writes in the year 85. He uses the Gospel of Mark to compose his narrative on Jesus. Mark writes in the year 70, the same year in which Jerusalem was surrounded and destroyed by the Roman armies. This is why Mark writes giving an indication to the reader: "When you see the appalling abomination set up where it ought not to be – and here he opens a parenthesis and says, "let the reader understand!" (he closes the parenthesis)— then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains" (Mk 13: 14). When Luke mentions the destruction of Jerusalem, for the past fifteen years Jerusalem was in ruins. This is why he omits the parenthesis of Mark and Luke says: "When you will see Jerusalem surrounded by the army, then you must realize 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 gentiles until their time is complete." Hearing Jesus who announces persecution (6th sign) and the destruction of Jerusalem (7th sign), the readers of the persecuted communities in the time of Luke concluded saying: "This is our day! We are in the 6th and 7th signs!"

- Luke 21: 25-26: The eighth sign: changes in the sun and in the moon. When will the end come? At the end, after having spoken about all these signs which had already been realized, there was still the following question: "God's project is very much advanced, and the stages foreseen by Jesus are already being realized. We are in the sixth and the seventh stages, how many stages or signs are still lacking until the end arrives? Is there much lacking?" The response is now given in the 8th sign: "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and 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." The 8th sign is different from the other signs. The signs in heaven and on earth are an indication of what is taking place, at the same time, at the end of the old world, of the ancient creation, it is the beginning of the coming of the new Heaven and the new earth. When the shell of the egg begins to crack it is a sign that the novelty is about to appear. It is the coming of a New World which is provoking the disintegration of the ancient world.

  Conclusion: very little is lacking! The Kingdom of God is arriving already!

- Luke 21: 27-28: The coming of the Kingdom of God and the appearance of the Son of Man. "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." In this announcement, Jesus describes the coming of the Kingdom with images taken from the

prophecy of Daniel (Dn 7: 1-14). Daniel says that, after the misfortunes caused by the kingdoms of this world, the Kingdom of God will come. The kingdoms of this world, all of them, had the figure of an animal: lion, panther, bear, and ferocious beast (Dn 7: 3-7). These are animal signs which dehumanize life, like it happens with the neo-liberal kingdom, today! The Kingdom of God then appears with the aspect of the Son of Man, that is, with a human aspect (Dn 7: 13). It is a human kingdom. To construct this kingdom which humanizes is the task of the persons of the community. It is the new history that we have to take to fulfilment and which brings together people from the four corners of the earth. The title Son of Man is the name that Jesus liked to use. In the four Gospels this name appearsmore than 80 times (eighty)! Any pain which we bear from now, any struggle in behalf of life, any persecution for the sake of justice, any birth pangs, are a seed of the Kingdom which will come in the 8th sign.

Personal Questions

- Persecution of the communities, destruction of Jerusalem. Lack of hope. Before the events which today make people suffer, do I despair? Which is the source of my hope?
- Son of Man is the title which Jesus liked to use. He wants to humanize life. The more human it is the more divine as Pope Leo the Great said. Am I human in my relationships with others? Do I humanize?

Concluding Prayer

For Yahweh is good, his faithful love is everlasting, his constancy from age to age. (Ps 100: 5)

Friday, November 27, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord,
increase our eagerness to do your will and help us to know the saving power of your love. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 21: 29-33

Jesus told to 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. Sky and earth
will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

Reflection

The Gospel today presents the final recommendations of the Apocalyptic Discourse. Jesus insists on two points: (a) on the attention which should be given to the signs of the times (Lk 21: 29-31) and (b) on hope founded on the firmness of the word of God which drives away fear to despair (Lk 21: 32-33).

- Luke 21: 29-31: Look at the fig tree and indeed every tree. Jesus orders to look at nature: "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." Jesus asks to contemplate the phenomena of nature to learn how to read and interpret the things which are happening in the world. The buds or sprouts on the fig tree are an evident sign that summer is near. In the same way when the seven signs appear they are a proof that "the Kingdom of God is close at hand!" To make this discernment is not easy. A person who is alone does not become aware of this. By reflecting together in community, the light appears. And the light is this: to experience in everything that happens the call not to close ourselves in the present, but rather to keep the horizon open and to perceive in everything that happens an arrow directed toward the future. But nobody knows the exact hour of the coming of the Kingdom, nobody. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus says: "But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, no one but the Father!" (Mk 13: 32).
- Luke 21: 32-33: "In truth I tell you, before this generation has passed away all will have taken place. Sky and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." This word of Jesus recalls the prophecy of Isaiah which says: "All humanity is grass and all its beauty like the wildflowers. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of Yahweh blows on them. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God remains forever." (Is 40: 7-8). The word of Jesus is the source of our hope. What he says will arrive!

  The coming of the Messiah and the end of the world. Today, many people live worried concerning the end of the world. Some, basing themselves on a mistaken and fundamentalist reading of the Apocalypse of John, even arrive at calculating the exact date of the end of the world. In the past, beginning at "one thousand years" quoted in the Apocalypse (Rev 20: 7), it was usually repeated: "The year one thousand has gone by but the year two thousand will not pass!" And because of this, as the year two thousand approached, many were worried. There were some people who anguished because of the coming of the end of the world, committed suicide! But the year 2000 arrived and nothing happened.

  The end of the world did not arrive! In the Christian communities of the first centuries, they faced the same problems. They lived in the expectation of the

imminent coming of Jesus. Jesus was coming to carry out the Final Judgment so as to finish with the unjust history of the world here on earth and to inaugurate the new phase of history, the definitive phase of the New Heavens and of the New Earth. They thought that this would take place between one or two generations. Many people would still be alive when Jesus would appear glorious in Heaven (1 Th 4: 16-17; Mk 9: 1). There were some persons who no longer worked, because they thought that the end would arrive within a few days or weeks (2 Th 2: 1-3; 3: 11). This is what they thought. But even today, the coming of Jesus has not arrived as yet! How can this delay be interpreted? On the streets of the cities people see writings on the walls which say Jesus will return! Is he coming or not? And how will his coming be? Many times, the affirmation "Jesus will return" is used to frighten persons and to oblige them to go to a determinate church.

In the New Testament the return of Jesus is always a reason for joy and peace! For those who are exploited and oppressed, the coming of Jesus is Good News! When will this coming take place?

Among the Jews, there were various opinions. The Sadducees and the Herodians said: "The Messianic times will come!" They thought that their well-being during the government of Herod was the expression of the Kingdom of God. And for this reason, they did not accept any changes and they fought against the preaching of Jesus who invited people to change and to convert themselves. The Pharisees said: "The coming of the Kingdom will depend on our effort in observing the law!" The Essens said: The promised Kingdom will arrive only when we will have purified the country from all its impurity." Among the Christians there was the same variety of opinions. Some of the community of Thessalonica the Greeks, basing themselves on Paul's preaching, said: "Jesus will return!" (1 Th 4: 13-18; 2 Th 2: 2). Paul responds that it was not that simple as they imagined. And to those who did not work he said: "Anyone who does not work has no right to eat!" (2 Th 3:1 0). Probably, it was a question of persons who at mealtime they would go to beg for food to the neighbor's house. Other Christians thought that Jesus would return only after the Gospel had been announced to the whole world (Acts 1: 6-11). And they thought that, the greater their effort would be to evangelize, the more rapidly would the end of the world arrive. Others, tired of waiting, said: "He will never come back!" (2 Pt 3: 4). Others basing themselves on the word of Jesus justly said: "He is already among us!" (Mt 25: 40)

The same thing happens today. There are people who say: "The way things are in the Church and in society, it is alright." They want no changes. Others are waiting for the immediate coming of Jesus. Others think that Jesus will return only through our work and announcement. For us, Jesus is already among us (Mt 28: 20). He is already at our side in the struggle for justice, for peace and for life. But the fullness has not as yet been attained. For this reason, we wait with perseverance the liberation of humanity and of nature. (Rm 8: 22- 25)

Personal Questions

- Jesus asks to look at the fig tree to contemplate the phenomena of nature. In my life have I already learnt something contemplating nature?
- Jesus says: “The sky and earth will pass, but my words will not pass.” How do I embody in my life these words of Jesus?

Concluding Prayer

Lord, how blessed are those who live in your house; they shall praise you continually. Blessed those who find their strength in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. (Ps 84: 4-5)

Saturday, November 28, 2026

Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

Lord,
increase our eagerness to do your will
and help us to know the saving power of your love. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - 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.”

Reflection

We are reaching the end of the long Apocalyptic Discourse and also getting to the end of the ecclesiastical year. Jesus gives a last piece of advice, inviting us to watch (Lk 21: 34-35) and to pray (Lk 21: 36).

- Luke 21:34-35: Attention not to lose the critical conscience. “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.” Jesus had already given a similar advice when they asked him about the coming of the Kingdom (Lk 17:20-21). He answers that the coming of the Kingdom will arrive like lightening; unexpectedly, without previous warning. Persons must be attentive and prepared always (Lk 17:22-27). When the wait is very long, there is the risk of not being attentive and of not paying attention to the events of

life “the hearts become coarsened by debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life.” Today there are many distractions which render us insensitive and the propaganda can even pervert in us the sense of life. Being far away from the suffering of so many people in the world, we are not aware of the injustices which are committed.

- Luke 21:36: Prayer, the source of a critical conscience and of hope. “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.” Constant prayer is quite an important means so as not to lose the presence of spirit. We must deepen in our hearts the knowledge, the awareness of God’s presence among us and, in this way, he gives us the strength and the light to bear the bad days and to increase our hope.
- Summary of the Apocalyptic Discourse (Lk 21:5-36). We have spent five days, from Tuesday to Saturday, meditating on and deepening the sense of the Apocalyptic Discourse for our life. All the three Synoptic Gospels have this Discourse of Jesus, each one in his own way. Let us try to see closely the version which the Gospel of Luke offers us. Here we give a brief summary of what we have been able to meditate during these five days.
- The whole of the Apocalyptic Discourse is an attempt to help the persecuted communities to place themselves in the general overall plan of God and in this way have hope and courage to continue on the way. In the case of the Apocalyptic Discourse of the Gospel of Luke, the persecuted communities were living in the year 85. Jesus speaks in the year 33. His discourse describes the stages or the signs of the realization of God’s plan. In all, there are eight signs and periods of time of Jesus up to our time. Reading and interpreting his life in the light of the signs given by Jesus, the communities discovered at what level the execution of the plan was found. The first seven signs had taken place already. They all belonged to the past. And especially in the 6th and 7th signs (persecution and destruction of Jerusalem) the communities found the image or the mirror of that which was happening in their present time. The following are the seven signs:
    - Introduction to the discourse (Lk 21: 5-7)
    - 1st sign: the false Messiahs (Lk 21: 8);
    - 2nd sign: war and revolutions (Lk 21: 9);
    - 3rd sign: nations which fight against other nations, a kingdom against another kingdom (Lk 21: 10);
    - 4th sign: earthquakes in different places (Lk 21: 11);
    - 5th sign: hunger, plagues and signs in the sky (Lk 21: 11);
    - 6th sign: persecution of Christians and mission that they have to carry out (Lk 21: 12-19) + Mission
    - 7th sign: destruction of Jerusalem (Lk 21: 20-24)

    Arriving at this 7th sign the communities conclude: We are in the 6th

and 7th signs. And this is the more important question: "How much is lacking for the end?" Anyone who is persecuted does not want to know or hear about a distant future. But he wants to know if he will be alive the following day or if he will have the strength to bear the persecution up to the following day. The response to this disturbing question comes in the eighth sign.

- 8th sign: changes in the sun and the moon (Lk 21: 25-26) they announce the coming of the Son of Man (Lk 21: 27-28).

Conclusion: little is lacking, all is according to God's plan, and all is like birth pangs. God is with us. It is possible to bear all this. Let us try to give witness of our faith in the Good News of Jesus At the end, Jesus confirms everything with his authority (Lk 21: 29-33).

Personal Questions

- Jesus asks that we watch so as not to allow ourselves to be surprised by facts or events. How do I live this advice of Jesus?
- The last warning of Jesus, at the end of the ecclesiastical year is this one: Watch and pray at all times. How do I put into practice in my life this advice of Jesus?

Concluding Prayer

For Yahweh is a great God, a king greater than all the gods.
In his power are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are his; the sea belongs to him, for he made it, and the dry land, molded by his hands. (Ps 95: 3-5)

Sunday, November 29, 2026

First Sunday of Advent

LECTIO

Initial Prayer:

Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Savior and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Mark 13: 33-37

"Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from his home, and left his

servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I am saying to you I say to all: 'Stay awake!'"

A Moment of Silence:

so that the Word of God may enter into our hearts and enlighten our lives.

MEDITATIO

A Key to the Reading:

"Watch!" This is the key word in the short passage that the Church presents for the liturgy of the first Sunday of Advent. To watch, to stay awake, to wait for the return of the master of the house, not to sleep, this is what Jesus asks of a Christian. These four verses of the Gospel of Saint Mark are part of the eschatological discourse in chapter thirteen. This chapter speaks of the destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem. Jesus takes up a point from the observation made by a disciple: "Master, look at the size of those stones!" (Mk 13: 1). Jesus, then, clarifies the idea: "You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be pulled down" (Mk 13: 2). The Temple, the tangible sign of the presence of God in the midst of his chosen people, Jerusalem "built as a city, in one united whole" where "the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh, a sign for Israel to give thanks to the name of Yahweh" (Ps 122: 4), all this, the sure sign of the promise made to David, sign of the covenant, all this will be destroyed...it is only a sign of something else to come. The disciples, rendered curious, ask the Lord who is sitting on the mount of Olives in front of the Temple: "Tell us, when is this going to happen, and what sign will there be that it is all about to take place?" (Mk 13: 4). After the Jewish apocalyptic style inspired by Daniel, Jesus limits his reply to proclaiming the warning signs (false christs and prophets who will deceive by proclaiming the coming of the imminent times, persecutions, signs in the powers of heaven. cf.: Mk 13: 5-32), "But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father" (Mk 13: 32).
This leads us to understand the importance of a watchful and attentive waiting for the signs of the times that help us to welcome the "master of the house" (Mk 13: 35). When he comes, all things will disappear, "the power of the servants" (Mk 13: 34) also the signs that help us remember his benevolence (temple, Jerusalem, house). When the master comes, the "servants" and "the doorkeeper" (Mk 13: 34) no longer care about the signs but take pleasure in the master himself: "Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him" (Mt 25: 6 + Mk 2: 19- 20).
Jesus often asked his disciples to watch. In the garden of Olives, on the Thursday night just before the passion, the Lord says to Peter, James and John: "Wait here, and stay awake" (Mk 14: 34; Mt 26: 38). Watching helps us not to fall into temptation (Mt 26: 41) but to stay awake. In the garden of Olives, the disciples fall asleep because the flesh is weak even though the spirit is willing

(Mk 14:38). Anyone who sleeps goes to ruin, like Samson who allowed himself to be put to sleep, thus losing his strength, the gift of God (Jud 16: 19). We must stay awake always and not fall asleep and watch and pray that we may not be deceived and thus go to our perdition (Mk 13: 22 + Jn 1: 6). Thus "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Eph 5: 14).

Questions to Orientate the Meditation and Make It Relevant:

- What does watching mean to you?
- The Lord foretells the destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem, the pride of the chosen people and symbols of the presence of God. Why does Jesus foretell their destruction?
- The Temple and the holy city were concrete forms of the covenant between God and his people. But these have gone through destruction. What are our concrete forms of the covenant? Do you think they will experience the same fate?
- Jesus calls us to transcend all forms and to attach ourselves to him. What things, forms and signs do you think the Lord is asking you to transcend so as to attach yourself more closely to him?
- Are you asleep? In what sense?
- Do you live always in expectation of the coming of the Lord? Is Advent a time for you to remember the element of waiting in the life of a Christian?

ORATIO

Psalm 96:

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols; but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in holy array; tremble before him, all the earth!
Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!
Yea, the world is established, it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity." Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Moments for a Prayerful Silence:

We give you thanks, O God our Father, for your son Jesus who came to raise us up and set us on the right way. When you awaken in our hearts a thirst for prayer and loving service, you prepare us for the dawn of that new day when our glory will be made manifest with all the saints in the presence of the Son of Man.

CONTEMPLATIO

Contemplation means to know how to adhere with one's whole heart and mind to the Lord who through his Word transforms us into new persons who always do his will. "Now that you know this, blessed are you if you behave accordingly." (Jn 13: 17)

Monday, November 30, 2020

St. Andrew, Apostle

Prayer

O Father, you called St. Andrew from the net of the world to become the wonderful fisher of men for the proclamation of the Gospel. Please also make us taste the sweetness of the heavenly Father and make us to be your beloved children, so that we can open our heart to you with full confidence in order to allow it to be made and formed by the eyes and words of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus, and that together with Him, we bring the joyful news of your merciful love to our brothers and sisters, which makes our life more beautiful.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 4: 18-22

As He was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen.19 He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, 22 and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

Meditation

- "He was walking along the Sea of Galilee." Jesus is just out of the desert, after 40 days of great loneliness and struggle against the devil (Mt 4: 1-11). He emerged victorious, secure in His love of the Father, and came into Galilee and dwelt in Capernaum on the seacoast, in the borders of Zabulon and of Nephthalim, bringing His great light and His salvation (Mt 4: 12-16). Here He began to shout His message of joy and liberation: "The kingdom of heaven is

at hand" (Mt 4: 17). There is no more loneliness since the Lord Jesus has arrived in our land, Galilee, among the Gentiles. He is very close, He is God-with-us. He is not far away and does not stay hidden. He "walks", along the sea and along the shores of our poor lives. Indeed, even more. Galilee, meaning "ring", tells us that He, being love, is to marry and to join with Him forever. Then you just have to welcome Him, as He walks by the sea. He already sees us, even from a distance, we already know.

- The verb "saw," repeated twice, first in reference to Andrew and his brother, then James and John, brings all the strength and intensity of a gaze that comes deep from the heart. Thus, the Lord sees us, as readers, with loving attention to browse the pages of our lives, and who knows everything about us, everything He loves.

  It is no accident that Matthew often uses a particular vocabulary to describe this episode of family vocation. In this encounter with the Lord Jesus we find the word "brother" four times and the word "father" two times. We discover that we too are sons and brothers. Jesus enters our reality in a most human way every day. He enters the flesh, in the heart, in my entire life, to make us born again.

- "Follow me." These are His words, simple and clear. He asks us to set out, to move, to "come to Him." It is a nice feeling to awaken to this voice that reaches us and is stronger and sweeter than the voice of the waters of the sea in the world which are noisy and confused. When He speaks to the heart, it becomes a great calm, and calm returns. Then He offers a course, marks the path to follow, and does not let us lose. "Follow me," says the Lord. Just accept the invitation, accept Him to know more, and just follow him as He opens the road.

- "They left and followed." The two brothers, the first called, Peter and Andrew, become for us the beginning of this journey, as a clear, strong decision. They teach us to do the moves, the movement, to choose. "Release" and "Forward" become the key verbs and the words are written in the heart.

  Maybe we will often have to make these changes on the inside, in the secret soul, where only we can see. This is where the Lord is faithful. For us it does this wonderful thing, this word of the Gospel, so bright and strong that it changes your life.

- "Now" Matthew shows us twice the welcoming and readiness of the disciples as the Lord is passing by, with His gaze and His voice for them. They do not put up obstacles. There is no doubt or fear, and they trust Him blindly and respond immediately, saying yes to that Love.

  In a crescendo, Matthew slides before our eyes all the elements that inspired the scene on the shore of the sea: nets, boats, the father, then it slips away into the background and is left aside. There remains only the Lord who goes before, and behind Him are the four new, called men. They carry our name, the story that God wrote for us.

Some Questions

- The horizon of this Gospel story and the grace that God still does for us is like the sea, a clear sea, which has a name and a geography. Can I, before the Word of God, at this moment, give a precise image of the horizon of my life? Do I have the inner peace to lay bare my life as it is, my Galilee, my sea, before the eyes of Christ? Do I fear that water in my heart, like a menacing sea, dark and empty? Can I allow the Lord to walk along my bank? Can I let myself look like Andrew, or as Simon, James or John?
- And if I'm silent at this moment, if I believe the steps of Jesus really are as close to me as to leave my poor sand on His prints of love and friendship, then do I have the courage to let myself look into His eyes full of light? Or do I continue to hide a bit, to escape, to hide somewhere such that I do not want to see or accept?
- And again, do I let Him talk to me, tell me, perhaps for the first time: "Come after me"? Or do I prefer to just keep listening to the sound of the sea, its waves invading and breaking on the shore?
- This Gospel speaks to me very strongly of the company of brothers. I speak of my being a son. It lays bare the deepest part of the heart, like the intimacy of home. Perhaps this is the place where there is more pain for me, where I do not feel understood, accepted and loved as I am? For the Lord puts His finger in my wound. Brothers, father, mother, friends... Jesus is all this for me, and much more. Do I really feel it? Is there room for Him in my house? And how is my relationship with him? Is it as a brother, or friend, or a son? Do you only know from a distance?
- It seems very clear that in this passage the Lord does great things in the life of the disciples. "I will make you fishers of men" He tells them. How do you react to this discovery? Do I let myself be touched by Him, really and truly? Do you want to let Him change your life? With Him I want to start a new adventure, looking for brothers and sisters who need to meet, to know and to feel loved by His infinite love? I can be a fisher of men, like Andrew and his brothers.
- We have just one thing: the decision to follow the Lord and to walk behind Him. What do I have to leave today to take this important step? What is holding me back which does not allow me to move? What weight in my heart, my soul? Perhaps I have in me the need to confess, to open my heart. My answer is now written into the look that He has laid on me, His words being stronger than the sound of the sea and I cannot pretend that nothing has happened. The Lord has left a mark. I am no longer what I was. I mean yes, as did Andrew. Amen.

Concluding Prayer

Your Word, Lord is a lamp to my feet.

How can the young walk without fault? Only by keeping your words. With all my heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commands.
In my heart I treasure your promise, that I may not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your laws.
With my lips I recite all the edicts you have spoken. I find joy in the way of your decrees more than in all riches. I will ponder your precepts and consider your paths. In your laws I take delight; I will never forget your word.