



Missionaries of Hope Among All Peoples

Meditations on the Biblical Readings of the Holy Mass for the Missionary Month October 2025

*At the request of the Pontifical Missionary Union,
the following collaborated in writing these meditations:
PMS National Directions in Spain, Ghana, Brazil, Portugal, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya*

Wednesday, October 1, 2025¹

XXVI Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Memorial of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Neh 2:1-8; Ps 137; Lk 9:57-62

The month of October begins, the month of missions par excellence...and it cannot begin in a better way than by celebrating Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, patron saint of missions and missionaries.

The memory of this saint is a precious gift for those of us who would like to be in some faraway country today, preaching the gospel. Saint Thérèse teaches us that you can be a missionary in the place where you live, in your home, even in the bed of a hospital or nursing home...prayer makes us missionaries! She was a missionary through her prayer and her silent dedication within a convent of Carmelite nuns...her cell was the world! And with her heart full of holy desires, she reached the ends of the earth. In the words of Pope Francis, we can say that “prayer is the first Missionary Society.”

Furthermore, the Gospel that is read today is very appropriate. Three people meet Jesus, they want to follow him, and the Lord invites them to go with him. But it is not worth doing it halfway; wanting to follow Jesus implies having discovered the treasure that is capable of changing the heart and life of any of us. As the song says, “I don’t want broken hearts...if I give mine, I give it all!”

Each one of us, according to his or her specific vocation – of consecrated life, marriage, contemplative life, the priesthood, in the cares of this world—each one of us has met Christ, who looked at us with affection and said to us, “Follow me!” We can make excuses, even seemingly very reasonable ones, to delay or postpone following him...but Jesus is worth it! Following him, accepting his call, taking our Christian vocation seriously—this is the greatest experience of love that man is called to live! And that makes us happy!

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus discovered her vocation when she was very young, and nothing stood in her way: If she had to ask the Pope for special permission to enter her convent... she would do it! Saint Thérèse, pray for us!

¹ The commentaries from October 1-5 were offered by Fr. José Maria Calderón Castro, PMS National Director in Spain, to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

Thursday, October 2, 2025

XXVI Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

Neh 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Ps 19; Mt 18:1-5,10

Today we remember the great allies of those who love Jesus...the holy guardian angels whom the Lord has placed next to each one of us to accompany us on our journey to heaven.

If yesterday we contemplated the Lord's call to follow him, today the liturgy reminds us that we do not make this journey of following him alone. The Lord has already taken care to provide us with help—an angel who, as Jesus says in the Gospel, “is always looking in heaven at the face of my heavenly Father.” Yes, he is contemplating the face of God and is speaking to him about us.

When I look at the missionaries who have left for distant countries, I see with what confidence they go, with what joy they leave their past—their history—to enter into another much more beautiful story which the Lord has written for each one of them. And in order to be able to live it, the Lord has provided them with their guardian angel as helper, consolation, and protection. This gives them security!

The Lord also wants to lead you and me along paths of dedication and joy, of service and mission wherever we are, and he does not leave us alone! He gives us his grace so that we do not falter, and he places us in the care of our guardian angel who, contemplating the face of God, also accompanies our way.

This is not a fairy tale or a romance story...it is the gift of a God who knows us, who knows very well our weaknesses and limitations, and who is the first to be committed to leading us along paths of holiness. For this, he also gives us the means to reach the goal.

“Angel” means sent, and our guardian angels have been sent to accompany us. You and I are also sent as “angels” for others whom the Lord has placed at our side, in order to accompany and support them so that they may draw closer to God. Holy Guardian Angels, pray for us!

Friday, October 3, 2025

XXVI Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Bar 1:15-22; Ps 79; Lk 10:13-16

A missionary is a witness, not a propagator of attractive or brilliant ideas; he is a witness of Christ. You and I, as followers of the Master, are witnesses of his love and his desire to save all men.

“We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:5) and him crucified. That is why the Lord can say, without exaggeration: “Whoever listens to you listens to me” (Lk 10:16). Missionaries—and you and I in our own environments—want to be his witnesses, to show his face, so that as saint Cardinal Newman said, “when they see me, they may not see me, but you in me.”

How beautiful is the life of missionaries and of all the saints! With their words, gestures, and concerns, they show the God who called them, chose them, and sent them. Perhaps the most impressive thing is that those who contemplate them, listen to them, or welcome them can see that these witnesses have been touched by the love of God.

But sometimes, men do not listen to them; they close the doors of their hearts to them, ignore them, or even reject them. That is why we must pray to the Lord for the missionaries so that they may be faithful instruments of the Gospel of Christ, and true reflections of the God who is thirsty to give himself to men. We must also pray for the people to whom the missionaries are sent so that, as Pope Saint John Paul II said, they may open wide the doors of their hearts to the Lord! May we prayerfully echo the Psalmist’s words, “Oh, that today you would hear his voice: Do not harden your hearts” (Ps 95:7,8).

Jesus was rejected...might we be rejected too? This should not discourage us, but rather invite us to be more faithful and to ask the Lord to do his work...despite us!

Saturday, October 4, 2025

XXVI Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi

Bar 4:5-12,27-29; Ps 69; Lk 10:17-24

What a beautiful text the liturgy offers us for today, coinciding with the feast of a great saint: St. Francis of Assisi. We entrust ourselves to him, and ask him that this day be a new opportunity to love God.

“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!” (*Lk 10:23*) The Lord has been good to us, and has allowed us not only to see him with the eyes of faith, and hear him in our hearts...he has even allowed us to participate in his own divine life, having made us children of God!

We have experienced God’s love; being conscious of what the Lord has done for us, can we keep quiet about it? No! Far from it. God has given us these gifts so that through our lives, words, testimonies, and service, we might make it possible for many others to discover what the Lord has in mind for them!

The reason for being a missionary, whether we go to distant lands or discover the greatness of our missionary vocation in our own nations and communities...is our desire that everyone meet Jesus! We want “everyone, everyone, everyone” (as Pope Francis liked to say), to be happy because they see the Father’s mercy and hear the voice of the Good Shepherd!

Jesus joyfully praised his Father for revealing the things of God to the little ones. Let us join our prayers to his, thanking God for the gifts of faith, hope, and love, as well as for having chosen and called us to be his apostles of love among our brothers and sisters, especially in this Jubilee Year of Hope.

We entrust ourselves to Saint Francis of Assisi, asking him to teach us how to live with a spirit of simplicity amid all of the beautiful things that God has given us.

Sunday, October 5, 2025

XXVII Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

Optional Memorial of Saint Faustina Kowalska, virgin

Hab 1:2-3;2:2-4; Ps 95; 2 Tim 1:6-8,13-14; Lk 17:5-10

I am very surprised by the trust in Jesus that the apostles show on so many occasions. The Lord calls them, and without thinking twice, they leave everything and set out on the road. In the end, the Lord sends them into the world, telling them to “cure the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the lepers” (*Mt 10:8*), and they are not surprised!

What about us? Jesus says in today’s Gospel that if we have faith like a mustard seed, we can do great things...but perhaps we are lacking even that little faith. The Lord is committed to doing great things with us and through us, but we have to trust God and firmly believe that the Lord both wants to and can do these beautiful and great works.

But there is no problem because we, like the apostles in the Gospel of the Holy Mass, can ask the Lord, “Increase our faith!” Or as the man who asked him for the healing of his son said on another occasion, “I do believe; help my unbelief!” (*Mk 9:24*).

Yes, the Lord asks us for great things that often exceed our capabilities...but he does not leave us alone, he does not abandon us. He knows of our poverty and our limitations, and that is why he comes to meet us... but we must believe that he can accomplish these great things and that with him, you and I can too.

Jesus entrusts the Church with an enormous task: to go throughout the world! To the ends of the earth! The mission is a beautiful and impressive adventure, but it can be carried out only by trusting in the grace of God.

The grave danger and the great temptation of the missionary, of the apostle, is to trust in ourselves, hoping to produce fruit by relying on our talents and strengths. But salvation is not there—it is only in Christ who gives us everything.

That is why we must ask the Lord to make us men and women of faith, of profound faith. That way, when the inevitable difficulties and adversities arise, we are able to continue the journey with hope, with optimism, with joy.

Saint Paul, in the text of today’s Second Letter to Timothy, tells us: “Do not be afraid to stand up for our Lord (...) Take on the hard work of the Gospel according to the strength that God gives you.” Let us not be afraid; instead, let us rekindle faith, the fire of God’s grace. Nothing and no one will prevent us from successfully completing what the Lord has entrusted to us and, then, we will say, as Jesus teaches us, “We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.”

Faith is a gift from God; it is not something that I can ever deserve. But the Lord gives it to those who ask for it with simplicity and humility. Faith is a gift, but it is within the reach of all who turn to the Father with confidence to ask for it.

Another Meditation²

The month of October is always referred to as the “Missionary Month.” It is dedicated to the mission of the Church. As Pilgrims of Hope, we are invited and commissioned to go out to preach the Good News and make disciples according to the Lord’s command: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always until the end of the age” (*Mt 28:19,20*). While the Church is missionary by nature and she exists to evangelize, the high point of this missionary month is the celebration of World Mission Sunday, which this year will be on the 19th of October. With this in mind, we also know that the mission of the Church is an everyday event; it is the daily work or mission of all the baptized! Every disciple of Jesus is missionary by virtue of their baptism. We are all baptized and sent. On this first Sunday of October, I would like to offer a brief commentary on the Gospel taken from *Lk 17:5-10*.

1. Lord, increase our faith

The apostles said to Jesus, “Lord, increase our faith.” Luke does not tell us what provoked the apostles to make such a request. We can only imagine that there was a sense of insufficiency or doubt, but not lack of faith. The chapters preceding this text are mainly about the sayings and parables that Jesus used to teach his disciples. They had heard and seen Jesus say and do many things before their eyes. When they asked Jesus to increase their faith, it could have been a moment of wonder, admiration, and perhaps, a coming to terms with the mystery of faith! Faith is a gift. No one buys it, earns it, conquers it, or wins it. It comes from God, and one can only do what the apostles in fact did: pray for it and for its increase when it’s weak, especially when assailed by indifference and doubt. (*Harold A Buetow in ODE to Joy, Homily Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days, page 231*) I want to think that the apostles were asking for this gift for themselves and on our behalf! We have some faith, but we need more faith to be the disciples that Jesus and the Church can depend on in our mission. This is exactly what makes us Pilgrims of Hope in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our Master! What do we know about this faith? It is born at baptism; it is supposed to grow; it sends us out for a mission; it is to be shared; it has to spread. Faith is effective, however small the dose; it is like a seed that must be planted and allowed to grow in order to produce fruit—fruit that lasts. It is in this spirit that we *do* need more of this faith.

Likewise, it is how we go together as Pilgrims of Hope. The journey starts somewhere and leads somewhere; along that journey, there are challenges to our growth in faith, such that it

² This commentary was offered by Fr Pontian Kaweesa, PMS National Director in Uganda, to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

can easily become stunted, choked, or even swept away or swallowed up by the enemies of our faith. Thanks be to God that where the seed of faith finds fertile ground, as in the parable of the Sower of Seeds (*Mt 13:1-23*), it grows, thrives, and bears abundant fruit! Faith can transform lives and lead us to attain salvation. This is what can motivate us to be on this journey with and for others, in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our hope. Missionaries accompany Jesus along the journey that leads to salvation. Sometimes in this companionship, we experience doubts, but we should never doubt Jesus Christ our Hope. He is the missionary from God the Father who came to show us the way, the truth, and the life of the Kingdom. There is a possibility of deserting Jesus on this journey—doubtful people, even missionaries, often can become deserters, like a people without hope, yet hope does not disappoint!

2. The power of faith

Jesus says to the apostles, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you” (v. 6). This speaks of the enormous power that genuine faith has. Faith surely can move mountains as well! Often, after the miracles Jesus performed among the people, he would state, “Go, your faith has set you free.” Many Scriptural testimonies remind us of those instances where Jesus’ miracles were a response to people’s faith: the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman (*Mk 7:24-30*), of the centurion’s slave (*Lk 7:1-10*), of the paralytic who was lowered down through the roof (*Lk 5:17-26*), and of a boy with a demon (*Mk 9:14-29*), for example. The power of faith cannot be underestimated! Having faith in Jesus because He is God is such a powerful treasure to have. The Kingdom of Heaven comes to those who have faith.

The power of faith is biblically related to the proverbial mustard seed! It is a very tiny and inconspicuous seed, but when its potential is explored, it can become amazing in its effects. It can literally grow into a tree in which even birds can shelter. It is amazing what genuine faith in God can do within *us* as well! We are capable of ordinary acts that can bear extraordinary effects.

3. Unprofitable Servants

“When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.’” The moral of this is to behave like humble servants who put their master’s instructions into practice. Carrying out the mission of the Church—the mission of our Master—is a service. Jesus tells the apostles that faith is gained through doing what they are supposed to do. Mission is also a disinterested service, an altruistic act, not only for its own sake, but also for the good of others. We are saved along with others, for we journey together and our Master is one and the same; we have to be following in his footsteps with a hope that does not disappoint.

October is the month of both the missions and the holy Rosary. No one ever followed through with the humble readiness of carrying out the mission of God—the mission of the Church—like the Blessed Virgin Mary. During this month of October, we pray with Mother Mary, Star of Evangelization, to ask Jesus to increase our hope, faith, and charity.

Monday, October 6, 2025³

XXVII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Jon 1:1–2:1-2,11; Jon 2:3, 4, 5, 8; Lk 10:25-37

The Book of Jonah in the Bible, like the parable of the Good Samaritan, is a story told to teach a lesson. We need not be concerned with what type of fish swallowed Jonah, nor whether such a thing is possible, any more than we need be concerned with the name of the Samaritan who stopped along the road to help the person in distress. And the point of both stories is not dissimilar.

The Ninevites, unlike Jonah, were not Jewish; they were non-believers. Jonah was commanded by God to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. He tried to escape from his mission because he was actually afraid that the people would listen to his message and receive mercy from God. He did not want them to repent; he wanted God to limit himself to only the Jews, and above all, he did not want God to show any favor to the Ninevites, who were enemies of the Jews.

Jonah represents the narrow attitude of those Jews who could not bear the thought that God would favor unbelievers, and he stands for all people who are prejudiced against others, who want to make religion into a narrow circle of intimates. In today's Gospel, Jesus holds up as a model the Samaritan who befriended his natural enemy, a Jew.

The point is abundantly clear. Jesus wished to show that no one may be excluded from our love. As Pilgrims of Hope among all peoples, we are the ones on the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho. Along the way, we were robbed of our friendship with God through sin, and we lay along the roadside stripped, beaten, and half dead. It was Jesus who entered our journey through his incarnation and who passed by our way during his own journey. Jesus saw us and responded to our needs. He embraced us, dressed our wounds, and brought us to the inn, the Church. The price that he paid was not merely the two pieces of silver mentioned in the parable, but his own life. That is what it means to say that Jesus is our Savior, our personal Good Samaritan.

³ The commentaries from October 6 to 10 were offered by Fr. Isaac Ebo-Blay, PMS National Director in Ghana, to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

XXVII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Jon 3:1-10; Ps 130; Lk 10:38-42

While good intentions can drive a person to overactivity and even to misguided zeal, the scriptures still defend the combination of human activity and morally good works as essential to salvation. For interpreting today's readings, we must keep in mind the healthy balance that each of us must hold of being simultaneously Martha and Mary, and Jonah and the Ninevites. Each of these persons becomes a symbol for us.

Jonah was a man of action; not always good action, but certainly decisive and effective. As we saw in the previous episode, when Jonah was ordered to go to Nineveh to preach repentance, he promptly acted, but in the wrong direction. We need to reflect still more carefully upon the readings. In the Book of Jonah, repentance did not consist simply in the ritual acts of sackcloth and ashes; all persons were required to "turn from their evil ways." This is an essential concept for this account of conversion: Both ritual and moral action were expected.

Turning to the Gospel, we are not surprised at Jesus' words to Martha: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things, one thing only is required. Mary has chosen the better portion." In a very true sense, Jesus was speaking to the "Mary" that should exist in Martha and each person. It is not good to be so active as to be "anxious and upset." We are always in need of being reminded of the secret, inner vision of our lives. An hour's contemplation each day gives heart and soul to the other twenty-three hours of our work as missionaries of hope among all peoples.

The prophecy of Jonah urges us to reform our lives and prayerfully call out to the Lord. The "better portion," also called "the one thing necessary," in no way makes the *other* portion unimportant or unnecessary; rather, it makes our activity full of spirit and soul, direction and wisdom, love and tenderness. We each need to be both Martha and Mary.

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

XXVII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Jon 4:1-11; Ps 86; Lk 11:1-4

If Jonah's being swallowed by the fish seems unreal to some people, his attitude seems even more so. Why is it that Jonah is displeased that God would show compassion and love toward the people of Nineveh? Why would he be jealous? His problem was that even though he knew that God is gracious and merciful, he was far from understanding God and his values.

God used the withered plant to teach a lesson. Jonah was disappointed that the plant had died. God's point then was that if Jonah had some form of pity for the plant, why should not God the Creator show pity for the people of Nineveh whom he had made?

Jonah finds a parallel today in those people who think that God's favor is something people ought to earn, as if some price could be paid to God for his mercy and love. They judge God by those human standards that say you are entitled only to those things for which you work...hard. They fail to understand that God loves people gratuitously because they are his creation.

Another reason why God gives his love freely is implicit in the Gospel. When Jesus teaches us to call God "our Father," it is clearly implied that we have become God's children. Good parents love their children, not because of accomplishments, but simply because they are their children. It is a love freely given. God loves us in much the same way. We are not just God's creatures; we are his children, and he loves us freely because of who we are. The Father of Jesus is our Father as well because we are one with Jesus, part of his body, his mystical body, which is the Church.

Thursday, October 9, 2025

XXVII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Mal 3:13-20b; Ps 1; Lk 11:5-13

We have been using the more religious, moral word “perseverance.” In today’s Gospel, St. Luke brings our discussion much closer to earth by citing a more secular word, “persistence.” While “perseverance” connotes the way to heaven and the faithful fulfillment of one’s moral obligation, “persistence” almost has an inappropriate taste of stubbornness about it. Such indeed is the tone and attitude of Jesus’ short parable.

According to the customs of almost every land throughout the world, we do not bang on the door of a neighbor in the middle of the night in order to obtain some bread. Jesus is not arguing what is right or wrong. The point of a parable is always reserved for the last line or final statement. The neighbor obliges, not because of friendship but because of the persistence, and gives that one as much as he needs.

Perseverance and persistence, then, carry a note of annoyance and trouble, but most of all, there is an enduring faith that hope will not be frustrated. A bond of the spirit between the neighbors is being deepened beyond the laws of friendship.

Jesus takes the parable a few steps further. He appeals to parents’ care and attention towards their children. Does a mother give a snake when a child asks for fish, or a father a scorpion when the son wants an egg? Jesus acknowledges the basic goodness and fidelity of every human being, yet he also wants our relationship to deepen and to be still more reliable. St. Luke adapts the account to focus on the Holy Spirit. God gives part of himself, his own Holy Spirit.

Perseverance enables us to wait long enough so that our own good actions manifest a divine goodness and reach beyond our dreams and expectations. Through the prophet Malachi, God responded to those who had lost heart. He assured the people that they were still his own special possession, dearer to him than children to their parents. He asked for patience, assuring them that in time, justice would prevail.

Friday, October 10, 2025

XXVII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Joel 1:13-15, 2:1-2; Ps 9; Lk 11:15-26

The background of today's first reading is that the crops had been devastated by a plague of locusts. Food was practically non-existent, and people literally did not know where their next meal was coming from. The prophet saw the plague not only as punishment for sin, but also as a warning that one day God would come in judgment. On that great day, all evil would be destroyed.

Even as the people were starving, the prophet was bold enough to warn them to have a broader view of the reality. He was so courageous and so convinced of the truth that, in effect, he was telling the people that starvation was not the great evil. The great evil was to be against God. That is why he called them to repentance, to turn once again toward God and be his faithful people. Learn a lesson, the prophet said, from the plague of locusts. If you think it is bad, he was saying, to suffer from starvation, it will be much worse to suffer alienation from God on the last day.

I suppose we would like to think that we do not need what might be called scare tactics to keep us faithful. But we too have a lesson to learn from the prophet Malachi. It is a lesson of perspective. Sometimes we are tempted to be a little nearsighted, to be absorbed in problems we face every day, perhaps even to the point of discouragement. It is then that we need to realize that the ultimate evil is that of sin, which separates us from God.

In the light of this perspective, most of our problems, none of which is as bad as starvation, ought to appear less significant. What really counts is to be on God's side, to live as the trusting and loving children of God.

Saturday, October 11, 2025⁴

XXVII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Joel 4:12-21; Ps 97; Lk 11:27-28

To reflect on this short passage from today's Gospel, we need to remember the exorcism that Jesus performed (*Luke 11:14*) and the astonishment it caused in the crowd. Jesus' words in response to those who wanted to test him aroused the enthusiastic approval of a woman because he spoke with authority, and all the more so because he was confronting the unbelief of many of those who heard him.

The woman's words express a typical phrase of praise known in Judaism, proclaiming the blessedness of a mother in order to express admiration for her child. Jesus responds by proclaiming the blessedness of the believers who, by listening to the Word of God and keeping it, share his desires, know the Father through the profound experience of faith (*Lk 8:21*), and are able to fight against the return of the forces of evil. Certainly Luke's community benefited greatly from this testimony, as do readers today, learning lessons about authentic discipleship.

The woman's exclamation reminds us of Mary: faithful daughter of Zion, model of faith for Christians, the first disciple who always listened to the word of God and put it into practice (*Lk 1:38, 45, 48; 2:19, 51*). Through her intercession, we can join in the prayer of Pope Francis, who asked the Mother of Jesus that "the light of Christian hope illumine every man and woman, as a message of God's love addressed to all! And may the Church bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world!" (Bull *Spes Non Confundit*, 6)

Knowledge of God comes through listening to and obeying his Word. In Jesus, the woman and the crowds recognize the new and true knowledge of God by listening to the Word (*Jn 1:1, 14*): "Whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life" (*Jn 5:24*). The woman's response illustrates the practicability of the divine word and its transforming power, as Pope Francis has reminded us: "In the human and divine heart of Jesus, God wants to speak to the heart of every man and woman, drawing all of us to his love" (*Message for World Mission Day 2025*). The passage shows that faith must work in each one of us, a practical consequence of being a missionary disciple.

Today the Church takes the place of that woman in the crowd who shouted because she recognized the power and effectiveness of the Master's words. By listening to and obeying the Word, the Church brings into the present tense the message of the Word of God that continues the realization of his Kingdom. "The LORD will be a shelter for his people" (*Joel 3:16*), says the prophet Joel; therefore, "let us renew the mission of hope, starting from prayer, especially prayer based on the Word of God" (*Message for World Mission Day 2025*).

⁴ The commentaries from October 11-15 were offered by the PMS National Direction in Brazil, to whose director, Sr. Regina da Costa Pedro, and the authors of the texts, Fr. Eltom de Sousa Melo (October 11-13) and Fr. Djalma Antonio da Silva (October 14-15), we extend our sincere gratitude.

Sunday, October 12, 2025

XXVIII Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

2Kgs 5:14-17; Ps 98; 2 Tm 2:8-13; Lk 17:11-19

Today's Gospel is a continuation of last Sunday's text from Luke, and begins with a brief reminder of the journey to Jerusalem, informing us that Jesus is between Samaria and Galilee, the third and final part of the "great journey." Jesus passes through an area considered unclean by the Jews (Samaria), and meets unclean people (lepers). He continues his mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. "'He went about doing good and healing all' from evil and the Evil One (cf. *Acts 10:38*), restoring hope in God to the needy and the people" (*Message for World Mission Day 2025*). In Luke's gospel, we first have the typical account of a miracle, with the lepers' pleading approach, Jesus' quick attention and words of sending, and then the healing from a distance while the group was already walking away. But the story continues because the focus is not on the healing that took place but on the attitude of those who were healed. The contrast between the indifference of the nine and the grateful awareness of only one—identified as a Samaritan, a foreigner—is evident. A curious detail is worth noting: this is the first time in Luke's Gospel that someone addresses Jesus by name. The name of Jesus is placed as an invocation and already indicates the central message of the story: it is God who saves. When we pray the name of Jesus, we are united with him in his own way, in which we are cleansed. The leper experiences God's mercy in the compassionate action of Jesus who heals; in fact, Jesus is God who saves.

This reflection would have occurred in a Christian community of pagan origin (Greeks) in order to make explicit the attention of Christians to the universal mission. (This is not an isolated case in Luke; in the parable of the Good Samaritan [*Luke 10:29-37*], he highlights the actions of the foreigner who helps, cares for, and ensures the recovery of a man he finds lying on the road.) In today's Gospel, the Samaritan leper's gesture of gratitude is a paradigm of conversion and salvation. The other nine who were healed would have benefited from the miracle but would not have known the grace of salvation. They represent the Jews who believe they were healed because they kept the law. In fact, they kept the law by staying outside the village and going to the priest, as required (*vv. 12, 14*), and therefore they believed they deserve to be healed. But it is the demonstration of faith, in the Eucharistic adoration at the feet of Jesus, that assures the Samaritan of salvation. As Pope Francis has reminded us: "Christ is the fullness of salvation for all, and in a particular way for those whose only hope is God" (*Message for World Mission Day 2025*).

It is written that they were healed, while they were "on the way." The way is the symbolic space of healing and a symbol of the missionary nature of Jesus' action. The way represents the distance between Jesus and the priests, that is, between the divine will and the traditionalist rituals. The group of the healed is on this way, that favors different directions, but only a few are oriented towards the path of life and truth. Jesus then takes advantage of the Samaritan's

gratitude to deepen the reflection, because salvation goes beyond physical healing. Jesus' action is supported by the testimony of the prophecy of Israel, as the first reading of this Sunday's liturgy reminds us. The passage from the Second Book of Kings tells of the cycle of the prophet Elisha. The climax is the story of Naaman, a Syrian military leader who had a Jewish slave whom he took captive during one of the invasions of Israel. But Naaman was a leper. His slave told him about Elisha, the man of God, so he went to Israel. But when he arrives at Elisha's door, the prophet does nothing spectacular. He simply asks the Syrian to bathe seven times in the Jordan River; in other words, he suggests that Naaman be healed from afar.

This causes reluctance in the Syrian, who refuses to act according to the prophet's instructions for he expects him to act in a miraculous way, with great rituals and spectacular gestures. On the contrary, God's action is simple: through the mouth of the prophet, his word is discreet and effective. Similarly in the Gospel account, the few words of Jesus contrast with the ritualistic prescriptions of the Law. Everything is very simple in the healing of Naaman; the advice of the slave, the Jordan River, the simple ritual, and finally Naaman's thanksgiving: he had wanted to give gifts to the prophet, but when they were refused, the Syrian decided simply to take a part of the land of Israel with him when he returned home in order to worship the God of Israel there. The text of Paul's second letter to Timothy also emphasizes the power of God's word to heal from afar. The apostle recalls his imprisonment, and reminds us that the Word of God cannot be imprisoned; it is free, strong, and liberating. The sufferings and anxieties of imprisonment are soothed by the gospel—the word of comfort and hope for the sufferings of the world. The proclamation of the Gospel is a recognition of the presence of Christ.

Even today, he bends over every poor, afflicted, desperate person oppressed by evil, in order to “pour on their wounds the oil of consolation and the wine of hope” (Preface, Christ the Good Samaritan).

Today the whole Church is invited to pray together, trusting in the word of Jesus and guided by the Spirit of God, so as to avoid every kind of prejudice and reject every form of discrimination, thus to be a sign of the saving presence of God in all places, and a herald of hope to answer the pleading cry of the sick world. We must always remember that it is God who cures our leprosy, forgives our sins, renews us, and purifies us, and that his saving action knows no barriers or distances. We need to show gestures of gratitude characteristic of those who have been touched by God's grace, and set out on the path of discipleship, always making the immediate transition from the benefit of healing to the experience of authentic faith in Jesus.

Monday, October 13, 2025

XXVIII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 1:1-7; Ps 98; Lk 11:29-32

Today's Gospel deals with a question raised by some in the crowd who want to test Jesus by asking him for a sign from heaven (*Lk 11:16*). Jesus responds first to the crowd's reactions after the exorcism, then he blesses the woman's praise, and finally, he rebukes the thoughts of the "evil generation." This is one of those times when the Lord shows little interest in the crowd because he knows their thoughts and intentions. This crowd had seen the exorcism and heard his discourse, but did not listen to his words; on the contrary, they even demanded that he obey them by showing off with signs.

The crowd's search for a sign was accompanied by their desire to test Jesus. They saw the power of God in him, but they did not believe. When we trust in God, we do not ask him for more proof. The need for proof reflects the fragility of many people's faith. As Pope Francis reminded us: "Jesus commended everything to God the Father, obediently trusting in his saving plan for humanity, a plan of peace for a future full of hope (cf. Jer 29:11)" (*Message for World Mission Day 2025*). Christians imitate Jesus by trusting in the will of the Father, a sign of true faith and of our conversion to his Word. Like Paul in his greeting in the Letter to the Romans, he recalls the Gospel of God, proclaimed from the beginning by the prophets, which we have the mission to proclaim to all nations through obedient faith because true wisdom is conversion to the message (*1 Cor 1:21*).

On the basis of the sign of Jonah, Jesus establishes an eschatological judgment; his words already constitute a condemnation against this crowd, defined as a "wicked generation." What Jonah had preached to the Ninevites corresponds to Jesus' words to this crowd; the reference is to the prophet's proclamation of a stern warning to the city (*Jon 3:4*). Jesus himself explains the judgment on the present generation that hears his word but does not obey it. According to Jewish tradition, Israel would judge the nations at the end of time, but in the judgment announced by Jesus, it will be a foreigner, the queen of the south, who will condemn this generation (*1 Kgs 10:1-13*). In addition, the inhabitants of Nineveh, who were converted by the preaching of Jonah (*Jon 3:5-10*), will join them. The universality of salvation will be evident when the nations joyfully accept the message that Israel rejected.

By listening to and practicing the words of Jesus, the community of faith becomes the recipient and herald of salvation to the world. In fact, "the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1).

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

XXVIII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 1:16-25; Ps 19; Lk 11:37-41

Jesus reveals his merciful love especially to those who do not yet fully understand the meaning of his mission. He is the one who draws near, who loves unconditionally, and who invites people to a new way of life. In today's passage from the Gospel of Luke, we see this reality expressed when Jesus accepts an invitation to eat at the home of a Pharisee. This gesture shows the extent of his love, which excludes no one, not even those who question him or do not yet understand his message of salvation for all.

During the meal at the Pharisee's house, Jesus is criticized for not performing the ritual of washing his hands, a practice valued by this religious group. He uses the occasion to convey an essential truth: true purity is not found in outward rituals but in the transformation of the heart. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for placing undue emphasis on outward appearance and cleanliness while their hearts remain filled with greed and evil. He warns them: "Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil." Jesus' lesson also teaches us to avoid rushing to judgment. Just as the Pharisees were fixated on appearances and so condemned those who did not follow their traditions, we can fall into the trap of judging others without looking at our own imperfections. The true way to God is through sincerity of heart, humility, and charity, which lead us to authentic transformation.

Jesus' compassionate love overcomes all kinds of evil. It is a love that welcomes everyone, regardless of their limitations, doubts, or failures. It is a love that not only forgives but transforms, renewing the human heart and leading it to a new way of life. Jesus' love makes no distinction between those who fully understand him and those who still resist his message. He approaches, dialogues, teaches, and above all, loves unconditionally, offering everyone the possibility of true conversion.

Jesus is always inviting us to change our lives and to commit ourselves to the kingdom of God. On this path, we are called not to judge but to be instruments of his mercy, sharing generously with those who are most in need: "But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you." During this month of mission, may we be inspired by Jesus to be living witnesses of his love. May our faith overflow into concrete acts of solidarity, justice, and compassion. As missionary disciples, may we bring the light of Christ to the marginalized, and proclaim with joy and courage that salvation is for all. May our lives reflect missionary zeal and the desire to make Christ known and loved in every heart.

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

XXVIII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Memorial of Saint Teresa of Jesus, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Rom 2:1-11; Ps 62; Lk 11:42-46

In today's Gospel, Jesus remains firm in his warnings to the Pharisees, denouncing their hypocrisy and legalistic rigidity. The expression "Woe to you," often used by the prophets, shows Jesus' indignation at the attitude of these religious authorities who were more concerned with outward observance of the law than with justice and the love of God. The Pharisees wore the cloak of goodness to appear righteous and pious but they hid the hardness of their hearts. Obsessed with the strict observance of the law, they neglected what was essential: love and mercy. Jesus rebukes them because their religiosity is superficial and empty, focused on display and social approval rather than true conversion of heart. Legalistic strictness with insignificant details does not make them righteous before God, because they ignore what really matters: love of neighbor and sincere living of the faith.

The law of God, as taught by the prophet Micah (*Mic 6:8*), demands justice, mercy, and humility. The law must protect the poor, the defenseless, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. Loving God means serving those most in need, reaching out to them with kindness and compassion. However, the Pharisees distorted this truth because they were more concerned with the public display of their religiosity than with inner transformation. They tithed even small aromatic herbs to demonstrate their meticulous observance of the law but neglected what really mattered: justice and love. Jesus warns them of this inconsistency between the outside and the inside by comparing them to unmarked tombs that appear harmless on the outside but hide death and impurity, into which people step without realizing it. This powerful image warns us of the danger of a life of appearances, where the outside may be beautiful but the inside remains hardened, empty of love and God.

Christ invites us to a change of life and a true conversion of heart. Our faith cannot be limited to external gestures but must come from a heart renewed by divine mercy. We live in a society that values the superficial, where aesthetics often take precedence over ethics and vanity takes the place of truth. Many are overly concerned with the image they project to the world, forgetting to cultivate a pure, upright, and sincere heart before God. This way of living leads to a superficial spirituality characterized by "pretense" in which moral and spiritual values are set aside for the sake of appearances.

May God grant us the grace of an authentic faith that overflows in works of love, justice, and mercy. May our life and mission be a reflection of the Gospel, and in the midst of a world thirsting for truth, may we be living signs of Christ's presence, radiating his light and love to all.

Thursday, October 16, 2025⁵

XXVIII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 3:21-30; Ps 130; Lk 11:47-54

The curses in today's Gospel are directed at the doctors of the law rather than at the Pharisees of yesterday's Gospel. Both groups, however, have a common problem: they identify salvation with righteousness and the law itself. Thus they transgress God's saving will for them, while the publicans and sinners recognize and accept God's mercy. Blessedness is believing in the word that says, "With the Lord there is mercy and abundant redemption," as we proclaim in the Responsorial Psalm. This is the blessedness of Saul, a Pharisee and doctor of the law: after being healed of his blindness by God, he recognizes, as he does today in the Letter to the Romans, that "they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus." The God of forgiveness welcomes everyone without distinction.

Jesus accuses the doctors of the law of being accomplices of their fathers who, in order not to be converted, killed the prophets who proclaimed the Word of God. The doctors of the law, in turn, suffocate the Word of God with endless prescriptions, and make it difficult to follow. Instead of opening themselves to God's mercy, they close themselves off in their self-sufficiency and arrogance. The generation of Jesus' time will be called to account for the blood of the prophets because in it, the mystery of iniquity and, at the same time, the mystery of his infinite goodness will be completed: through his passion.

The other criticism that Jesus makes of the doctors of the law is that they have taken possession of the key to science or the knowledge of God. They do not enter and do not allow access to those who want to know God. They have taken away the key to his Word, and give the image of a God without mercy. But the wisdom of God will use the cross of Jesus as the key offered to all to enter into the knowledge of God. We, the missionary disciples of Jesus, are called to make this key known to all peoples.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, whose liturgical commemoration is celebrated today, was of great importance in the development of the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a response to the rigorous and disembodied forms of spirituality that forgot the Lord's mercy. As Saint John Paul II said in a catechesis, this cult was "the response to the Jansenist rigor that ended up underestimating the infinite mercy of God." At the same time, it can be considered a contemporary appeal to a world that seeks to build itself without God: "The men and women of the third millennium need the heart of Christ in order to know God and to know themselves; they need it to build the civilization of love" (texts cited by Pope Francis in *Dilexit nos*, 80). Indeed, the Heart of Jesus leads us to be intimate with God and with ourselves, and to work for the Kingdom of God. May the Lord teach us to be missionaries of his merciful Heart!

⁵ The commentaries from October 16-19 were offered by Fr. José António Mendes Rebelo, M.C.C.J., PMS National Director in Portugal, to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

Friday, October 17, 2025

XXVIII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr

Rom 4:1-8; Ps 32; Lk 12:1-7

In today's Gospel, Jesus warns his disciples against the "leaven—that is, the hypocrisy—of the Pharisees." Yeast has a positive influence on the making of bread and cakes: it helps the dough to rise and become what it should be. The "yeast of hypocrisy," on the other hand, has a harmful effect on people: it is contagious and leads them to show what they are not, to live in lies, to privilege appearances, and to create a society of façade in which people are like "actors." The disciple is called to discern the yeast that moves his life: whether it is the fear of death, which leads to hypocrisy, or it is the yeast of goodness and truth.

In the second part of the Gospel, Jesus invites his listeners to have an attitude of trust and unconditional abandonment before God the Father. He cares for us with an immense tenderness, from which no detail escapes. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. This is a sign of his love. In fact, our value is as infinite as His love for us: we are worth more than the life of his Son, we are worth the blood of Christ. We are therefore called to contemplate God, who is always present and active in our lives and in our history, and to trust in His love for us.

The profound experience of God's love removes the fear of death that conditions our lives. St. Ignatius of Antioch, whom the Church commemorates today, is an example of those people of faith who, throughout history, have not feared those who "kill the body and then can do nothing." The third bishop of Antioch (in Syria) was a victim of persecution by the Emperor Trajan. He was arrested around the year 110 and taken to Rome in chains. During the journey, he wrote seven letters that testify to his burning love for Christ and the Church. In his letter to the Romans, he wrote that he was "the leaven of God": "I am writing to all the churches, assuring them that I am ready to die for God if you do not prevent me. I beg you not to show me untimely kindness. Let me be food for the wild beasts, through which I may come into the possession of God. I am God's wheat, and I must be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts so that I may become the pure bread of Christ." St. Ignatius is asking Christians not to prevent his martyrdom, so that he may be "born" into eternity.

Saturday, October 18, 2025

XXVIII Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Feast of Saint Luke, Evangelist

2 Tm 4:10-17b; Ps 145; Lk 10:1-9

Today the Church celebrates the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, a physician born in Antioch in Syria. A convert to Christianity, he became an associate of St. Paul whom he accompanied on missionary journeys when others had abandoned him out of tiredness or fear, as we read in Paul's letter to Timothy. Luke was the author of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and was also one of those responsible for missionary activity in the early days of the Church.

The Gospel recounts the sending of the seventy-two disciples on a mission to prepare for the coming of Jesus, an episode that is unique to Luke. After having sent the Twelve on a mission (*Lk 9:1ff*), Jesus then sends these seventy-two disciples to whom he gives clear instructions on what they should do and how they should behave on mission. Jesus asks them to go in poverty so that they may experience their dependence, to accept the hospitality offered to them, and to trust only in the power of the message they carry—not in the power of the means that they might eventually have.

Luke links the mission of the seventy-two disciples to prayer when he says: "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." Mission begins with prayer; without prayer there is no mission. By asking God for more workers for his mission, we open ourselves to his inspiration and impulse, which are the indispensable means to become the collaborators God needs. Therefore, prayer is the first missionary action, as Pope Francis has reminded us.

Mission is one of St. Luke's greatest concerns. He is the evangelist of prayer, mercy, and forgiveness. He presents Jesus as the friend of sinners and the comforter of the suffering. Salvation is for everyone, but especially for the poor, the sick, the marginalized, sinners, and women and children, because Jesus "came to seek and to save what was lost" (*Lk 19:10*). In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke recounts how Jesus' salvation in Jerusalem reached the ends of the earth, thanks to the witness of the apostles and the first Christians, and the power of the Holy Spirit, the great protagonist of the mission.

We, the disciples of today, continue this mission of salvation by doing everything we can to ensure that the fragrance of Christ and his Gospel reaches everyone.

Sunday, October 19, 2025

World Mission Sunday

XXIX Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

Ex 17:8-13; Ps 121; 2 Tm 3:14-4:2; Lk 18:1-8

Today's readings speak of the importance and power of prayer, and give two examples.

1. The first reading tells us that through the power of prayer we can win our battles and triumph over our enemies. The story in the book of Exodus is as follows: The Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land. They had to pass through the territory of Amalek, a nomadic tribe that lived in the Sinai desert. Tired from the journey, they asked for water, but instead of helping them, the Amalekites attacked and killed the weakest who were at the back of the caravan (*cf. Deut. 25:17-19*).

Today's episode in Exodus refers to one of the first confrontations with this tribe. The text says that Moses ordered Joshua to attack them while he, along with Aaron and Hur, went up on the mountain to ask God for help. It happened that while Moses had his arms raised in prayer, Joshua prevailed in the battle, but when he lowered them because of fatigue, the Amalekites prevailed. To keep Moses' arms raised in prayer, Aaron and Hur told him to sit on a stone, and they, one on the right and the other on the left, kept his arms raised. They stayed like this until evening, and Israel defeated the Amalekites. It is clear that the victory over Amalek was not due to Joshua's sword but to Moses' prayer.

The biblical passage is obviously not an invitation to ask God for strength to kill enemies, but to face and win the spiritual battles we face as believers. The text has a theological message: it teaches us that those who want to achieve goals beyond their strength must pray without ceasing. There are results that can only be achieved through prayer. The enemies we are called to confront are ambition, hatred, and disordered passions. Without prayer, these enemies will win over us.

Moses, with his arms raised, is the symbol of the believer who is aware of the need to invoke the power of God through prayer, knowing that "our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Responsorial Psalm).

2. In the Gospel we have a parable about the need to always pray without losing heart. It is said that through prayer, justice is done. The first character in the parable is a judge whose duty was to protect the weak and defenseless, not to be someone without feelings or compassion. The second character is the widow, the symbol of a defenseless person who is vulnerable to abuse. The widow had suffered an injustice and had no means of defending her cause other than repeatedly and persistently pestering the judge.

Although the judge is agnostic and incapable of sympathizing with the widow's suffering, he ends up helping her, not because his heart has become more sensitive, but because he does not want to be bothered. If this is the case with a judge with a closed heart, God will, with much more reason, "immediately" bring justice "to his elect who cry out to him day and night."

With this parable, Jesus wants to present the situation of the disciples in this world still dominated by evil and deeply marked by death. Injustice is represented by abuses and deceptions committed against the poorest. What should we do in these situations? The parable says: pray always, without ceasing. Prayer is the best way to keep our heads in the most difficult and dramatic moments, when we see no way out of situations, when everything seems to be against us.

True prayer is a dialogue with the Lord to evaluate reality, events, people, and criteria of judgment. We examine our thoughts, feelings, reactions, and plans with him using Scripture. In prayer, we discern what to do. As we pray, we are led to commit ourselves to social transformation and to do our part in building the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of justice and brotherhood.

We should pray not so much that God will do what we ask of him now, but that our faith will not be extinguished and that Jesus' last question ("But when the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on the earth?") will have a positive answer.

3. Prayer is the guide and strength of mission. Today the Church celebrates the 99th World Missionary Day, on which we are invited in a special way to pray for the mission of the Church throughout the world. We feel a part of it, especially through our prayer, our way of living and witnessing to Jesus, and our financial contributions, which are entirely dedicated to supporting the work of evangelization among the youngest and most needy Catholic communities.

For this day of prayer and commitment to the universal mission of the Church, Pope Francis wrote a message entitled "Missionaries of Hope Among all Peoples" which "reminds individual Christian and the entire Church, the community of the baptized, of the fundamental vocation to be, in the footsteps of Christ, messengers and builders of hope."

Pope Francis recalled how in his earthly life, Jesus, "the divine Missionary of hope ... 'went about doing good and healing all' from evil and the Evil One (*cf. Acts 10:38*), restoring hope in God to the needy and the people." He urges us to be inspired to set out "in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus to become, with him and in him, signs and messengers of hope for all, in every place and circumstance that God has granted us to live."

The Holy Father insists on the necessity and urgency of continuing Jesus' "ministry of hope for humanity." He exhorts us, saying, "Faced with the urgency of the mission of hope today, Christ's disciples are called first to discover how to become 'artisans' of hope and restorers of an often distracted and unhappy humanity."

Hope is born, nourished and renewed in prayer. The mission of hope is only possible in prayer, the Pope reminded us, “especially prayer based on the word of God and particularly the Psalms, that great symphony of prayer whose composer is the Holy Spirit” (cf. *Catechesis*, 19 June 2024).

After nourishing ourselves, the Word of God must be used to nourish others. This is why Saint Paul tells Timothy: “Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching” (Second Reading). For the Word not only transmits knowledge but has the power to give “wisdom that leads to salvation.”

Let us not forget, then, to nourish ourselves with the Word of God—the great source of wisdom, self-knowledge and hope—and to pray for the missionary work of the Church throughout the world. Through our prayers, let us be missionaries from the very beginning.

Monday, October 20, 2025⁶

XXIX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 4:20-25; Lk 1:69-75; Lk 12:13-21

Today's readings invite us to reflect on the importance of faith and trust in God's providence. In the first reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, St. Paul tells us that Abraham, our father in faith, did not trust in his own strength or resources; rather, he unwaveringly trusted in God's promise, even when it seemed impossible. He believed, and as a result, he was justified and his faith was credited to him as righteousness.

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us about the dangers of greed and materialism. A rich man who has stored up wealth and possessions is told by God that his life will be demanded of him that night. Jesus warns us that our lives do not consist in the abundance of our possessions. He called the man a fool because if he were wise, there are two things he would have done:

- 1) He would have thanked God for blessing him with such abundance, but instead of praying to God, the man prayed to himself.
- 2) He would have realized he had been blessed so as to bless others, factoring them into his plans; instead, he was covetous.

Why did Jesus tell this parable to the man who had come to ask for his intervention over an inheritance dispute? *Jesus tells this parable to assure him that even though he had been cheated, he could still live a very long and happy life. Meanwhile, his greedy brother was like the rich man who, even though his lands yielded abundantly, refused to consider others in his enjoyment plan. If God calls this greedy brother tonight, what becomes of the inheritance he has gathered?*

This gospel passage is a stark reminder of the transience of earthly life. We can accumulate wealth and possessions but they will not last. They will not bring us true happiness or fulfillment—only God can bring us that. So, what is the foundation of *your* faith? Is it based on your own strength and resources or do you trust in God's providence? Do you store up treasures on earth or do you seek to store up treasures in heaven?

Jesus teaches us that as missionaries, our true wealth is measured not by possessions but by our relationship with God. When we trust in God's providence, we are free to live a generous life; we can share the little we have with others with compassion and love. We are free to store treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not consume. May our faith be strengthened, and may we be guided by the Holy Spirit as we seek to proclaim the gospel to all nations.

⁶ The commentaries from October 20-23 were offered by Fr. Solomon Patrick Zaku, PMS National Director in Nigeria, to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

XXIX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 5:12,15b, 17-19, 20b-21; Ps 40; Lk 12:35-38

In the First Reading, St. Paul shows the difference between the disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Jesus. He describes how humanity was negatively affected by the sin of Adam. However, he goes on to say that the obedience of Jesus far surpasses the disobedience of Adam. In Greek, one of the major words is πολλοὶ – *polloi*, which is translated as “many”. This seems to imply “the multitude,” which would mean “everyone.” Thus, through the disobedient actions of Adam, death and sin entered the world for all humans. More importantly, however, through the obedient life and actions of Jesus, salvation was granted to all.

In the Gospel, Jesus urges his disciples, and us too by extension, to be obedient and vigilant as they await the second coming of the Son of Man. The profound insights of Blaise Pascal, a renowned French philosopher-theologian, resonate deeply with the themes of today’s readings. In his seminal work, “Pensées,” Pascal presents his iconic wager, positing the existence of God and urging individuals to live as though God exists. This philosophical gamble is rooted in the notion that if one lives as though God exists, and subsequently discovers that God indeed does, one will receive eternal reward. Conversely, if one denies God’s existence and later discovers that he is real, that one will incur infinite punishment.

This Pascalian wager has profound implications for our understanding of the Second Coming of Jesus. As we await the Lord’s return, we are invited to live our lives in a state of readiness, as though the Second Coming were imminent. By doing so, we demonstrate our faith and trust in God’s providence, and we open ourselves to the possibility of eternal reward. Conversely, if we neglect to prepare ourselves spiritually, we risk facing the consequences of our unpreparedness.

In this sense, Pascal’s wager serves as a clarion call to live our lives with intentionality, purpose, and a deepening sense of faith and trust in God. As we navigate the complexities of human existence, may we be guided by the wisdom of Pascal’s wager, and may we ever be mindful of the eternal consequences of our choices.

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

XXIX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 6:12-18; Ps 124; Lk 12:39-48

Today's readings invite us to reflect on the importance of faithfulness and responsibility in our lives as Christians. Apart from the group of beatitudes that are well known to us, there are single beatitudes scattered throughout the gospels, one of which is found in today's reading. Jesus declares, "Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at his employment." This is the "faithful and wise" servant who provides for the needs of the household members while the master is away. Jesus teaches us about the importance of being prepared and faithful by using this image. He emphasizes the importance of being faithful and responsible, not just for our own sake, but for the sake of others. He says that the servant who is faithful and responsible will be blessed, and that the servant who is not will be held accountable.

The master-slave relationship is not one that we are comfortable with today, yet it was an integral part of the world in which Jesus lived. In sharing his vision for human life, Jesus regularly drew on the day-to-day experience of the people among whom he was moving. Although the social world alluded to by Jesus' image may be foreign to most of us, the message it embodies retains its validity for disciples of every age. We all seek to be the Lord's faithful and wise servants. He needs such servants, people he can trust to provide for the needs of all the members of his household. We are all servants of one Lord, which means that none of us can set ourselves up as lords of others. Rather, our task is to faithfully and wisely care for the needs of those around us.

In the first reading from Romans, St. Paul teaches us about the importance of living a life of faithfulness and responsibility. He says that we are slaves to sin, but that through baptism, we have been set free and are now slaves to righteousness. To be faithful and responsible, we must be willing to make sacrifices and to put the needs of others before our own. We must be willing to take risks and to step out of our comfort zones in order to fulfill our mission as Christians.

Today we celebrate someone who was a responsible and faithful servant, St. John Paul II. He was a great missionary pope who was responsible and faithful to his call. He lived a good life and touched the lives of many people during his papacy. He left his comfort zone on so many occasions, and travelled to different countries. He prepared himself and was found ready when the Lord called him.

As we reflect on these readings, let us ask ourselves: Are we living lives of faithfulness and responsibility? Are we being faithful to our calling as Christians? Are we taking responsibility for our actions? Let us pray for the grace to be faithful and responsible, to live lives that are pleasing to God, and to take our rightful place as servants of the Lord.

Thursday, October 23, 2025

XXIX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 6:19-23; Ps 1; Lk 12:49-53

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus metaphorically speaks about setting the earth on fire. What is he talking about? I'm sure many of us were shocked when Jesus declared that he would set the earth on fire. What kind of fire does Jesus have in mind? As we all know, fire gives light, warmth, purification, and cleansing; it can even smooth metal. Fire in biblical times was figuratively associated with God's presence and with his action in the world and the lives of his people.

For example, in the Old Testament, God sometimes manifested his presence by using fire, such as the burning bush that was not consumed when God spoke to Moses (*Ex 3:2*). The image of fire was also used to symbolize God's glory (*Ezek 1:4, 13*), his protective presence (*2Kings 6:17*), his holiness (*Deut. 4:24*), his righteous judgment (*Zech 13:9*), and his wrath against sin (*Is 66:15-16*); his word was also likened to fire (*Jer 23:29*). In the New Testament, the influence of the Holy Spirit is linked to fire (*Mt 3:11*), and his descent was denoted by the appearance of tongues as of fire (*Acts 2:3*).

Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus specifically wants us to be on fire with his love and presence in our lives. His fire of love burns away all the impurities of sin and makes us holy. His passion and death show us that love is his greatest expression.

And so, through this fire of love and presence, Jesus wants to change us from merely passive churchgoers/observers into fully committed and active Christians. He wants us to become willing and open to following him, imitating his obedience to God; he wants us to work for him and even die for him as disciples in the world; he wants to make our lives visible instruments of his love, goodness, and compassion, offering salvation to the entire world.

Let us pray that through this love and presence of Christ in our lives, we may have a mind that thinks like Jesus, hands that work like Jesus, a heart that loves like Jesus, an eye that sees people in need like Jesus, a mouth that speaks words like Jesus, and a life that is exactly like Jesus'. May this fire ignite our zeal for mission.

Friday, October 24, 2025⁷

XXIX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 7:18-25a; Ps 119; Lk 12:54-59

If someone were to ask us where, in what signs, and in what forms the Lord is present among us, we would probably answer immediately: in the Word of God and in the Eucharist. This is certainly true, but let us not forget that God is the God of time and history. He is present in events, in people, in everything that surrounds us every day. It is not easy to recognize the signs of this divine presence—certainly much more difficult than weather forecasts. It requires great humility, openness to the Holy Spirit, and prudence. Discernment of God's action in history and reality must always take place in prayer, together with the Holy Spirit, and, very importantly, in the Church! Confirmation from the confessor, from the person who accompanies us in the spiritual life, from superiors... is necessary. Whoever wants to decide for himself what is from God and what is not risks becoming a slave to his own pride and falling into the trap of that spirit that always opposes God.

Today is Friday: the day that makes us think of Jesus' passion and death. There, on the Cross, occurred the most important event for all humanity and the greatest event in world history: the redemption of humanity. For Christians, the Cross is a clear sign of this event. St. Paul today thanks the Lord God for this because he knows that alone, he would not have been able to do anything good. On that Friday when the sun darkened and darkness enveloped the earth, few people were able to interpret those signs. The Lord reveals the secrets of his kingdom only to people with simple hearts, to those who do not complicate things, who do not divide God into four, but simply welcome him. We ask for simple and humble hearts which can recognize the signs of God's presence every day.

⁷ The commentaries from October 24 to 27 are drawn from the previous years' meditations.

Saturday, October 25, 2025

XXIX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 8:1-11; Ps 24; Lk 13:1-9

The teaching of Jesus in today's Gospel begins with a story that is reported to him by some people about a group of Galileans massacred by Pilate while offering a sacrifice in the Temple. Not only was the outrage committed within the walls of the Temple, but human blood was mixed with that of the sacrificed animals, provoking further shame and indignation. It is not clear why these people tell Jesus about the episode. Perhaps it's because Jesus himself was a Galilean and they wanted to warn him, just as they did a bit later regarding the persecution of Herod Antipas who wanted to kill him. Or maybe they were subtly threatening him, suggesting that if he were reported to the Roman prosecutor, he would suffer the same fate. Or maybe they're just passing along some gossip about the tragedies of others; as the psalm says, people who rejoice in the troubles of others should be ashamed.

But Jesus' answer suggests the presence of something even more serious: a condescending judgment towards the victims, as if they deserved to die so violently while they were at prayer, and as if the brutality of the Romans was a judgment of God on those who were killed. Jesus does not comment on the event, but draws a lesson from the attitude of those who report the sad episode. No one, he says, is authorized to interpret the suffering, illness, accidents, or tragedies of others as a divine punishment for sins committed, but everyone must consider their sins as the worst misfortune and try to convert with sincere repentance. No one has been given the authority to judge and divide people between "good" and "bad." Only the Lord knows all the truth of our hearts.

As soon as the news about the Galileans is communicated to him, Jesus rejects the suggestion that there is a causal link between violent death and the gravity of sin. He wants to underline that the incidents do not necessarily reveal the gravity of some hidden sin of the victim. Rather, they are like warnings that remind us that death can always knock, even when we least expect it. This is why we must awaken in everyone the necessity and urgency of interior conversion, accepted and carried out before it is too late. This is why Jesus, rejecting the idea that the victims should be considered more sinful than anyone else, continues his discourse by suggesting that if those who listen to him do not convert their hearts, they might perish in the same way; they should convert not because their repentance would protect them from death, but rather because conversion puts them in a good spiritual and human disposition to meet the Lord of life in total serenity and peace of heart. The death from which conversion frees us is the eternal one, not the physical one. The image of God which underlies the notion that violent death reveals serious sin does not correspond to the Father God revealed by Jesus. He is not a god who takes revenge on sinners, but a patient one who hopes that humanity, given the necessary time, will come to recognize how radically it is loved, and then bear the fruits of fraternal love and solidarity that it should.

In any case, this is the theological point and perspective suggested by the parable of a landowner, his fig tree, and his gardener. Disappointed by not receiving the fruit that he expected after so many years of care and work, the landowner decides to cut down his fig tree rather than let it waste the space it was planted in. But surprisingly, his gardener intervenes, asking to give the fig tree more time, enough to see whether working the land and adding more fertilizer might help. Jesus doesn't conclude the story, but he seems to suggest that the verdict is suspended, opening the way to hope. If we see ourselves reflected in the image of the fig tree, the good news is that the length of life given to us by the Master of the universe provides us the opportunity to allow divine grace to act and produce in us its fruits of peace, joy, justice, and love. It's a gift, a sort of second chance that leaves little room for error. On the other hand, if we see ourselves in the figure of the gardener, it's a reminder that we must intercede and make efforts toward the conversion of others. As an ecclesial community, it goes without saying that we are called to a two-fold commitment: first, to convert ourselves without ceasing, becoming ever more transparent to the Word of God and docile to the Spirit of love that gives life; and second, to work for the conversion of the world, never obscuring the merciful and patient face of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, whose first and only desire is to save—not to condemn. Experience proves that hearts respond more generously when they are shown trust; capturing people with divine love is not done through fear, imprisoning them in their misfortunes. May this pedagogy guide our missionary activity without diminishing its prophetic acuteness, its profound understanding of human nature, or its true expression of the content of salvation.

The image of the fig tree planted in the vineyard suggests, perhaps, that the kingdom of God (the vineyard) is much larger than either Israel or Jerusalem (the fig tree), and that Jesus the Messiah, the divine gardener, came to seek in the Holy City the fruits of mercy, justice, and faithfulness. These are the fruits that God likes, the fruits expected by the “owner of the orchard.” But time is running out, and the decision to cut down the fig tree is made because these fruits have not been found. This is also the meaning of the episode of the barren fig tree in the Gospels of Mark (*Mk 11:12-14*; see *Mt 21:18, 19*), which ends with the cursing of the tree.

But surprisingly, in the parable of Luke, it is the gardener who intercedes with the owner, asking him to have a little patience with his fig tree, that is, to have mercy on Jerusalem. And as if this were not enough, he commits himself to doing everything possible to make this very expensive tree fruitful because surely, as the prophet Ezekiel declares in today's Alleluia verse, God takes no pleasure in the death of a wicked person; rather, it is their conversion that he desires—that they abandon the wrong path and their life of sin. “Turn, turn from your evil ways! Why should you die, house of Israel?” (*Ezek 33:11*) Unfortunately, the invitation to conversion was not accepted, his warnings were not heard, the signs were not understood, and the time of grace was not embraced. But before the final tragedy of Jerusalem occurred, the Tree of Life itself, Jesus, accepted to be cut down so that, in the end, the root of all evil was torn out and that Tree was planted our hearts, eternally vivifying it with the sap of the Holy Spirit.

Sunday, October 26, 2025

XXX Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

Sir 35:12-14, 16-18; Ps 34; 2Tm 4:6-8, 16-18; Lk 18:9-14

The teaching of the sage Ben Sirach, heir to the age-old prophetic doctrine of justice and God's preferential love for the poor and the oppressed, leads us to the summits of true biblical spirituality. Deuteronomy warned that God "has no favorites [and] accepts no bribes" (Dt 10:17), as opposed to people, who play favorites based on social, racial, or ideological prejudices at the expense of the lives of the humble. This concept was applied broadly by Jesus in his preaching and his work of liberation, as well as by the apostles and evangelists who featured it in their writings and spread it universally. God, in his infinite mercy, never fails to be present to all those who, aware of their own faults and weaknesses, seek his help and forgiveness. The proud, however, he allows to wander confusedly in the haughty thoughts of their hearts.

Jesus' parable about the tax collector and the Pharisee demonstrates Jesus' way of seeing people—God's way of seeing people. He does not judge by appearances, nor according to prejudices, but by what he sees with clarity in the depths of the human heart, discerning the true motivations that generate people's actions and their prayers.

In fact, in the Gospels, we first encounter the idea that God has no favorites on the lips of Jesus' adversaries, who, though they were plotting against him, had to publicly acknowledge his perfect moral integrity, saying, "Teacher, we know that what you say and teach is correct, and you show no partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth" (*Lk 20:21; see Mt 22:16*). This is the path of God, which Jesus practiced and taught. It is a practice he demonstrated not only in his approach to humble people, but also to those who were excluded and marginalized because they were judged to be sinners, such as prostitutes and publicans, or impure and accursed, such as lepers. In his evangelization work, he broke down all barriers of discrimination, whether religious, social, or racial. Jesus, in fact, agreed to listen to the humble request of the Roman centurion, going to his house to heal his servant. Moreover, in his continuous travels as an itinerant teacher, he visited the Samaritan region, often praising its inhabitants. Going into the pagan territories, he reached the region of Tyre where he healed the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman. Crossing to the other side of Lake Tiberias, he headed towards the Decapolis and healed people afflicted by various diseases. His repeated crossings of the Sea of Galilee demonstrate Jesus' lordship over reality, symbolically represented by the sea; he is able to calm its menacing strength and walk over its abyss. The terrifying sea, a negative symbol, no longer functions as a force of separation but becomes a bridge, and, through the ministry of Jesus, a path toward the reconciliation of Jews and pagans.

In the synagogue of Nazareth where he had presented the program of his ministry (Lk 4:16-30), Jesus challenged his listeners on Israel's position with regard to the other peoples. The examples of Elijah, who was sent to the Phoenician widow, and of Elisha, who healed the

Syrian leper Naaman, were sufficient to show that God doesn't play favorites; all creatures are precious in his eyes. Those who heard this reacted negatively, condemning Jesus' statement about the fulfillment of the prophecies. But as the psalmist says, the Lord is good to all, and his tenderness embraces every creature. He is close to all those who sincerely call upon him. The psalmist does not mention any specific race or nationality, nor status or color of skin. If the love of God permeates all creatures, it is because they are all his handiwork; his is a universal love, full of care for all human beings, without any discrimination.

This does not negate the fact that Israel was chosen by God to enter into a special covenant with him, but this election was a function of the specific mission for the good of all peoples. It reflected the presence of the living God in history as the liberator of the oppressed and the savior of the human person in all their reality:

You are my witnesses—oracle of the Lord—
my servant whom I have chosen
to know and believe in me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
and after me there shall be none. (*Is 43:10*)

God, in fact, has not only chosen his servant but has also formed and instructed him:

I, the Lord, have called you for justice,
I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you
as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,
to open the eyes of the blind,
to bring out prisoners from confinement,
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness. (*Is 42:6-7*)

Looking more closely at today's teaching of Jesus' parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee in the Temple, we realize that the difference between the two lies precisely in the human heart, laid bare by the presence of God in prayer.

In any case, it is with the intention of praying that the tax collector and the Pharisee go to the Temple, thus finding themselves sharing for a few moments the same sacred place. But the particular way each of them will go about their prayer is what will determine their respective destiny and final spiritual state. The tax collector, having had the humility and sincerity to recognize his unworthiness and sin and to implore God's forgiveness, returns home a better man, transformed inwardly, reconciled. In response to his authentic prayer, divine grace is not withheld. Once again, we learn the truth that "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

On the other hand, the Pharisee is a prisoner in his tower of spiritual pride. Too aware of his own meritorious works and of the excellence of his socio-religious class, he believes himself

superior and better than all the others, erecting barriers between himself and them, insulting them and despising them. He was perhaps good and pious up to that moment, but the attitude he shows reveals the arrogance in his heart, undermining his alleged virtue from within.

Moreover, we do not approach God in the Temple in order to celebrate and contemplate ourselves in a self-referential pose, looking down at others from above. We stand before God for an encounter of love and to meet others in him. In this sense, prayer is contemplation of the Lord, a celebration of the wonders that his grace works every day in the bosom of human frailty, and of his indefatigable mercy that lifts up those who have fallen and want to get up again.

Listening to this parable, the immediate temptation would be to identify ourselves with the tax collector, simply because he occupies the positive place in the story. It's a sign of the subtle human desire to get rid of our conscience. But the parable invites us to look inward to remove all sense of self-sufficiency and contempt for others, in order to find a simple, humble, and fraternal heart that knows how to look upon itself and upon others with a merciful and hopeful gaze. In this regard, it is often necessary to question the way we pray. What does it reveal to us about the depth and quality of our hearts? What does it reveal to us about ourselves, about the way we relate to others, about the way we perceive them spontaneously in relation to us? What does it reveal to us about our relationship with God and his salvation?

Pope Francis constantly reminded us of the centrality of prayer in relation to the Church and its mission. Prayer is the soul of mission, for the efficacy of one's personal encounter with Christ, and the right measure of one's relationship with oneself and with the world in the light of the Holy Spirit, are at the root of the experience of truth that saves. The missionary disciple, thanks to prayer, always includes himself among those in need of the salvation that he is called to announce and, in the sacraments, to communicate. What is certain is that the mission of evangelization entrusted to us as a Church could not be conducted in truth if we adopt a domineering attitude in the ways we relate to others, being confident and convinced of our own moral and religious superiority. Mission must be a humble proposal of friendship with Christ, having a profound respect for the religious freedom of the men and women of our age and for their cultures and history. True humility is never the absence of truth. It is, rather, an effective presence of a truth that judges, forgives, and saves both those who proclaim it and those who hear it proclaimed.

Monday, October 27, 2025

XXX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 8:12-17; Ps 68; Lk 13:10-17

The great drama of a woman who had been ill for eighteen years. Her suffering was twofold—not only physical but also spiritual. She was a slave to the spirit of helplessness, chained by it and bent over. Instead of the Spirit of God, there was in her the spirit of him who seeks at all costs to destroy the image and likeness of God in us. Therefore this poor woman, she could not stand up straight, she could not look up to heaven. She was focused on herself and worldly things. Freedom is only in the Spirit of God. Only he can free us from fear, anxiety, and spiritual depression. Only the Holy Spirit enables us to look to heaven with the joy and freedom of a child of God.

Jesus freed the woman from her spirit of helplessness; he restored her dignity. But the good that was done did not please everyone. The cold rules of the Law wanted to override a human and natural attitude of the heart: to help one's neighbor. Jesus did not get involved in the discussion. He demonstrated their hypocrisy with simple arguments, and his words reached those who murmured to such an extent that they were shamed. A disciple-missionary is one who looks to heaven, focuses on God and not on himself, and by God's grace is able to show people the truth of the gospel to which he is a witness through calm speech. The disciple-missionary does not forget his dignity as a child of God; he tries to remember it and give it back to others. There are so many in the world today who are slaves to their own selfishness and desires for power, possession, money. They have forgotten who they are; they only remember what they have. Our task is to bring to them the spirit of the Gospel of God. It is not an easy task, but we are not alone. By our side is the One through whom we cry out to God, "Abba, Father!"

Tuesday, October 28, 2025⁸

XXX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Feasts of Sts. Simon and Jude, Apostles

Eph 2:19-22; Ps 19; Lk 6:12-19

Building the House of God, One Slightly Crooked Brick at a Time with Hope!

Our readings today, on this feast day of Saints Simon and Jude, paint a beautiful and powerful picture of who we are called to be, not as isolated individuals, but as a living, breathing community built on the foundation of faith. Just as the universe silently proclaims God's glory, so too are we called to let our lives speak of his love, not just within the walls of our church, but in every corner of our lives, reaching out to those who have yet to hear the good news.

And then we turn to the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus, after a night spent in prayer—the very source of his mission—chooses his twelve disciple; among them, Simon and Jude. This act underscores the fundamental truth that mission is communion.

The twelve disciples were not perfect people. They were fishermen, tax collectors, individuals with diverse backgrounds and likely differing opinions. Yet Jesus saw in them the potential to be pillars of his new community, a community that would carry his message of love and salvation to the ends of the earth.

This brings us to missionary discipleship: We are called and sent to share the good news, not by being perfect preachers, but by being ourselves, showing love and kindness. We are not sent out alone. We are part of a larger community, the Body of Christ, and our mission is strengthened and sustained through our communion with God and with one another. Our parishes, our small Christian communities, our families—these are the vital networks where we support and encourage each other in our shared mission. We go forth together, bearing witness to the love of God through our words and our actions, our shared prayer and our mutual support.

So, let's embrace our role as living stones, emulating Saints Simon and Jude whom we celebrate today—sharing God's love in unique ways and supporting each other in communion, always with the joyful hope that God is building something beautiful. Let us remember that every act of kindness, every word of encouragement, every effort to build justice and peace is a brick in the house of God, a testament to the hope that lies within us. Let us go forth, inspired by the example of Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be missionary disciples who, through our lives lived in communion, bring the light of Christ and the unwavering hope of the gospel to all. Amen.

⁸ The commentaries from October 28-31 were offered by Fr. Bonaventure S.M. Luchidio, PMS National Director in Kenya, to whom we express our sincere gratitude.

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

XXX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 8:26-30; Ps 13; Lk 13:22-30

Missionaries of Hope to all people

Brothers and sisters, beloved children of God, look around you. Look at the faces filled with hope, with yearning, with the quiet strength that carries us through each day. Feel the beating of your own heart, a rhythm of life given to you as a precious gift. Today, we stand at the precipice of wonder, gazing into the boundless heart of our Creator. Let the words we have just heard in the Readings of the day not simply echo in our ears but resonate deeply within the very core of our being. Let them awaken a sense of awe that will forever change how we see the world and our place within the context of the Jubilee Year of Hope in which we are invited to be missionaries of hope.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, our sighs take on a new dimension. They are not just the echoes of our individual struggles but perhaps the collective yearning of humanity for healing, for reconciliation, for the fulfillment of God's promises. This year is a time to listen more intently to that inner voice, to the whispers of the Spirit guiding us towards greater hope, towards a deeper understanding of God's will for our lives and for our world. It reminds us that even when we feel voiceless in the face of overwhelming challenges, the Spirit of hope intercedes on our behalf, carrying our deepest longings to the heart of God.

The call from the Gospel of Luke to "strive" urges us to not be complacent, to not take this year of grace for granted. It reminds us that hope is not a passive waiting but an active engagement with God's will. We are called to examine our lives to ensure that we are truly walking the path of righteousness, of love, and of justice. The "narrow door" can be seen as the focused effort required to embrace the transformative power of this Jubilee, to let go of old ways and embrace the new possibilities that God offers.

Let the awe of these readings settle deep within us. Let the Spirit's unutterable groanings remind us of God's intimate presence. Let the Psalmist's journey from despair to joy ignite your own trust in God's unfailing love. And let Jesus' vision of the universal kingdom inspire us to strive with all our being to enter through the narrow door, with hearts open to all, recognizing that in God's kingdom, the last can indeed be first. Amen.

Thursday, October 30, 2025

XXX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 8:31b-39; Ps 109; Lk 13:31-35

An Enduring Heart

In his letter to the Romans, Paul asks a powerful question: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Think about that for a moment. In the face of life’s relentless challenges, the whispers of doubt, the sting of betrayal, the fear of the unknown—Paul reminds us of a fundamental truth: God is on our side. He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also graciously give us all things? Perhaps today some of us feel like the Psalmist who cries out in distress; maybe we feel vulnerable, overlooked, abandoned, forgotten, or marginalized, while others of us are carrying heavy financial and economic burdens in life today.

Yes! Even Jesus faced similar threats and sorrow, as we see in today’s Gospel from Luke. Nevertheless, the Psalmist makes a beautiful turn around, saying, “I will give great thanks to the Lord with my mouth; among the throngs I will praise him. For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who would condemn his soul to death.” Even in the depths of despair, the Psalmist and Jesus remind us of the unwavering love and power of God. We encounter the deep yearning of a loving heart met with resistance, a poignant reminder that even divine love cannot force its way in.

The core message for us today is the transition from desperation to joy, from doubt to certainty. No matter your station in life, no matter the battles you are facing, no matter the doubts that cloud your mind, remember Paul’s resounding declaration: “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Let these words sink deep into your soul. Allow them to be an anchor in the storms of life. Recognize that even when you feel most alone, most vulnerable, God’s love surrounds you, protects you, and empowers you. Like the hen longing to gather her chicks, God yearns for you, offering solace and strength.

Therefore, let us turn our hearts to Jesus who is the steadfast heart of love. Let us offer our anxieties and our joys, our triumphs and our failures, to him who has already conquered all. Let us trust in his unfailing presence, and allow his love to be the guiding force in our lives, for in his love, we find our true strength, our lasting hope, and our eternal peace. Amen.

Friday, October 31, 2025

XXX Week in Ordinary Time - Year I

Rom 9:1-5; Ps 147; Lk 14:1-6

Called for Mission

St. Paul's writing to the Romans presents a deep and abiding sorrow, a constant anguish in his heart for his own people, the Israelites. He recounts the immense privileges bestowed upon them: adoption as sons, the divine glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. And yet, despite all this, many had not recognized the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who came from their lineage.

Paul's pain is palpable. It is a pain born not of judgment but of profound love and a burning desire for their salvation. This passage reminds us that mission is not a detached, clinical exercise. It springs from a heart that cares deeply, a heart that aches for those who have not yet encountered the transformative love of Christ. It calls us to look beyond our own comfort zones and to feel the spiritual hunger of those around us, near and far.

Finally, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is confronted on the Sabbath with a man suffering from dropsy. The religious leaders watch intently, eager to find fault. But Jesus, with his characteristic compassion and wisdom, asks a simple yet profound question: "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath or not?" Their silence speaks volumes. Jesus then heals the man, demonstrating that acts of mercy and compassion transcend even the strictest interpretations of the law. This reminds us that missionaries of hope daily break down barriers of indifference and legalism to bring about healing and wholeness.

The call to be a missionary of hope is not just about proclaiming grand theological truths; it is about embodying the love of Christ in tangible ways. It is about seeing the suffering of our neighbor and responding with compassion, even when it is inconvenient or challenges the status quo.

As we conclude this Mission Month, let us carry these reflections in our hearts. We are all called to be missionaries of hope. This is not a task reserved for priests, religious sisters, or those who travel to distant lands. It is the vocation of every baptized Christian.

Let us go forth from today's Mass renewed in our commitment to be missionaries of hope among all people. Let our words and actions reflect the love and compassion of Christ. Let us be bearers of light in the darkness, offering a reason for hope to a world that so desperately needs it.

May the Lord bless us and strengthen us in our mission. Amen.