

LUKE



The third Gospel is the work of a disciple of Paul, probably a physician (Col 4:14) of Syrian origin. He must have converted to the Christian faith in the 40's when the persecuted Christians of Jerusalem and Caesarea took refuge outside Palestine, bringing the message with them. As early as the year 50 A.D., Luke accompanied Paul in his missions (Acts 16:10).

Luke may have concluded his Gospel and Acts in Greece. For him, these books were two halves of the same work and they were probably finished between the years 63–64 A.D.

Luke tells us that he went to seek the testimonies of the first servants of the word, namely, the apostles (1:1-5). In fact, more than once, Luke went with Paul to Jerusalem and Caesarea, two great centers of the Church in Palestine, and these first communities kept the documents that the first three Gospels used.

Luke, the same as Mark, kept the two main sections that served as the basis of the Church's early catechesis, namely: the activity of Jesus

in Galilee and his final days in Jerusalem. But between them, Luke inserted the content of another document with many sayings of Jesus. He intentionally placed them during Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem to show that Christian life is placed under the sign of the cross.

Other documents of the first Christian communities of Palestine provided Luke with the content of his first two chapters devoted to the infancy of Jesus. It is the testimony of the primitive community of which Mary was a member. From the very start, these chapters give to the Gospel of Luke its own personality. If we had to characterize it in one word, we would have to say that it is the most human of the four.

We can see this profoundly human aspect of Luke in his care to recall the attitude of Jesus toward women. Luke had left his family to follow Paul in his missions and, as a result, he always lived with insecurity and provisionally and more than others, he underlined the incompatibility of the Gospel with possessions.

Luke learned a great deal from Paul, his teacher. He emphasized the words of Jesus that remind us that salvation is always, first and foremost, a personal gift of God rather than a reward for our merits. This highlighting of the strange mercy of God has given us the unforgettable parables of Chapter 15.

After the infancy narrative (1–2), and the account of the Baptism of Jesus in Judea, the Gospel of Luke is made up of three sections:

- The ministry of Jesus in Galilee: 3:1—9:56;
- The journey through Samaria to Jerusalem: 9:57—18:17;
- The events of Jerusalem: 18:18-24.

The last chapter on the apparitions of the risen Jesus will serve as an invitation to read the Book of Acts, which is a continuation of Luke's Gospel.

LUKE



1 ¹Several people have set themselves to relate the events that have taken place among us ²as they were told by the first witnesses who later became ministers of the word. ³After I, myself, had carefully gone over the whole story from the beginning, it seemed right for me to give you, Theophilus, an orderly account ⁴so that your Excellency may know the truth of all you have been taught.

The birth of John the Baptist foretold

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zechariah, belonging to the priestly clan of Abiah. Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, also belonged to a priestly family. ⁶Both of them were upright in the eyes of God and lived blamelessly in accordance with all the laws and commands of the Lord, ⁷but they had no child. Elizabeth could not have any and now they were both very old.

⁸Now, while Zechariah and those with him were fulfilling their office, ⁹it fell to him by lot, according to the custom of the priests, to enter the Sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰At the time of offering incense, all the people were praying outside; ¹¹it was then that an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²On seeing the angel, Zechariah was deeply troubled, and fear took hold of him.

¹³But the angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah, be assured that your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. ¹⁴He will bring joy and gladness to you and many will rejoice at his birth.

¹⁵This son of yours will be great in the eyes of the Lord. Listen: he shall never drink wine or strong drink, but he will be filled with the Holy

Spirit even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶Through him, many of the people of Israel will turn to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He, himself, will open the way to the Lord with the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah; he will reconcile fathers and children, and lead the disobedient to wisdom and righteousness in order to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I believe this? I am an old man and my wife is elderly, too." ¹⁹The angel replied, "I am Gabriel, who stands before God; and I am the one sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news! My words will come true in their time. ²⁰But you would not believe; and now, you will be silent and unable to speak until this has happened."

²¹Meanwhile, the people waited for Zechariah; and they were surprised that he delayed so long in the Sanctuary. ²²When he finally appeared, he could not speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the Sanctuary. He remained dumb and made signs to them.

²³When his time of service was completed, Zechariah returned home; ²⁴and, some time later, Elizabeth became pregnant. For five months she kept to herself, remaining at home, and thinking, ²⁵"This, for me, is the Lord's doing! This is his time for mercy and for taking away my public disgrace."

LUKE 1:1-25

Read: Luke presents the goal of his work "to clearly understand the lessons learned" (4). God acts in history, hears the prayer of the faithful (13), and nothing is impossible for Him (19-20). John the Baptist is the precursor of the Lord.

Reflect: What does all this tells you? Is it possible to contemplate God's action in history? How?

Pray: I ask you, O Lord, the grace to recognize your presence in all the events of life and in the face of every person who crosses my path.

Act: Review your history mentally and contemplate God's presence in it. Praise Him with a song of thanksgiving.

The Annunciation

(Mt 1:18)

²⁶In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent ²⁷to a virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

³⁰But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. ³¹You shall conceive and bear a son; and you shall call him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; he will rule over the people of Jacob forever; ³³and his reign shall have no end."

³⁴Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born of you shall be called Son of God. ³⁶Even your relative, Elizabeth, is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child; and she is now in her sixth month. ³⁷With God nothing is impossible."

³⁸Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

LUKE 1:26-38

Read: The difference between the birth of John and of Jesus is surprising. John will be great before the Lord; Jesus will be great and is also the Son of the Most High. John prepares the people; Jesus will rule them. John's mission is temporal; the reign of Jesus lasts forever. Mary responds generously to God's plan: "Let it be done to me as you have said."

Reflect: Do you trust in the power of God? How? Do you believe in his word? How do you respond to the call that God makes you every day to love and serve Him in the brothers and sisters?

Pray: I ask from you, O Lord, the strength to trust in your Word, respond to your call and do your will.

Act: Review the things you do every day and see how many of them do you do the will of God.

Mary visits Elizabeth

³⁹Mary then set out for a town in the hill country of Judah. ⁴⁰She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and, ⁴²giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷my spirit exults in God, my savior!

⁴⁸He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness, and people, forever, will call me blessed.

⁴⁹The Mighty One has done great things for me, Holy is his Name!

⁵⁰From age to age, his mercy extends to those who live in his presence.

⁵¹He has acted with power and done wonders, and scattered the proud with their plans.

⁵²He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up those who are downtrodden.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He held out his hand to Israel, his servant, for he remembered his mercy,

⁵⁵even as he promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever."

⁵⁶Mary remained with Elizabeth for about three months, and then returned home.

LUKE 1:39-56

Read: Mary hurried to go visit her cousin Elizabeth who will give birth in her old age. Elizabeth praises Mary, and Mary praises God with the “Magnificat”: praise to God that becomes present in history, showing His power by saving us.

Reflect: What does the attitude of Mary and Elizabeth suggest to you? Could you make a song of praise like Mary? What implications does this expression have today: “He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up those who are down-trodden”?

Pray: Oh God, help me to contemplate you in the daily events of life, and help me to make of my life a song of praise for your nearness.

Act: Discreetly, offer to help a friend or family member in need. Let this gesture be a way to thank God for His closeness.

Birth of John the Baptist

⁵⁷When the time came for Elizabeth, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the merciful Lord had done a wonderful thing for her and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹When, on the eighth day, they came to attend the circumcision of the child, they wanted to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother said, “Not so; he shall be called John.” ⁶¹They said to her, “But no one in your family has that name!” ⁶²and they made signs to his father for the name he wanted to give him. ⁶³Zechariah asked for a writing tablet, and wrote on it, “His name is John;” and they were very surprised. ⁶⁴Immediately, Zechariah could speak again and his first words were in praise of God.

⁶⁵A holy fear came on all in the neighborhood, and throughout the hill country of Judea, the people talked about these events. ⁶⁶All who heard of it, pondered in their minds and wondered, “What will this child be?” For they understood that the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, sang this canticle:

⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has come and redeemed his people.

⁶⁹In the house of David his servant,

he has raised up for us a victorious Savior;
⁷⁰as he promised through his prophets of old,
⁷¹salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of our foes.
⁷²He has shown mercy to our fathers;
and remembered his holy Covenant,
⁷³the oath he swore to Abraham, our father,
⁷⁴to deliver us from the enemy,
⁷⁵that we might serve him fearlessly
as a holy and righteous people,
all the days of our lives.
⁷⁶And you, my child,
shall be called Prophet of the Most High,
for you shall go before the Lord
to prepare the way for him,
⁷⁷and to enable his people to know of their salvation
when he comes to forgive their sins.
⁷⁸This is the work of the mercy of our God,
who comes from on high as a rising sun,
⁷⁹shining on those who live in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
and guiding our feet into the way of peace.”

⁸⁰As the child grew up, he was seen to be strong in the Spirit; and he lived in the desert until the day when he appeared openly in Israel.

LUKE 1:57-80

Read: The text tells of the birth of John the Baptist and presents the song of Zechariah: God does not forget His people; His action is salvation for all.

Reflect: Have you contrasted your projects with God's plans? Do they relate? Do you feel the nearness of God in your life?

Pray: I ask from you, O God, the gift of discernment to know what you want from me. I also ask for strength to do your will.

Act: Go to a church and there offer to the Lord your personal projects.

The birth of Jesus

2¹At that time, the emperor issued a decree for a census of the whole empire to be taken. ²This first census was taken when Quirinus was governor of Syria. ³Everyone had to be registered in his own town. So everyone set out for his own city. ⁴Joseph, too, set out from Nazareth of Galilee. As he belonged to the family of David, being a descendant of his, he went to Judea, to David's town of Bethlehem, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was with child.

⁶They were in Bethlehem when the time came for her to have her child; ⁷and she gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in torn rags and laid him in a feeding trough because there was no place for them in the inn.

The shepherds and the angels

⁸There were shepherds camping in the countryside, taking turns to watch over their flocks by night. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them with the glory of the Lord shining around them.

As they were terrified, ¹⁰the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid; I am here to give you good news, great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today, a Savior has been born to you in David's town; he is the Messiah and the Lord. ¹²Let this be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in torn rags and lying in a feeding trough."

¹³Suddenly, the angel was surrounded by many more heavenly spirits praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest and Peace on earth to those whom God loves."

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go as far as Bethlehem and see what the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the feeding trough. ¹⁷On seeing him, they related what they had been told about the child; ¹⁸and all were astonished on hearing the shepherds.

¹⁹As for Mary, she treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰The shepherds then returned, giving glory and praise to God for all they had heard and seen, just as the angels had told them.

²¹On the eighth day, the circumcision of the baby had to be performed; he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

LUKE 2:1-21

Read: The birth of Jesus in a manger is not just a circumstantial data, but expresses God's option for the simple and the poor, as Mary, Joseph and the shepherds who come near the child. Luke highlights another detail: "Mary kept and pondered everything in her heart."

Reflect: The desire to gain prestige and social recognition is somewhat inappropriate. What does the birth of Jesus in the midst of poverty suggest to you? And, what about the attitude of Mary?

Pray: O God, may I ask for the grace to recognize your presence in simple things and contemplate your birth in everyday life.

Act: Make a list of birthdays of your loved ones. Remember how you celebrate the birthday of each of them and thank God for the gift of life.

Jesus is presented in the temple

²²When the day came for the purification according to the law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, ²³as it is written in the law of the Lord: *Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God.* ²⁴And they offered a sacrifice as ordered in the law of the Lord: *a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*

²⁵There lived in Jerusalem, at this time, a very upright and devout man named Simeon; the Holy Spirit was in him. He looked forward to the time when the Lord would comfort Israel; ²⁶and he had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah of the Lord. ²⁷So, he was led into the temple by the Holy Spirit at the time the parents brought the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the law.

²⁸Simeon took the child in his arms and blessed God, saying,

²⁹"Now, O Lord, you can dismiss
your servant in peace,
for you have fulfilled your word

³⁰and my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you display for all the people to see.

³² Here is the light you will reveal to the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.”

³³ His father and mother wondered at what was said about the child.

³⁴ Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, “Know this: your son is a sign; a sign established for the falling and rising of many in Israel, a sign of contradiction; ³⁵ and a sword will pierce your own soul so that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.”

³⁶ There was also a prophetess named Anna, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. After leaving her father’s home, she had been seven years with her husband; and since then, she had been continually about the temple, serving God as a widow, night and day, in fasting and prayer. ³⁷ She was now eighty-four. ³⁸ Coming up at that time, she gave praise to God and spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When the parents had fulfilled all that was required by the law of the Lord, they returned to their town, Nazareth in Galilee. ⁴⁰ There, the child grew in stature and strength and was filled with wisdom: the grace of God was upon him.

LUKE 2:22-40

Read: Mary and Joseph, as faithful Jews, had Jesus circumcised and presented him to the Lord, as prescribed by the Law. Simeon proclaims the universality of salvation that Jesus brings.

Reflect: Do you observe the commandments of God and the Church? Do you consider them necessary for salvation? Does God want the salvation of a few or of all?

Pray: O God, I ask for your help to do what you command us and to contemplate everywhere your saving presence.

Act: Promote family participation in your parish activities.

I must be in my Father’s house

⁴¹ Every year, the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, as was customary. ⁴² And when Jesus was twelve years old, he went up with them according to the custom of this feast. ⁴³ After

the festival was over they returned, but the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem and his parents did not know it.

⁴⁴They assumed that he was in their group of travelers and, after walking the whole day, they looked for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵As they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem searching for him; ⁴⁶and on the third day, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. ⁴⁷And all the people were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

⁴⁸His parents were very surprised when they saw him; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I were very worried while searching for you." ⁴⁹Then he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand this answer.

⁵¹Jesus went down with them, returning to Nazareth, and he continued to be obedient to them. As for his mother, she kept all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and in divine and human favor.

LUKE 2:41-52

Read: On the occasion of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover feast, Jesus stays in the Temple without Joseph and Mary knowing it. Through this story, Luke presents the divine sonship of Jesus and his mission: "My Father's affairs."

Reflect: Do you realize that by baptism you are a child of God? In your opinion, what mission has God entrusted you?

Pray: Lord Jesus, help me to be ever more aware of my condition as a child of God, and the mission that as such I have: building up your kingdom.

Act: Support any initiative of your diocese or parish that promotes respect for human rights.

John the Baptist prepares the way

(Mk 1:1; Mt 3:1; Jn 1:19)

3¹It was the fifteenth year of the rule of the Emperor Tiberius: Pontius Pilatus was governor of Judea; Herod ruled over Galilee, his brother

Philip ruled over the country of Iturea and Trachonitis; and Lysanias ruled over Abilene. ²Annas and Caiaphas were the High Priests at the time when the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the desert.

³John proclaimed a baptism for repentant people to obtain forgiveness of sins and he went through the whole country bordering the Jordan River. ⁴It was just as is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: *Listen to this voice crying out in the desert, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight!'* ⁵*The valleys will be filled and the mountains and hills made low. Everything crooked will be made straight and the rough paths smooth;* ⁶*and every human being will see the salvation of God!*

⁷John said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! How will you escape when divine punishment comes?" ⁸Produce now the fruits of a true change of heart; and do not deceive yourselves by saying, "We have Abraham for our ancestor!" For I tell you, God can make children of Abraham from these stones. ⁹The ax is already laid to the root of the tree and every tree that fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰The people asked him, "What are we to do?" ¹¹And John answered, "If you have two coats, give one to the person who has none; and if you have food, do the same."

¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized and asked him, "Master, what must we do?" ¹³John said to them, "Collect no more than your fixed rate." ¹⁴Then some soldiers asked John, "What about us? What are we to do?" And he answered, "Don't take anything by force, or threaten the people by denouncing them falsely. Be content with your pay."

¹⁵The people were wondering about John's identity, "Could he be the Messiah?" ¹⁶Then John answered them, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will do much more: he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. As for me, I am not worthy to untie his sandal. ¹⁷He comes with a winnowing fan to clear his threshing floor and gather the grain into his barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

¹⁸With these and many other words, John announced the Good News to the people ¹⁹until Herod put him in prison. For John had reproached Herod for living with Herodias, his brother's wife, and for his evil deeds. ²⁰Then Herod added another crime to all the rest he had committed: he put John in prison.

LUKE 3:1-20

Read: Presentation of John the Baptist and his ministry. John announces the coming of the Lord and prepares his mission.

Reflect: John proclaims the coming of the Lord boldly, and so is imprisoned. Do you think that we Christians are bold enough in proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord? How should we do it?

Pray: I ask you, Jesus, for strength to proclaim your Gospel with courage.

Act: Find out more about the Church's option in favor of life, and decide how to live the Gospel today.

Jesus is baptized by John

(Mt 3:13; Mk 1:9; Jn 1:29)

²¹Now, with all the people who came to be baptized, Jesus, too, was baptized. Then, while he was praying, the heavens opened: ²²the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the bodily form of a dove and a voice from heaven was heard, "You are my Son in whom I am well pleased."

²³When Jesus made his appearance, he had reached the age of thirty years. He was known as the Son of Joseph, whose father and forefathers were:

Heli, ²⁴Matthat, Levi, Melchi, Jannai, Joseph, ²⁵Matthathias, Amos, Nahum, Esli, Naggai, ²⁶Maath, Mattathias, Semein, Josech, Joda, ²⁷Joanan, Rhesa, Zerubbabel, Shealtiel, Neri, ²⁸Melchi, Addi, Cosam, Elmadam, Er, ²⁹Joshua, Eliezer, Jorim, Matthat, Levi, ³⁰Simeon, Judah, Joseph, Jonam, Eliakim, ³¹Melea, Menna, Mattatha, Nathan, David, ³²Jesse, Obed, Boaz, Salmon, Nahson, ³³Amminadab, Adnim, Arni, Hezron, Perez, Judah, ³⁴Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Terah, Nahor, ³⁵Serug, Reu, Peleg, Eber, Shelah, ³⁶Cainan, Arphaxad, Shem, Noah, Lamech, ³⁷Methuselah, Enoch, Jared, Malaleel, Cainan, ³⁸Enos, Seth, and Adam—who was from God.

LUKE 3:21-38

Read: Luke tells of the baptism of the Lord and his genealogy. Unlike Matthew, whose genealogy stretches back to Abraham,

the Gospel of Luke extends it to Adam, the father of all humankind.

Reflect: What does the genealogy that Luke presents suggest to you? Do you see in every person who crosses your path a brother and a sister?

Pray: Lord Jesus, I thank you for having become one of us and, thus, we all become brothers and sisters, and together with love, we may build a better world.

Act: Promote among your peers actions that help to treat others as real brothers and sisters: sons and daughters of the one Father/Mother God.

Jesus tempted in the wilderness

(Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12)

4¹ Jesus was now full of the Holy Spirit. As he returned from the Jordan, the Spirit led him into the desert ² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. He did not eat anything during that time and at the end he was hungry. ³ The devil then said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into bread.” ⁴ But Jesus answered, “Scripture says: People cannot live on bread alone.”

⁵ Then the devil took him up to a high place and showed him, in a flash, all the nations of the world. ⁶ And he said to Jesus, “I can give you power over all the nations; and their wealth will be yours; for power and wealth have been delivered to me; and I give them to whom I wish. ⁷ All this will be yours, provided you worship me.” ⁸ But Jesus replied, “Scripture says: *You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him alone.*”

⁹ Then the devil took him up to Jerusalem and set him on the highest wall of the temple; and he said, “If you are God’s Son, throw yourself down from here; ¹⁰ for it is written: *God will order his angels to take care of you;* ¹¹ and again: *They will hold you in their hands, lest you hurt your foot on the stones.*” ¹² But Jesus replied, “It is written: *You shall not challenge the Lord your God.*”

¹³ When the devil had exhausted every way of tempting Jesus, he left him to return another time.

LUKE 4:1-13

Read: Jesus is tested by Satan in the wilderness. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he confronts temptations and always chooses God's plan.

Reflect: What temptations are you facing and how do you deal with them? Do you ask the help of the Holy Spirit to overcome them?

Pray: O God, may your Spirit assist me in times of temptation, helping me always to choose your path of service, love and, self-giving.

Act: Identify the temptation that creates the most problems in your life. Do you have a plan to overcome them? Do you ever ask someone for help?

Jesus proclaims his mission at Nazareth

(Mt 13:53)

¹⁴Jesus acted with the power of the Spirit; and on his return to Galilee, the news about him spread throughout all that territory. ¹⁵He began teaching in the synagogues of the Jews and everyone praised him.

¹⁶When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath as he usually did. ¹⁷He stood up to read, and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: ¹⁸*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives, and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed; ¹⁹and to announce the Lord's year of mercy."*

²⁰Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he said to them, "Today, these prophetic words come true even as you listen."

²²All agreed with him and were lost in wonder while he spoke of the grace of God. Nevertheless, they asked, "Who is this but Joseph's Son?"

²³So he said, "Doubtless you will quote me the saying: Doctor, heal yourself! Do here, in your town, what they say you did in Capernaum."

²⁴Jesus added, "No prophet is honored in his own country. ²⁵Truly, I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when

the heavens withheld rain for three years and six months and a great famine came over the whole land. ²⁶Yet, Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow of Zarephath, in the country of Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet; and no one was healed except Naaman, the Syrian.”

²⁸On hearing these words, the whole assembly became indignant. ²⁹They rose up and brought him out of the town, ³⁰to the edge of the hill on which Nazareth is built, intending to throw him down the cliff. But he passed through their midst and went his way.

LUKE 4:14-30

Read: Jesus announces his mission in his own town, Nazareth, but they reject him.

Reflect: How do you see the saving actions of God in your life? How do you think that Jesus fulfills his mission today? What does this expression suggest to you: “Today, in your presence, this passage of the Scripture has been fulfilled”?

Pray: O Jesus, may we contemplate on your saving action among us. Free us from our bias, and may your Spirit encourage us to work in your mission.

Act: Encourage your family to become aware of the mission of Jesus.

With the power of the spirit

(Mk 1:23; Mt 4:24; 8:14)

³¹Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee, and began teaching the people at the Sabbath meetings. ³²They were astonished at the way he taught them, for his word was spoken with authority.

³³In the synagogue, there was a man possessed by an evil spirit who shouted in a loud voice, ³⁴“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I recognize you: you are the Holy One of God.” ³⁵Then Jesus said to him sharply, “Be silent and leave this man!” The evil spirit then threw the man down in front of them and came out of him without doing him harm.

³⁶Amazement seized all these people, and they said to one another, “What does this mean? He commands the evil spirits with authority and

power. He orders and you see how they come out!”³⁷ And news about Jesus spread throughout the surrounding area.

³⁸Leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to the house of Simon. His mother-in-law was suffering from high fever and they asked him to do something for her. ³⁹Bending over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately, she got up and waited on them.

⁴⁰At sunset, people suffering from many kinds of sickness were brought to Jesus. Laying his hands on each one, he healed them. ⁴¹Demons were driven out, howling as they departed from their victims, “You are the Son of God!” He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, for they knew he was the Messiah.

⁴²Jesus left at daybreak and looked for a solitary place. People went out in search of him, and finding him, they tried to dissuade him from leaving. ⁴³But he said, “I have to go to other towns to announce the good news of the kingdom of God. That is what I was sent to do.” ⁴⁴And Jesus continued to preach in the synagogues of Galilee.

LUKE 4:31-44

Read: In Capernaum, Jesus exorcizes, heals Peter’s mother-in-law and all the sick brought to him.

Reflect: The example of Peter’s mother-in-law is very instructive. As soon as she feels healthy, she gets up and serves Jesus. She shows in this way her gratitude. Has God healed you of something? How do you give thanks?

Pray: Dear Jesus, I give thanks to you for all that you do for me. May your Spirit teach me to be generous with others as you are with me.

Act: Perform an act of charity as gratitude for what God has done for you.

You will catch people

(Mt 4:18; Mk 1:16)

5¹One day, as Jesus stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, with a crowd gathered around him listening to the word of God, ²he caught sight of two boats left at the water’s edge by fishermen now washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked

him to pull out a little from the shore. There he sat and continued to teach the crowd.

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” ⁵Simon replied, “Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will lower the nets.” ⁶This they did, and caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷They signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and they filled both boats almost to the point of sinking.

⁸Upon seeing this, Simon Peter fell at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Leave me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” ⁹For he and his companions were amazed at the catch they had made ¹⁰and so were Simon’s partners, James and John, Zebedee’s sons.

Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. You will catch people from now on.” ¹¹So they brought their boats to land and followed him, leaving everything.

Cure of a leper

(Mk 1:40; Mt 8:2)

¹²One day, in another town, a man came to Jesus covered with leprosy. On seeing Jesus, the man bowed down to the ground and said, “Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean.”

¹³Stretching out his hand, Jesus touched the man and said, “Yes, I want to. Be clean.” In an instant, the leprosy left him. ¹⁴Then Jesus instructed him, “Tell this to no one. But go and show yourself to the priest. Make an offering for your healing as Moses prescribed; that will serve as evidence for them.”

¹⁵But the news about Jesus spread all the more; and large crowds came to him, to listen and to be healed of their sickness. ¹⁶As for Jesus, he would often withdraw to solitary places and pray.

The paralytic saved

(Mk 2:1; Mt 9:1)

¹⁷One day, Jesus was teaching and many Pharisees and teachers of the law had come from every part of Galilee and Judea, and even from Jerusalem. They were sitting there while the power of the Lord was at work to heal the sick. ¹⁸Then some men brought a paralyzed man who lay on his mat. They tried to enter the house to place him before Jesus,

¹⁹but they couldn't find a way through the crowd. So they went up on the roof and, removing the tiles, they lowered him on his mat into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus.

²⁰When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." ²¹At once the teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to wonder, "This man insults God! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

²²But Jesus knew their thoughts and asked them, "Why are you reacting like this?" ²³Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk'? ²⁴Now you shall know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." And Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." ²⁵At once, the man stood before them. He took up the mat he had been lying on and went home praising God.

²⁶Amazement seized the people and they praised God. They were filled with holy fear and said, "What wonderful things we have seen today!"

LUKE 5:1-26

Read: Simon had been trying all night fishing with no success. Jesus asks him to throw their nets one more time. He does and gets a great catch. Jesus calls Simon and his companions and from here on they follow him as his disciples. Jesus' healing reveals God's liberating power in the world.

Reflect: Simon trusts in the words of Jesus despite his initial failure. Do you trust in the Word of God? Do you feel called by the Lord? What for? From what does the Lord liberates us today?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit increase my faith to always trust in your Word and be your disciple.

Act: Talk to your family about what it means to have faith in Jesus, and about the mission that he calls us to: the kingdom of God.

Call of Levi

(Mk 2:13; Mt 9:9)

²⁷After this, Jesus went out, and noticing a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax office, he said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁸So Levi, leaving everything, got up and followed Jesus.

²⁹ Levi gave a great feast for Jesus and many tax collectors came to his house and took their places at the table with the other people. ³⁰ Then the Pharisees and their followers complained to Jesus' disciples, "How is it, that you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹ But Jesus spoke up, "Healthy people don't need a doctor but sick people do. ³² I have not come to call the just, but sinners to a change of heart."

³³ Some people asked him, "The disciples of John fast often and say long prayers and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why is it that your disciples eat and drink?" Then Jesus said to them, ³⁴ "You can't make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them. ³⁵ But later the bridegroom will be taken from them and they will fast in those days."

³⁶ Jesus also told them this parable: "No one tears a piece from a new coat to put it on an old one; otherwise, the new coat will be torn and the piece taken from the new coat will not match the old coat. ³⁷ No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and be spilled and the skins will be destroyed as well. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into fresh skins. ³⁹ Yet, no one who has tasted old wine is eager to drink new wine, but says, 'The old is good.'"

LUKE 5:27-39

Read: Jesus calls Levi (Matthew), a publican. Immediately, he leaves everything to follow the Master. Levi welcomes Jesus into his home and shares the table with him and with other tax collectors. This scandalized the Pharisees and the scribes.

Reflect: Would you be able to share your table with the marginalized? What do you make of Jesus' comparisons on the piece of new garment to patch an old one? What is new in the message of Jesus?

Pray: Give me, Lord Jesus, a generous heart to welcome you without prejudice in my brothers and sisters, especially those who are despised and marginalized by society.

Act: Share your table with the people considered marginalized by your society, at least once a year. Receive them as you would receive Jesus himself.

Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath

(Mk 2:23; Mt 12:1; Mk 3:1)

6¹One Sabbath, Jesus was going through a field of grain, and his disciples began to pick heads of grain crushing them in their hands for food. ²Some of the Pharisees asked them, “Why do you do what is forbidden on the Sabbath?” ³Then Jesus spoke up and asked them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his men were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, took and ate the bread of the offering and even gave some to his men, though only priests are allowed to eat that bread.” ⁵And Jesus added, “The Son of Man is Lord and rules over the Sabbath.”

⁶On another Sabbath, Jesus entered the synagogue and began teaching. There was a man with a paralyzed right hand ⁷and the teachers of the law and the Pharisees watched him: Would Jesus heal the man on the Sabbath? If he did, they could accuse him.

⁸But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to the man, “Get up and stand in the middle.” ⁹Then he spoke to them, “I want to ask you: what is allowed by the law on the Sabbath? To do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” ¹⁰And Jesus looked around at them all.

Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out and his hand was restored, becoming as healthy as the other. ¹¹But they were furious and began to discuss with one another how they could deal with Jesus.

The Twelve

(Mk 3:13; Mt 10:1)

¹²At this time, Jesus went out into the hills to pray, spending the whole night in prayer with God. ¹³When day came, he called his disciples to him and chose Twelve of them whom he called ‘apostles’: ¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; ¹⁵Matthew and Thomas; James son of Alpheus and Simon called the Zealot; ¹⁶Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot, who would be the traitor.

LUKE 6:1-16

Read: Jesus teaches us to be merciful, even on the Sabbath. He calls the Twelve. The lawyers, who did not approve of his actions, plot against Him.

Reflect: What does the following question suggest to you: “What is lawful to do on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil? To save life or to destroy it?” Do you feel called by Jesus by your own name?

Pray: I recognize, Lord Jesus, how good you are with me; so I ask for the grace of sharing your goodness with all those in my path.

Act: Evaluate yourself for a week, every evening. Consider if you have been kind to others as God is good to you.

Blessings and woes

(Mt 5–7)

¹⁷Coming down the hill with them, Jesus stood in an open plain. Many of his disciples were there and a large crowd of people who had come from all parts of Judea and Jerusalem, and from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸They gathered to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And people troubled by unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹The entire crowd tried to touch him, because of the power that went out from him and healed them all.

²⁰Then, looking at his disciples, Jesus said,

“Fortunate are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.

²¹Fortunate are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

Fortunate are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

²²Fortunate are you when people hate you, when they reject you and insult you and number you among criminals, because of the Son of Man.

²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. Remember, that is how the ancestors of the people treated the prophets.

²⁴But alas for you who have wealth, for you have been comforted now.

²⁵Alas for you who are full, for you will go hungry.

Alas for you, who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶Alas for you when people speak well of you, for that is how the ancestors of the people treated the false prophets.

Love of enemies

(Mt 5:38)

²⁷But I say to you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. ²⁸Bless those who curse you and pray for those who treat you badly. ²⁹To the one who strikes you on the cheek, turn the other cheek; from the one who takes your coat, do not keep back your shirt. ³⁰Give to the one who asks, and if anyone has taken something from you, do not demand it back.

³¹Do to others, as you would have others do to you. ³²If you love only those who love you, what kind of grace is yours? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³If you do favors to those who are good to you, what kind of grace is yours? Even sinners do the same. ³⁴If you lend only when you expect to receive, what kind of grace is yours? For sinners also lend to sinners expecting to receive something in return.

³⁵But love your enemies and do good to them and lend when there is nothing to expect in return. Then will your reward be great and you will be sons and daughters of the Most High, for he is kind toward the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

LUKE 6:17-36

Read: Just after calling the Twelve, Jesus sets the lifestyle that his disciples should aspire to: the Beatitudes. The community of Jesus' disciples is to rule by love.

Reflect: What is the following expression suggesting to you: "Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return... Be merciful as your Father is compassionate"?

Pray: Lord Jesus, help me to live by the Beatitudes, to be able to share your love with everyone who comes close to me.

Act: Today try to interiorize the Beatitudes deeply in yourself. At the end of the day, thank God for the experience and for His help to try it again tomorrow.

³⁷Don't be a judge of others and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give and it will be given to you and you will receive in your sack good

measure, pressed down, full and running over. For the measure you give will be the measure you receive back.”

³⁹And Jesus offered this example, “Can a blind person lead another blind person? Surely both will fall into a ditch. ⁴⁰A disciple is not above the master; but when fully trained, he will be like the master. ⁴¹So why do you pay attention to the speck in your brother’s eye while you have a log in your eye and are not conscious of it? ⁴²How can you say to your neighbor, ‘Friend, let me take this speck out of your eye,’ when you can’t remove the log in your own? You hypocrite! First, remove the log from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your neighbor’s eye.

⁴³No healthy tree bears bad fruit, no poor tree bears good fruit. ⁴⁴And each tree is known by the fruit it bears: you don’t gather figs from thorns or grapes from brambles. ⁴⁵Similarly, the good person draws good things from the good stored in his heart, and an evil person draws evil things from the evil stored in his heart. For the mouth speaks from the fullness of the heart.

⁴⁶Why do you call me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷I will show you what the one is like who comes to me and listens to my words and acts accordingly. ⁴⁸That person is like the builder who dug deep and laid the foundations of his house on the rock. The river overflowed and the stream dashed against the house but could not carry it off because the house had been well built.

⁴⁹But the one who listens and does not act is like a man who built his house on the ground without a foundation. The flood burst against it and the house fell at once: and what a terrible disaster that was!”

LUKE 6:37-49

Read: Jesus asks his disciples to be merciful to others, not to judge or condemn, but know how to forgive. Building up your life on the teachings of Jesus is like building a house on a rock.

Reflect: Do you root your life on the teachings of Jesus? How concretely do you do that?

Pray: Change, Lord Jesus, my life, to be rooted in the love with which you love us.

Act: Review your actions and see what are at the root of them.

Cure of the centurion's servant

(Mt 8:5; Jn 4:46)

7¹When Jesus had finished teaching the people, he went to Capernaum.

²A Roman military officer lived there whose servant was very sick and near to death, a man very dear to him. ³So when he heard about Jesus, he sent some elders of the Jews to persuade him to come and save his servant's life. ⁴The elders came to Jesus and begged him earnestly, saying, ⁵"He deserves this of you, for he loves our people and even built a synagogue for us."

⁶Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the Roman officer sent friends to give this message, "Sir, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to welcome you under my roof. ⁷You see, I didn't approach you myself. Just give the order and my servant will be healed. ⁸For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to the other, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this!' and he does it."

⁹On hearing these words, Jesus was filled with admiration. He turned and said to the people with him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." ¹⁰The people sent by the captain went back to his house; there they found that the servant was well.

The son of a widow restored to life

¹¹A little later, Jesus went to a town called Naim. He was accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. ¹²As he reached the gate of the town, a dead man was being carried out. He was the only son of his mother and she was a widow; there followed a large crowd of townspeople.

¹³On seeing her, the Lord had pity on her and said, "Don't cry." ¹⁴Then he came up and touched the stretcher and the men who carried it stopped. Jesus then said, "Young man, I say to you, wake up!" ¹⁵And the dead man sat up and began to speak and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶A holy fear came over them all and they praised God saying, "A great prophet has appeared among us. God has visited his people." ¹⁷This news spread throughout Judea and the surrounding places.

LUKE 7:1-17

Read: The healing of the centurion's servant and the resurrection of the son of the widow express the closeness that God has for His people, especially to the marginalized and needy.

Reflect: If Jesus manifested the love of God by caring for the suffering, how do we, his disciples, express that love?

Pray: Father, forgive me for being indifferent to the suffering of those around me. May your grace help me to be caring and compassionate to others.

Act: Express the compassionate love of God concretely by helping someone who is suffering or needing help.

Jesus answers the messengers of John

(Mt 11:2)

¹⁸ John's disciples informed him about all these things. So John called two of his disciples ¹⁹ and sent them to the Lord with this message, "Are you the one we are expecting, or should we wait for another?" ²⁰ These men came to Jesus and said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you: Are you the one we are to expect, or should we wait for another?"

²¹ At that time, Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses and diseases; he freed them from evil spirits and he gave sight to the blind. ²² Then he answered the messengers, "Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the poor are given good news. Now, listen: ²³ Fortunate are those who meet me, and are not offended by me."

²⁴ When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began speaking to the people about John. And he said, "What did you want to see when you went to the desert? A reed blowing in the wind? ²⁵ What was there to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? But people who wear fine clothes and enjoy delicate food are found in palaces. ²⁶ What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ For John is the one foretold in Scripture in these words: *I am sending my messenger ahead of you to prepare your way.* ²⁸ No one may be found greater than

John among those born of women; but, I tell you, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

²⁹All the people listening to him, even the tax collectors, had acknowledged the will of God in receiving the baptism of John, ³⁰whereas the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, in not letting themselves be baptized by him, ignored the will of God.

³¹And Jesus said, “What comparison can I use for the people? What are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace about whom their companions complain, ‘We piped you a tune and you wouldn’t dance; we sang funeral songs and you wouldn’t cry.’

³³Remember John: he didn’t eat bread or drink wine and you said, ‘He has an evil spirit.’ ³⁴Next, came the Son of Man, eating and drinking; and you say, ‘Look, a glutton for food and wine, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ ³⁵But the children of Wisdom always recognize her work.”

LUKE 7:18-35

Read: The message of John the Baptist is accepted by all the people, even by tax collectors. But religious authorities, as wayward children, reject it, closing themselves to all manifestations of God that does not conform to their expectations.

Reflect: Are you open to see the manifestation of God’s saving deeds beyond your own prejudices and considerations? At present, how is God’s saving action manifested?

Pray: O God, may I see your saving presence in all times and places, and to be imbued by it.

Act: Be aware of the signs of God’s saving presence in your life. Give thanks for this by sharing it with your people.

Jesus, the woman, and the Pharisee

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to share his meal, so he went to the Pharisee’s home, and as usual reclined at the table to eat. ³⁷And it happened that a woman of this town, who was known as a sinner, heard that he was in the Pharisee’s house. She brought an alabaster jar of perfume ³⁸and stood behind him, at his feet, weeping. She wet his feet with tears; she dried them with her hair; she kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them.

³⁹The Pharisee who had invited Jesus was watching and thought, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what sort of person is touching him; isn’t this woman a sinner?”

⁴⁰Then Jesus spoke to the Pharisee and said, “Simon, I have something to ask you.” He answered, “Speak, master.” And Jesus said, ⁴¹“Two people were in debt to the same creditor. One owed him five hundred silver coins and the other fifty. ⁴²As they were unable to pay him back, he graciously canceled the debts of both. Now, which of them will love him more?”

⁴³Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, who was forgiven more.” And Jesus said, “You are right.” ⁴⁴And turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? ⁴⁵You gave me no water for my feet when I entered your house, but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn’t welcome me with a kiss, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since she came in. ⁴⁶You provided no oil for my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷This is why, I tell you, her sins, her many sins, are forgiven, because of her great love. But the one who is forgiven little has little love.”

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹The others reclining with him at the table began to wonder, “Now this man claims to forgive sins!” ⁵⁰But Jesus again spoke to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace!”

LUKE 7:36-50

Read: Jesus has dinner at Simon’s house, the Pharisee, where a woman washes and kisses his feet. Simon is shocked that Jesus did not notice that the woman is a “sinner,” but Jesus reproaches the mediocrity of the Pharisee’s love, and praises the generosity of love of the sinner: “She has been forgiven many sins, for she showed a great love.”

Reflect: A superficial commitment to Jesus and his teachings—like the one of the Pharisee—is not enough. Jesus wants deep commitments: of heart, conversion, gratitude, and compassion, as the one shown by the woman.

Pray: Lord Jesus, transform our lives by the power of your love, that we may love others as you love us.

Act: As the woman of this passage, adhere strongly to the love of Jesus. Wash his feet by doing a gesture of love with somebody.

The women who followed Jesus

8¹ Jesus walked through towns and countryside, preaching and giving the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve followed him,² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases: Mary called Magdalene, who had been freed of seven demons;³ Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Suzanna; and others who provided for them out of their own funds.

The parable of the sower

(Mk 4:1; Mt 13:1)

⁴As a great crowd gathered and people came to him from every town, Jesus began teaching them with a story:⁵ "The sower went out to sow the seed. And as he sowed, some of the seed fell along the way was trodden on, and the birds of the sky ate it up.⁶ Some seed fell on rocky ground, and no sooner had it come up than it withered because it had no water.⁷ Some seed fell among thorns; the thorns grew up with the seed and choked it.⁸ But some seed fell on good soil and grew, producing fruit a hundred times as much!" And Jesus cried out, "Listen then, if you have ears to hear!"

⁹The disciples asked him, "What does this story mean?"¹⁰ And Jesus answered, "To you, it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. But to others, it is given in the form of stories, or parables, so that, *seeing, they may not perceive; and hearing, they may not understand.*

¹¹Now, this is the point of the parable:

The seed is the word of God.¹² Those along the wayside are people who hear it; but immediately, the devil comes and takes the word from their minds, for he doesn't want them to believe and be saved.¹³ Those on the rocky ground are people who receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe for a while and give way in time of trial.¹⁴ Among the thorns are people who hear the word, but as they go their way, they are choked by worries, riches, and the pleasures of life; they

bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵The good soil, instead, are people who receive the word and keep it, in a gentle and generous mind and, persevering patiently, they bear fruit.

¹⁶No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a bowl or puts it under the bed; rather, he puts it on a lampstand so that people coming in may see the light. ¹⁷In the same way, there is nothing hidden that shall not be uncovered; nothing kept secret that shall not be known clearly. ¹⁸Now, pay attention and listen well, for whoever produces, will be given more; but from those who do not produce, even what they seem to have will be taken away from them.”

Jesus' mother and brothers

(Mk 3:31; Mt 12:46)

¹⁹Then his mother and his relatives came to him but they could not get to him because of the crowd. ²⁰Someone told him, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and wish to meet you.” ²¹Then Jesus answered, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

LUKE 8:1-21

Read: Jesus, along with some disciples, men and women, goes through the region successfully preaching the Gospel. The parable suggests several kinds of responses to the Word of God. The seed that falls on fertile soil produces a hundredfold.

Reflect: As you look at your life, can you identify times when you have been like each of the soils in the parable receiving and responding to God?

Pray: Grant me, Lord Jesus, the grace to receive your Word. May it produce much fruit in my life and in the life of others.

Act: Set aside time in your daily life to listening and meditating on the Word of God.

Jesus calms the storm

(Mk 4:35; Mt 8:23)

²²One day, Jesus got into a boat with his disciples and said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” ²³So they set out, and

as they sailed he fell asleep. Suddenly, a storm came down on the lake and the boat began to fill with water; and they were in danger. ²⁴The disciples then went to Jesus to wake him saying, “Master! Master! We are sinking!” Jesus woke up. He rebuked the wind and the rolling waves; the storm subsided, and all was quiet.

²⁵Then Jesus said to them, “Where is your faith?” They had been afraid; now they were astonished and said to one another, “Who can this be? See, he commands even the wind and the sea and they obey him!”

The possessed man and the pigs

(Mk 5:1; Mt 8:28)

²⁶And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷As Jesus stepped ashore, a man from the town approached him. This man was possessed by demons and for a long time he had not worn any clothes. He would not live in a house but stayed among the tombstones. ²⁸When he came nearer to Jesus, he screamed and threw himself on the ground before him; and then he shouted, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me,” ²⁹for Jesus had ordered the evil spirit to leave the man.

This spirit had seized him many times when he had been bound with ropes and chains and kept under control. He would then suddenly break the chains and be driven by the evil spirit into wild places.

When Jesus asked him, ³⁰“What is your name?” the man said, “I am Legion,” because many demons had entered into him. ³¹And they begged Jesus not to command them to go into the bottomless pit. ³²Nearby on the hillside, a great herd of pigs was feeding; so the demons asked to be allowed to enter the pigs and Jesus gave them permission. ³³The demons then left the man and entered the pigs and the herd rushed down the hillside into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and reported it in the town and in the countryside. ³⁵Then people went out to see what had happened and came to Jesus. There they saw the man from whom the demons had been driven out. He was clothed and in his right mind and was sitting at the feet of Jesus. They were afraid. ³⁶Then people who had seen it told them how the man had been healed; ³⁷and all this crowd from the Gerasene country asked Jesus to depart from them, for a great fear took hold of them. So Jesus got into the boat to return.

³⁸It was then that the man freed of the demons asked Jesus if he could stay with him. ³⁹But Jesus sent him on his way; “Go back to your family and tell them how much God has done for you.” So the man went away, proclaiming through the whole town how much Jesus had done for him.

LUKE 8:22-39

Read: Jesus calms a storm and rebukes the disciple’s unbelief. They are astonished to see his power over nature. Closer to home, Jesus frees a man possessed by a “legion” of demons. His power scares locals, and although the liberated man wants to follow him, Jesus tells him to announce what God has done for him.

Reflect: Do you trust in the saving power of God? Do you think there may be some sin that God cannot forgive? What kind of sin? Why?

Pray: Thanks, Lord Jesus, for the gifts of faith and forgiveness. May the Spirit help us in moments of doubt and confusion. May we be able to tell “to our people” what God does for us.

Act: Tell your companions any situation where you experienced God’s saving action. Promote faith in them.

A woman is healed and a child, raised to life

(Mk 5:21; Mt 9:18)

⁴⁰When Jesus returned, the people welcomed him, for all had been waiting for him. ⁴¹At that time, a man named Jairus, an official of the synagogue, threw himself at Jesus’ feet and begged him to come to his house ⁴²because his only daughter, about twelve years old, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way the crowd pressed from every side. ⁴³There was a woman who had suffered from a bleeding for twelve years. This woman had spent everything she had on doctors, but none of them had been able to cure her. ⁴⁴Now, she came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his cloak and her bleeding stopped at once. ⁴⁵Jesus said, “Who touched me?” Everyone denied it; and Peter said, “Master, the crowd is pushing all around you.” ⁴⁶But Jesus insisted, “Someone touched me, for I felt power go out from me.”

⁴⁷The woman knew she had been discovered. She came trembling and knelt before Jesus. Then she openly confessed why she had touched

him and how she had been instantly cured. ⁴⁸ And Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

⁴⁹ While Jesus was still speaking, a messenger arrived from the official’s home to tell him, “Your daughter has just died; don’t trouble the master any further.” ⁵⁰ But Jesus heard the news, and said to the official, “Do not fear, only believe.”

⁵¹ When he entered the house, Jesus allowed no one to follow him, except Peter, James, and John, with the father and mother of the child. ⁵² As all the people were weeping and wailing loudly, Jesus said to them, “Do not weep, she is not dead but asleep.” ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ As for Jesus, he took the child by the hand and said to her, “Child, wake up!” ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned and she got up at once; then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ The parents were amazed, but Jesus ordered them not to let anyone know what had happened.

LUKE 8:40-56

Read: Luke highlights the faith and courage of those who come to Jesus. Jairus, who is not afraid of what people will say because he is the chief of the synagogue, pleads for his daughter. Similarly, the woman suffering from hemorrhages does not fear being discovered and punished for being impure comes to touch Jesus’ cloak. Both get what they expect.

Reflect: Do you think that we, Christians of today, are daring to express our faith? Why? Does the saving action of God have limits? Can you see God acting it in other denominations and religions, and even in the activity of those who do not believe in God?

Pray: Lord Jesus, increase our faith. May we bear witness of your saving presence in the world.

Act: Share in your community what in your time of prayer the Holy Spirit has inspired you about faith.

Jesus sends the Twelve on a mission

(Mt 10:5; Mk 6:7)

9¹ Then Jesus called his Twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to drive out all evil spirits and to heal diseases. ² And he sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³ He instructed them, “Don’t take anything for the journey, neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and don’t even take a spare tunic. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, remain there until you leave that place. ⁵ And wherever they don’t welcome you, leave the town and shake the dust from your feet: it will be as a testimony against them.”

⁶ So they set out and went through the villages, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

⁷ King Herod heard of all this and did not know what to think, for people said, “This is John, raised from the dead.” ⁸ Others believed that Elijah, or one of the ancient prophets, had come back to life. ⁹ As for Herod, he said, “I had John beheaded. Who is this man, about whom I hear such wonders?” And he was anxious to see him.

¹⁰ On their return, the apostles told Jesus everything they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But the crowd heard of this and caught up with him. So he welcomed them and began speaking about the kingdom of God, curing those who needed healing.

The miracle of the loaves

(Mk 6:30; Mt 14:13; Jn 6:1)

¹² The day was drawing to a close, and the Twelve drew near to tell him, “Send the crowd away and let them go into the villages and farms around to find lodging and food, for we are here in a lonely place.” ¹³ But Jesus replied, “You, yourselves, give them something to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves and two fish. Do you want us to go and buy food for all this crowd?” ¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men. Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of fifty.”

¹⁵ So they made all of them sit down. ¹⁶ Jesus then took the five loaves and two fish and, raising his eyes to heaven, pronounced a blessing over them; he broke them and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the crowd. ¹⁷ They ate and everyone had enough; and when they gathered up what was left, twelve baskets were filled with broken pieces.

LUKE 9:1-17

Read: Jesus sends the Twelve to proclaim by word and deed the kingdom of God, and this perplexes Herod. When the Twelve return, a crowd follows them. By nightfall, they are in a deserted place and Jesus feeds the multitude miraculously.

Reflect: Do you feel called to proclaim the kingdom of God? How do you announce it? Do you trust in the generosity of God and people? Do you consider possible the miracle of “sharing” the bread in our present circumstances?

Pray: Thanks, Lord Jesus, for sharing your mission and provide us with food that generates life.

Act: Work with institutions seeking to eradicate hunger and poverty. Make a donation according to your means.

Peter’s profession of faith

(Mk 8:27; Mt 16:18)

¹⁸One day, when Jesus was praying alone, not far from his disciples, he asked them, “What do people say about me?” ¹⁹And they answered, “Some say that you are John the Baptist; others say that you are Elijah, and still others, that you are one of the prophets of old, risen from the dead.” Again Jesus asked them, ²⁰“But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “The Messiah of God.” ²¹Then Jesus spoke to them giving them strict orders not to tell this to anyone.

²²And he added, “The Son of Man must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the elders and chief priests and teachers of the law and be put to death. Then after three days, he will be raised to life.”

²³Jesus also said to all the people, “If you wish to be a follower of mine, deny yourself and take up your cross each day and follow me! ²⁴For if you choose to save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it. ²⁵What does it profit you to gain the whole world if you destroy or damage yourself? ²⁶If someone feels ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of his Father with his holy angels. ²⁷Truly, I say to you, there are some here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

The transfiguration

(Mk 9:2; Mt 17:1; Jn 12:28)

²⁸About eight days after Jesus had said all this, he took Peter, John, and James, and went up the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰Two men were talking with Jesus: Moses and Elijah. ³¹Appearing in the glory of heaven, Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about his departure from this life, which was to take place in Jerusalem.

³²Peter and his companions had fallen asleep but they awoke suddenly and they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³As Moses and Elijah were about to leave, Peter—not knowing what to say—said to Jesus, “Master, how good it is for us to be here! Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ³⁴And no sooner had he spoken, than a cloud appeared and covered them; and the disciples were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then these words came from the cloud, “This is my Son, my Beloved, listen to him.” ³⁶And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was there alone.

The disciples kept this to themselves at the time, telling no one of anything they had seen.

LUKE 9:18-36

Read: Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” Peter recognizes him as the Messiah and then he speaks about the requirements to follow him. Subsequently, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up to the mountain to pray. There, they listen: “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.”

Reflect: Who is Jesus for you? Are you willing to accept the conditions to follow him? How do you hear the voice inside you saying, “This is my chosen Son, listen to him”?

Pray: Lord Jesus, help my life may bear witness that you are the Messiah, that I may proclaim your Gospel, announcing and building the kingdom of God.

Act: Participate in activities in your parish that promote Christian formation. Share the faith with your people, tell them what Jesus means to you.

The epileptic demoniac

(Mk 9:14; Mt 17:14)

³⁷The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Jesus. ³⁸A man among them called out, “Master, I beg you to look at my son, my only child. ³⁹When the evil spirit seizes him, he suddenly screams. The spirit throws him into a fit and he foams at the mouth; it scarcely ever leaves him after wearing him out. ⁴⁰I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.”

⁴¹Jesus answered, “You faithless people! How disoriented you are! How long must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.” ⁴²And while the boy was being brought, the demon beat him to the ground and threw him into a fit. But Jesus spoke sharply to the evil spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³And all who saw it were astonished at God’s wonderful work.

(Mk 9:30)

But while all were amazed at everything Jesus did, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴“Listen, and remember what I tell you now: The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵But the disciples didn’t understand this saying; something prevented them from grasping what he meant and they were afraid to ask him about it.

Who is the greatest?

⁴⁶One day, the disciples were arguing about which of them was the most important. ⁴⁷But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he took a little child and stood him by his side. ⁴⁸Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. And listen: the one who is found to be the least among you all is the one who is the greatest.”

⁴⁹Then John spoke up, “Master, we saw someone who drives out demons by calling upon your name and we tried to forbid him because he doesn’t follow you with us.” ⁵⁰But Jesus said, “Don’t forbid him. He who is not against you is for you.”

LUKE 9:37-50

Read: Jesus exorcizes a boy. He announces a second time his passion, but his disciples still do not understand and even argue

over who is the most important. Jesus corrects and teaches them: “Whoever is not against you is with you.”

Reflect: Do you feel possessed by any concern, worry or distress? Have you asked Jesus for help? What should be the greatest desire of a Christian: service or fame? Do you think that God’s action in your life has no limits?

Pray: Lord Jesus, deliver me from all that binds and prevents me from following you with love and freedom. May I serve always and everywhere.

Act: Today try to see the presence of God in all things and thank Him by serving others.

Jesus unwelcome in a Samaritan village

⁵¹As the time drew near when Jesus would be taken up to heaven, he made up his mind to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²He sent ahead of him some messengers who entered a Samaritan village to prepare a lodging for him. ⁵³But the people would not receive him because he was on his way to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴Seeing this, James and John, his disciples, said, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to reduce them to ashes?” ⁵⁵Jesus turned and rebuked them, ⁵⁶and they went on to another village.

The cost of following Jesus

(Mt 8:19)

⁵⁷As they went on their way, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

⁵⁹To another, Jesus said, “Follow me!” But he answered, “Let me go back now, for first, I want to bury my father.” ⁶⁰And Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their dead; as for you, leave them and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

⁶¹Another said to him, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say goodbye to my family.” ⁶²And Jesus said to him, “Whoever has put his hand to the plow and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God.”

LUKE 9:51-62

Read: Jesus goes to Jerusalem and sends his disciples to prepare the way for him in a Samaritan village, but they are rejected. Jesus talks about the risks and dangers involved in following him.

Reflect: For you, what is the hardest thing about following Jesus? Is it achievable? Yes? No? Why?

Pray: Lord Jesus, I ask you for strength to face the challenges of each day that your follow-up demands from me. I trust in your Word and in your presence.

Act: What is the most difficult commitment you are taking on this day? Do your best.

Jesus sends out the seventy-two

(Mt 10:5; Mk 6:7)

10¹After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two other disciples and sent them, two by two, ahead of him to every town and place where he himself was to go. ²And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So you must ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest. ³Courage! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. ⁴Set off without purse or bag or sandals, and do not stop at the homes of those you know.

⁵Whatever house you enter, first bless them, saying, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person. But if not, the blessing will return to you. ⁷Stay in that house, eating and drinking at their table, for the worker deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house.

⁸When they welcome you to any town, eat what they offer you. ⁹Heal the sick who are there and say to them: ‘The kingdom of God has drawn near to you.’

¹⁰But in any town where you are not welcome, go to the marketplace and proclaim: ¹¹‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off and leave with you. But know for a certainty that the kingdom of God has drawn near to you.’ ¹²I tell you, that on the Day of Judgment it will be better for Sodom than for this town.

¹³Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! So many miracles have been worked in you! If the same miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would already be sitting in ashes and wearing the sackcloth of repentance. ¹⁴Surely for Tyre and Sidon, it will be better on the Day of Judgment than for you. ¹⁵And what of you, city of Capernaum? Will you be lifted up to heaven? You will be thrown down to the place of the dead.

¹⁶Whoever listens to you listens to me and whoever rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

Jesus gives thanks to the Father

(Mt 11:25)

¹⁷The seventy-two disciples returned full of joy. They said, “Lord, even the demons obeyed us when we called on your name.” ¹⁸Then Jesus replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹You see, I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the Enemy so that nothing will harm you. ²⁰Nevertheless, don’t rejoice because the evil spirits submit to you; rejoice, rather, that your names are written in heaven.”

²¹At that time, Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and made them known to little ones. ²²Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. I have been given all things by my Father so that no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

²³Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said to them privately, “Fortunate are you to see what you see, ²⁴for I tell you that many prophets and kings would have liked to see what you see, but did not see it; and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”

LUKE 10:1-24

Read: Jesus appoints seventy-two disciples to prepare the way for him. They must travel without belongings and their mission is the proclamation of the kingdom. Upon their return, Jesus gives thanks to God because he reveals himself to the humble and simple.

Reflect: How do you prepare the way of the Lord? How? Can you contemplate the liberating action of God in the simple and humble?

Pray: Here I am, Lord Jesus. May my life always announce your good news, your Gospel: the kingdom of God.

Act: Collaborate in an initiative of your parish or diocese that promotes missionary action.

The good Samaritan

(Mt 22:34; Mk 12:28)

²⁵ Then a teacher of the law came and began putting Jesus to the test. And he said, “Master, what shall I do to receive eternal life?” ²⁶ Jesus replied, “What is written in the law? How do you understand it?” ²⁷ The man answered, “*It is written: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” ²⁸ Jesus replied, “What a good answer! Do this and you shall live.” ²⁹ The man wanted to justify his question, so he asked, “Who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ Jesus then said, “There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him and went off, leaving him half-dead.

³¹ It happened that a priest was going along that road and saw the man, but passed by on the other side. ³² Likewise, a Levite saw the man and passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan also was going that way, and when he came upon the man he was moved with compassion. ³⁴ He went over to him and cleaned his wounds with oil and wine and wrapped them in bandages. Then he put him on his own mount and brought him to an inn, where he took care of him.

³⁵ The next day, he had to set off; but he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper and said, “Take care of him and whatever you spend on him, I will repay when I return.”

³⁶ Jesus then asked, “Which of these three, do you think, made himself neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” ³⁷ The teacher of the law answered, “The one who had mercy on him.” And Jesus said, “Then go and do the same.”

Martha and Mary

³⁸As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he entered a village and a woman called Martha welcomed him to her house. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet to listen to his words. ⁴⁰Martha, meanwhile, was busy with all the serving and finally, she said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹But the Lord answered, "Martha, Martha, you worry and are troubled about many things ⁴²whereas only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken away from her."

LUKE 10:25-42

Read: Before the question "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan and urges us to follow his example.

Reflect: Do you feel you are a member of a single family: the human family? Can you contemplate the face of God in the face of the suffering brother or sister? What prevents you from being like the Good Samaritan?

Pray: I ask you, Lord, to transform my life. May I follow your example of love, and be able to love all human beings as you love me.

Act: Pray for someone in need, go and offer your support.

Lord, teach us to pray

(Mt 6:9; 7:7)

1 ¹One day, Jesus was praying in a certain place; and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." ²And Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say this:

Father, may your name be held holy,
may your kingdom come;

³give us, each day, the kind of bread we need,

⁴and forgive us our sins; for we also forgive all who do us wrong;
and do not bring us to the test."

⁵Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to

his house in the middle of the night and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine who is traveling has just arrived, and I have nothing to offer him.’ ⁷Maybe your friend will answer from inside, ‘Don’t bother me now; the door is locked, and my children and I are in bed, so I can’t get up and give you anything.’ ⁸But I tell you, even though he will not get up and attend to you because you are a friend, yet he will get up because you are a bother to him, and he will give you all you need.

⁹And so I say to you, ‘Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For the one who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to him who knocks the door will be opened.

¹¹If your child asks for a fish, will you give him a snake instead? ¹²And if your child asks for an egg, will you give him a scorpion? ¹³If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”

LUKE 11:1-13

Read: Jesus teaches his disciples to pray the Our Father. Then he illustrates with a parable the persistence with which his disciples should beg God. The promptness of the divine response.

Reflect: Prayer is important in Christian following. Do you spend a few moments of your daily life praying with God?

Pray: O God, thank you for your love, which makes us your children. May the consolation and confidence I receive from you in prayer enable me to share your love with everyone who approaches me.

Act: Reserve a time from your daily life for personal prayer.

Jesus and Beelzebul

(Mk 3:22; Mt 12:23; Mk 4:21; 9:40)

¹⁴One day, Jesus was driving out a demon, which was mute. When the demon had been driven out, the mute person could speak and the people were amazed. ¹⁵Yet some of them said, “He drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the chief of the demons.” ¹⁶Others wanted to put him to the test by asking him for a heavenly sign.

¹⁷But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every nation

divided by civil war is on the road to ruin and will fall. ¹⁸If Satan also is divided, his empire is coming to an end. How can you say that I drive out demons by calling upon Beelzebul? ¹⁹If I drive them out by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive out demons? They will be your judges, then.

²⁰But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, would not this mean that the kingdom of God has come upon you? ²¹As long as a man, strong and well armed, guards his house, his goods are safe. ²²But when a stronger man attack and overcomes him, the challenger takes away all the weapons he relied on and disposes of his spoils.

²³Whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me, scatters.

²⁴When the evil spirit goes out of a person, it wanders through dry lands looking for a resting place; and finding none, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' ²⁵When it comes, it finds the house swept and everything in order. ²⁶Then it goes to fetch seven other spirits even worse than itself. They move in and settle there so that the last state of that person is worse than the first."

²⁷As Jesus was speaking, a woman spoke from the crowd and said to him, "Blessed is the one who gave you birth and nursed you!" ²⁸Jesus replied, "Truly blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it as well."

²⁹As the crowd increased, Jesus spoke the following words: "People of the present time are troubled people. They ask for a sign, but no sign will be given to them except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰As Jonah became a sign for the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign for this generation. ³¹The Queen of the South will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and accuse them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and here there is greater than Solomon. ³²The people of Nineveh will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and accuse them, for Jonah's preaching made them turn from their sins and here there is greater than Jonah.

³³You do not light a lamp to hide it; rather, you put it on a lampstand, so that people coming in may see the light.

³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye sees clearly, your whole person benefits from the light; but if your eyesight is poor, your whole person is without light. ³⁵So be careful, lest the light inside you

become darkness. ³⁶If your whole person receives the light, having no part that is dark, you will become light, as when a lamp shines on you.”

Woe to you, Pharisees!

(Mt 23:13)

³⁷As Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to have a meal with him. So he went and sat at table. ³⁸The Pharisee then wondered why Jesus did not first wash his hands before dinner. ³⁹But the Lord said to him, “So then, you Pharisees, you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside yourselves you are full of greed and evil. ⁴⁰Fools! He who made the outside also made the inside. ⁴¹But according to you, by the mere giving of alms everything is made clean.

⁴²A curse is on you, Pharisees! To the temple you give a tenth of all, including mint and rue and other herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. These ought to be practiced, without neglecting the other obligations. ⁴³A curse is on you, Pharisees, for you love the best seats in the synagogues and to be greeted in the marketplace. ⁴⁴A curse is on you, for you are like tombstones of the dead which can hardly be seen; people don’t notice them and make themselves unclean by stepping on them.”

⁴⁵Then a teacher of the law spoke up and said, “Master, when you speak like this, you insult us too.” ⁴⁶And Jesus answered, “A curse is on you also, teachers of the law. For you prepare unbearable burdens and load them on the people, while you yourselves do not move a finger to help them. ⁴⁷A curse is on you, for you build monuments to the prophets your ancestors killed. ⁴⁸So you approve and agree with what your ancestors did. Is it not so? They got rid of the prophets, and you build monuments to them!

⁴⁹For that reason, the wisdom of God also said: I will send prophets and apostles and these people will kill and persecute some of them. ⁵⁰But the present generation will have to answer for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the foundation of the world, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was murdered between the altar and the Sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, the people of this time will have to answer for them all.

⁵²A curse is on you, teachers of the law, for you have taken the key of knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you prevented others from entering.”

⁵³As Jesus left that place, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to harass him, ⁵⁴asking him endless questions, setting traps to catch him in something he might say.

LUKE 11:14-54

Read: Jesus exorcizes demons and his adversaries accuse him of being a demon himself. Jesus fights back: his power is the manifestation of the presence of the kingdom of God. Those honestly looking for God will see his power in Jesus' actions, even if they contradict their preconceived expectations.

Reflect: What does all this suggest? Is it difficult to distinguish a good action from a bad one? Do Christians repeat the same attitudes that Jesus reproaches the Pharisees and doctors of the law?

Pray: My incessant supplication, Lord, is this: "In you I trust. Deliver me from evil."

Act: Be alert to the saving manifestations of God that occur in your day to day. Do not close your eyes before them; give thanks to God for this and promote them in your family environment.

Open and fearless speech

(Mk 3:28; Mt 10:19; 12:31; Mk 8:38)

12¹Meanwhile, such a numerous crowd had gathered that they crushed one another. Then Jesus spoke to his disciples in this way,

"Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²Nothing is covered that will not be uncovered; or hidden, that will not be made known. ³Whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in hidden places, will be proclaimed from housetops.

⁴I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who put to death the body and, after that, can do no more. ⁵But I will tell you whom to fear: Fear the one who, after killing you, is able to throw you into hell. This one you must fear. ⁶Don't you buy five sparrows for two pennies? Yet not one of them has been forgotten by God. ⁷Even the hairs of your head

have been numbered. Don't be afraid! Are you less worthy in the eyes of God than many sparrows?

⁸I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. ⁹But the one who denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God.

¹⁰There will be pardon for the one who criticizes the Son of Man, but there will be no pardon for the one who slanders the Holy Spirit.

¹¹When you are brought before the synagogues, and before governors and rulers, don't worry about how you will defend yourself, or what to say; ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you have to say."

LUKE 12:1-12

Read: Jesus warns his disciples of hypocrisy, urges them to be sincere and courageous in proclaiming the Gospel.

Reflect: What are the biggest difficulties in proclaiming the Gospel day after day? What difficulty, in particular, do you experience?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit accompany us at all times, to confess with courage the faith we profess.

Act: May your life bear witness to the faith of Jesus in welcoming and serving others.

The rich fool

¹³Someone in the crowd spoke to Jesus, "Master, tell my brother to share with me the family inheritance." ¹⁴He replied, "My friend, who has appointed me as your judge or your attorney?" ¹⁵Then Jesus said to the people, "Be on your guard and avoid every kind of greed, for even though you have many possessions, it is not that which gives you life."

¹⁶And Jesus continued, "There was a rich man and his land had produced a good harvest. ¹⁷He thought, 'What shall I do, for I am short of room to store my harvest?' ¹⁸Alright, I know what I shall do: I will pull down my barns and I will build bigger ones to store all this grain, which is my wealth. ¹⁹Then I will say to myself: My friend, you have a lot of good things put by for many years. Rest, eat, drink and enjoy yourself.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be taken

from you. Tell me, who shall get all you have put aside?' ²¹This is the lot of the one who stores up riches for himself and is not wealthy in the eyes of God."

Do not worry!

(Mt 6:25)

²²Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you not to worry about your life: What are we to eat? Or about your body: What are we to wear? ²³For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Look at the crows: they neither sow nor reap; they have no storehouses and no barns, yet God feeds them. In so much, truly, are you different from birds! ²⁵Which of you, for all your worrying, can add a moment to your span of life? ²⁶And if you are not able to control such a small thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷Look at the wildflowers: they do not spin or weave; but I tell you, even Solomon with all his wealth was not clothed as one of these flowers. ²⁸If God so clothes the grass in the fields, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, people of little faith.

²⁹Do not set your heart on what you are to eat and drink; stop worrying! ³⁰Let all the nations of the world run after these things; your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Seek, rather, his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³²Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell what you have and give alms. Get yourselves purses that do not wear out, and an inexhaustible treasure in the heavens, where no thief comes and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

LUKE 12:13-34

Read: Jesus exhorts his disciples to trust in God, to seek above all His kingdom, which others will receive in addition.

Reflect: Life is a free gift from God. An opportunity to be happy and to make others happy. There is no point worrying about riches. A Christian must first seek the kingdom of God.

Pray: Lord Jesus, save me from the foolishness of striving for riches rather than for your kingdom and justice.

Act: Mentally review all your daily worries and trust them to the teaching of the Gospel. Thank God for the good in life and ask God for help to remedy the bad.

Be ready

(Mk 13:33; Mt 24:43; 6:19)

³⁵Be ready, dressed for service, and keep your lamps lit ³⁶like people waiting for their master to return from the wedding. As soon as he comes and knocks, they will open the door to him. ³⁷Happy are those servants whom the master finds wide-awake when he comes. ³⁸Truly, I tell you, he will put on an apron and have them sit at table and he will wait on them. Happy are those servants if he finds them awake when he comes at midnight or daybreak!

³⁹Pay attention to this: If the master of the house had known at what time the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect.”

⁴¹Peter said, “Lord, did you tell this parable only for us, or for everyone?” ⁴²And the Lord replied, “Imagine, then, the wise and faithful steward, whom the master sets over his other servants to give them wheat at the proper time. ⁴³Fortunate is this servant if his master, on coming home, finds him doing his work. ⁴⁴Truly, I say to you, the master will put him in charge of all his property.

⁴⁵But it may be that the steward thinks, ‘My Lord delays in coming,’ and he begins to abuse the male servants and the servant girls, eating and drinking and getting drunk. ⁴⁶Then the master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he doesn’t know. He will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful.

⁴⁷The servant who knew his master’s will, but did not prepare and do what his master wanted, will be soundly beaten; ⁴⁸but the one who does unconsciously what deserves punishment, shall receive fewer blows. Much will be required of the one who has been given much and more will be asked of the one who has been entrusted with more.

(Mt 10:34; 5:25; 16:2)

⁴⁹I have come to bring fire upon the earth and how I wish it were

already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to undergo and what anguish I feel until it is finished!

⁵¹Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵²From now on, in one house five will be divided: three against two and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided father against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴Jesus said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when the wind blows from the south, you say, ‘It will be hot’; and so it is. ⁵⁶You superficial people! You understand the signs of the earth and the sky, but you don’t understand the present times. ⁵⁷And why do you not judge for yourselves what is fit? ⁵⁸When you go with your accuser before the court, try to settle the case on the way, lest he drags you before the judge and the judge deliver you to the jailer and the jailer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the very last penny.”

LUKE 12:35-59

Read: After warning his disciples about undue desire for riches, Jesus now calls them to wait for upon his return, be attentive to his presence, and ready to answer his call.

Reflect: Do you consider yourself ready for a definitive encounter with the Lord? If not, what would it be missing? How should we prepare Christians for the encounter with the Lord?

Pray: O God, grant me the grace to perceive death as a close encounter with you, and not as a moment of judgment and punishment. May your Spirit help me to always be ready for meeting you.

Act: Spend more time on those things and situations that help you be prepared for your final encounter with the Lord.

The fig tree without fruit

13¹One day, some people told Jesus what had occurred in the temple: Pilate had had Galileans killed and their blood mingled with

the blood of their sacrifices. ²Jesus asked them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this? ³No, I tell you. But unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did.

⁴And those eighteen persons in Siloah, who were crushed when the tower fell, do you think they were more guilty than all the others in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you: no. But unless you change your ways, you will all perish, as they did.”

⁶And Jesus continued, “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. ⁷Then he said to the gardener, ‘Look here, for three years now I have been looking for figs on this tree and I have found none. Cut it down, why should it continue to deplete the soil?’ ⁸The gardener replied, ‘Leave it one more year, so that I may dig around it and add some fertilizer, ⁹perhaps it will bear fruit from now on. But if it doesn’t, you can cut it down.’”

The healing on a Sabbath day

¹⁰Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath ¹¹and a crippled woman was there. An evil spirit had kept her bent for eighteen years so that she could not straighten up at all. ¹²On seeing her, Jesus called her and said, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” ¹³Then he laid his hands upon her and immediately she was made straight and praised God.

¹⁴But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had performed this healing on the Sabbath day and he said to the people, “There are six days in which to work. Come on those days to be healed and not on the Sabbath!”

¹⁵But the Lord replied, “You hypocrites! Every one of you unties his ox or his donkey on the Sabbath and leads it out of the barn to give it water. ¹⁶And here you have a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound for eighteen years. Should she not be freed from her bonds on the Sabbath?”

¹⁷When Jesus said this, all his opponents felt ashamed. But the people rejoiced at the many wonderful things that happened because of him.

Two parables

(Mt 13:31; Mk 4:30)

¹⁸And Jesus continued, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall

I compare it to? ¹⁹Imagine a person who has taken a mustard seed and planted it in his garden. The seed has grown and become like a small tree so that the birds of the air shelter in its branches.”

²⁰And Jesus said again, “What is the kingdom of God like? ²¹Imagine a woman who has taken yeast and hidden it in three measures of flour until it is all leavened.”

LUKE 13:1-21

Read: The exhortation to repentance (1–4) contrasts with the patience and mercy of God toward His people (parable of the fig tree without figs). God always watches over His people, even on the Sabbath. His liberating presence is simple but powerful (18–21).

Reflect: What do you need to change in your life? Why? Do you trust in the mercy of God? What do the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven have to do with you?

Pray: Lord, I trust you. Transform my life according to your Gospel.

Act: Promote in your family those gestures that manifest the saving presence of God, such as knowing how to ask for forgiveness and to forgive others.

²²Jesus went through towns and villages, teaching and making his way to Jerusalem. ²³Someone asked him, “Lord, is it true that few people will be saved?”

And Jesus answered, ²⁴“Do your best to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the master of the house has gone inside and locked the door, you will stand outside. Then you will knock at the door, calling, ‘Lord, open to us!’ But he will say to you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’

²⁶Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you and you taught in our streets!’ ²⁷But he will reply, ‘I don’t know where you come from. *Away from me, all you workers of evil.*’

²⁸You will weep and grind your teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves left outside. ²⁹Others will sit at table in the kingdom of God, people

coming from east and west, from north and south. ³⁰Some who are among the last will be first, and some who are among the first will be last!”

³¹At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and gave him this warning, “Leave this place and go on your way, for Herod wants to kill you.”

³²Jesus said to them, “Go and give that fox my answer: ‘I drive out demons and I heal today and tomorrow and on the third day I finish my course!’ ³³Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and for a little longer; for it would not be fitting for a prophet to be killed outside Jerusalem.

Alas for you, Jerusalem

³⁴O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you slay the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I tried to bring together your children as a bird gathers her young under her wings? But you refused! ³⁵From now on, *you will be left with your temple*. And you will no longer see me until the time when you will say, “*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*”

LUKE 13:22-35

Read: Jesus invites his disciples to persevere in their vocation, to enter through “the narrow door,” and image that reveals following Jesus is not easy. God wants everyone to be saved. Jesus laments for his people because they did not know how to accept his Gospel.

Reflect: What does the expression “enter through the narrow door” mean in your life? Is it difficult to live the values of the Gospel in our current society? Why?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit give me the strength to accept your Word with courage and live according to it.

Act: Make a list of the five situations that you consider most difficult for a Christian in our current society. In your daily life, try to overcome them with the values that the Gospel proposes.

14¹One Sabbath Jesus had gone to eat a meal in the house of a leading Pharisee and he was carefully watched. ²In front of him was a man suffering from dropsy; ³so Jesus asked the teachers of the

law and the Pharisees, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” ⁴But no one answered. Jesus then took the man, healed him and sent him away. ⁵And he said to them, “If your lamb or your ox falls into a well on a Sabbath day, who among you doesn’t hurry to pull it out?” ⁶And they could not answer.

The first places

⁷ Jesus then told a parable to the guests, for he had noticed how they tried to take the places of honor. And he said, ⁸“When you are invited to a wedding party, do not choose the best seat. It may happen that someone more important than you has been invited; ⁹and your host, who invited both of you, will come and say to you, ‘Please give this person your place.’ What shame is yours when you take the lowest seat!

¹⁰Whenever you are invited, go rather to the lowest seat so that your host may come and say to you, ‘Friend, you must come up higher.’ And this will be a great honor for you in the presence of all the other guests. ¹¹For whoever makes himself out to be great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

¹² Jesus also addressed the man who had invited him and said, “When you give a lunch or a dinner, don’t invite your friends, or your brothers and relatives, or your wealthy neighbors. For surely they will also invite you in return and you will be repaid. ¹³When you give a feast, invite instead the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. ¹⁴Fortunate are you then because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the upright.”

LUKE 14:1-14

Read: Jesus, on the Sabbath, in the midst of a meal offered by a Pharisee, heals a suffering person. It reveals his choice for life and his authority over the Sabbath (Law). Immediately after, he criticizes the attitude of those who strive for public recognition, fame, and honor.

Reflect: What does the following expression suggest: “When you give a feast, invite instead the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Fortunate are you because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the upright”?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit help me to follow your example of courage, humility, and generosity; always to choose to do good, and do not try to gain fame, but manifest your saving presence in the world.

Act: Perform an act of charity with anonymity, with humility and generosity. This will follow the example of Jesus.

A man once gave a feast

(Mt 22:1)

¹⁵Upon hearing these words, one of those at the table said to Jesus, “Happy are those who eat at the banquet in the kingdom of God!”

¹⁶Jesus replied, “A man once gave a feast and invited many guests.

¹⁷When it was time for the feast, he sent his servant to tell those he had invited to come, for everything was ready. ¹⁸But all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘Please excuse me. I must go and see the piece of land I have just bought.’ ¹⁹Another said: ‘I am sorry, but I am on my way to try out the five yoke of oxen I have just bought.’ ²⁰Still, another said, ‘How can I come, when I’ve just got married?’

²¹The servant returned alone and reported this to his master. Upon hearing his account, the master of the house flew into a rage and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly, into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

²²The servant reported after a while, ‘Sir, your orders have been carried out, but there is still room.’ ²³The master said, ‘Go out to the highways and country lanes and force people to come in to ensure that my house is full. ²⁴I tell you, none of those invited will have a morsel of my feast.”

The cost of following Jesus

(Mt 10:37)

²⁵One day, when large crowds were walking along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, ²⁶“If you come to me, unwilling to sacrifice your love for your father and mother, your spouse and children, your brothers and sisters and indeed yourself, you cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not follow me carrying his own cross, cannot be my disciple.

²⁸Do you build a house without first sitting down to count the cost to

see whether you have enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, if you have laid the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone will make fun of you: ³⁰‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’

³¹And when a king wages war against another king, does he go to fight without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand can stand against the twenty thousand of his opponent? ³²And if not, while the other is still a long way off, he sends messengers for peace talks. ³³In the same way, none of you may become my disciple if he doesn’t give up everything he has.

³⁴However good the salt may be, if the salt has lost taste you cannot make it salty again. ³⁵It is fit for neither soil nor manure. Let them throw it away. Listen then, if you have ears!”

LUKE 14:15-35

Read: Jesus tells the parable of the wedding feast. He expresses the universality and urgency of the salvation that God offers. Everyone must decide if they will accept or reject God’s invitation. Jesus speaks about the need to continually reflect on the willingness to be his disciple.

Reflect: Are you willing to shape your life with the demands of following Jesus? Or do you have a limit that you are not willing to go beyond? What does the expression suggest: “Whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”?

Pray: Lord, give me what you ask from me and ask me what you want (St. Augustine).

Act: Make a list of five crosses you carry as you follow Jesus. Do your best with them this day.

The lost sheep

(Mt 18:12)

15¹Meanwhile tax collectors and sinners were seeking the company of Jesus, all of them eager to hear what he had to say. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law frowned at this, muttering, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³So Jesus told them this parable:

⁴“Who among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, will not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and seek the lost one till he finds it? ⁵And finding it, will he not joyfully carry it home on his shoulders? ⁶Then he will call his friends and neighbors together and say, ‘Celebrate with me, for I have found my lost sheep!’ ⁷I tell you, in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner, than over ninety-nine decent people, who do not need to repent.

⁸What woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one, will not light a lamp and sweep the house in a thorough search till she finds the lost coin? ⁹And finding it, she will call her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Celebrate with me, for I have found the silver coin I lost!’ ¹⁰I tell you, in the same way, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.”

The parable of the lost sons

¹¹Jesus continued, “There was a man with two sons. ¹²The younger said to his father, ‘Give me my share of the estate.’ So the father divided his property between them.

¹³Some days later, the younger son gathered all his belongings and started off for a distant land where he squandered his wealth in loose living. ¹⁴Having spent everything, he was hard pressed when a severe famine broke out in that land. ¹⁵So he hired himself out to a well-to-do citizen of that place and was sent to work on a pig farm. ¹⁶So famished was he that he longed to fill his stomach even with the food given to the pigs, but no one offered him anything.

¹⁷Finally coming to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have food to spare and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will get up and go back to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against God and before you. ¹⁹I no longer deserve to be called your son. Treat me then as one of your hired servants.’ With that thought in mind, he set off for his father’s house.

²⁰He was still a long way off when his father caught sight of him. His father was so deeply moved with compassion that he ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. ²¹The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.’

²²But the father turned to his servants: ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Bring out the

finest robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! ²³Take the fattened calf and kill it! We shall celebrate and have a feast, ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found!’ And the celebration began.

²⁵Meanwhile, the elder son had been working in the fields. As he returned and approached the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the servants and asked what it was all about. ²⁷The servant answered, ‘Your brother has come home safe and sound and your father is so happy about it that he has ordered this celebration and killed the fattened calf.’

²⁸The elder son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹The son, very indignant, said, ‘Look, I have slaved for you all these years. Never have I disobeyed your orders. Yet you have never given me even a young goat to celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours returns, after squandering your property with loose women, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹The father said, ‘My son, you are always with me and everything I have is yours. ³²But this brother of yours was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found. And for that, we had to rejoice and be glad.’”

LUKE 15:1-32

Read: Jesus responds to the criticisms of the Pharisees and lawyers with three parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son. With them, he justifies his choice for “sinners” and reveals the true face of God: mercy (love).

Reflect: Do you feel the mercy of God in your life? Do you consider that just as God is merciful to you, so God is merciful to every human being? Do you consider yourself merciful toward others, as is God with you?

Pray: How can I reciprocate, O God, the measureless love you offer me every day?

Act: As an expression of gratitude to God, be kind and merciful with that person who has distanced himself from you because of some dispute or quarrel. Call him or her and arrange a meeting to remedy the distances.

The crafty steward

16¹ At another time Jesus told his disciples, “There was a rich man, whose steward was reported to him because of fraudulent service. ²He summoned the steward and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? I want you to render an account of your service, for it is about to be terminated.’

³The steward thought to himself, ‘What am I to do now? My master will surely dismiss me. I am not strong enough to do hard work, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I know what I will do: I must make sure that when I am dismissed, there will be people who will welcome me into their homes.’

⁵So he called his master’s debtors, one by one. He asked the first debtor, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶The reply was, ‘A hundred jars of oil.’ The steward said, ‘Here is your bill. Sit down quickly and write fifty.’ ⁷To the second debtor he put the same question, ‘How much do you owe?’ The answer was, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ Then the steward said, ‘Take your bill and write eighty.’

⁸The master commended the dishonest steward for his astuteness: for the people of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light. ⁹And so I tell you: use filthy money to make friends for yourselves, so that, when it fails, these people may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰Whoever can be trusted in little things can also be trusted in great ones; whoever is dishonest in slight matters will also be dishonest in greater ones. ¹¹So if you have been dishonest in handling filthy money, who would entrust you with true wealth? ¹²And if you have been dishonest with things that are not really yours, who will give you that wealth which is truly your own?

¹³No servant can serve two masters. Either he does not like the one and is fond of the other, or he regards one highly and the other with contempt. You cannot give yourself both to God and to Money.”

LUKE 16:1-13

Read: Jesus exposes to his disciples the parable of the astute administrator. With it, he invites them to be creative, witty and clever in announcing the kingdom. Then he urges them to take a stance against money (wealth) because you cannot be at the

service of two masters. Whoever absolutizes money cannot love God with all their heart.

Reflect: How important is money in your life? Do you try to “win” friends with it, or, on the contrary, does it generate “enemies”? How do you experience “You cannot be at the service of God and money”?

Pray: Oh gracious God, give me the grace to be generous with the goods that I have, that I will be in solidarity with the most needy, and that my heart never moves away from you.

Act: Plan a day in which you dare to live on the charity of others. With what you can save, make a donation to a charity.

¹⁴The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and sneered at Jesus. ¹⁵He said to them, “You do your best to be considered righteous by people. But God knows the heart, and what is highly esteemed by human beings is loathed by God.

¹⁶The time of the law and the prophets ended with John. Now the kingdom of God is proclaimed and everyone tries to enter it by force.

¹⁷It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for a single letter of Scripture not to be fulfilled.

¹⁸Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced by her husband also commits adultery.

The rich man and Lazarus

¹⁹Once there was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen and feasted every day. ²⁰At his gate lay Lazarus, a poor man covered with sores, ²¹who longed to eat just the scraps falling from the rich man’s table. Even dogs used to come and lick his sores. ²²It happened that the poor man died and the angels carried him to take his place with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³From the netherworld where he was in torment, the rich man looked up and saw Abraham afar off and with him Lazarus at rest.

²⁴He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus, with the tip of his finger dipped in water, to cool my tongue, for I suffer so much in this fire!’

²⁵ Abraham replied, 'My son, remember that in your lifetime you were well-off, while the lot of Lazarus was a misfortune. Now he is in comfort and you are in agony. ²⁶But that is not all. Between your place and ours, a great chasm has been fixed so that no one can cross over from here to you, or from your side to us.'

²⁷The rich man implored once more, 'Then I beg you, Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house ²⁸where my five brothers live. Let him warn them so that they may not end up in this place of torment.'
²⁹Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.'
³⁰But the rich man said, 'No, Father Abraham; but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

³¹Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced, even if someone rises from the dead.'"

LUKE 16:14-31

Read: To round off the issue of the incompatibility between service to God and money, Jesus exposes the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. A life lived in service to money is a slavery that makes a person lose the sense and the purpose of life: the definitive encounter with complete happiness is God.

Reflect: What do you think about hunger and misery in the world? Do you feel committed by the words of the Gospel to doing something about it? What should we Christians do?

Pray: I ask you, Lord, the grace to be in solidarity with the needs of others; may I not be indifferent to the pain of those who suffer.

Act: Do something to help some "Lazarus" you know up close.

17¹ Jesus said to his disciples, "Scandals will necessarily come and cause people to fall, but woe to the one who brings them about. ²It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone around his neck. Truly, this would be better for that person, than to cause one of these little ones to fall.

³Listen carefully: if your brother offends you, tell him, and if he is sorry, forgive him. ⁴And if he offends you seven times in one day, but seven times he says to you, 'I'm sorry,' forgive him."

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” And the Lord said, ⁶“If you have faith, even the size of a mustard seed, you may say to this tree, ‘Be uprooted, and plant yourself in the sea!’ and it will obey you.

⁷Who among you would say to your servant, coming in from the fields after plowing or tending sheep, ‘Go ahead and have your dinner’? ⁸No, you tell him, ‘Prepare my dinner. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink afterward.’ ⁹Do you thank this servant for doing what you told him to do? ¹⁰I don’t think so. And therefore, when you have done all that you have been told to do, you should say, ‘We are no more than servants; we have only done our duty.’”

The ten lepers

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus passed through Samaria and Galilee and ¹²as he entered a village, ten lepers came to meet him. ¹³Keeping their distance, they called to him, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” ¹⁴Jesus said to them, “Go, and show yourselves to the priests.” Then, as they went on their way, they found they were cured. ¹⁵One of them, as soon as he saw that he was cleansed, turned back, praising God in a loud voice; and ¹⁶throwing himself on his face before Jesus, he gave him thanks. This man was a Samaritan.

¹⁷Then Jesus asked him, “Were not all ten healed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸Did none of them decide to return and give praise to God, but this foreigner?” ¹⁹And Jesus said to him, “Stand up and go your way; your faith has saved you.”

LUKE 17:1-19

Read: Jesus instructs his disciples on the importance of faith. Faith is developed in a community environment, hence the care not to scandalize the “little ones” and to forgive those who offend us. Faith, moreover, is a free gift, we do not earn it by merit, so we must always ask for it and give thanks to God for it.

Reflect: Do you consider it important to have faith in life? Are you careful to practice it in community? How do you thank God for it?

Pray: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of faith; for your call to follow you and proclaim your Gospel with my life to others.

Act: Share your faith with others, telling them how God is present in your daily life.

The coming of the kingdom of God

(Mt 24:17)

²⁰The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was to come. He answered, “The kingdom of God is not like something you can observe, ²¹and say of it, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘See, there it is!’ for the kingdom of God is within you.”

²²And Jesus said to his disciples, “The time is at hand when you will long to see one of the glorious days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³Then people will tell you, ‘Look there! Look here!’ ‘Do not go with them, do not follow them.’ ²⁴As lightning flashes from one end of the sky to the other, so will it be with the Son of Man; ²⁵but first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

²⁶As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be on the day the Son of Man comes. ²⁷In those days people ate and drank and got married; but on the day Noah entered the ark, the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸So it was in the days of Lot: people ate and drank, and bought and sold, and planted and built; ²⁹but on the day Lot left Sodom, God made fire and sulfur rain down from heaven which destroyed them all. ³⁰So will it be on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

³¹On that day, if you are on the rooftop, don’t go down into the house to get your belongings; and if you happen to be in the fields, do not turn back. ³²Remember Lot’s wife! ³³Whoever tries to save his life will lose it, but whoever gives his life will be born again.

³⁴I tell you, though two men are sharing the same bed, it might happen that one will be taken and the other left; ³⁵though two women are grinding meal together, one might be taken and the other left.”

³⁷Then they asked Jesus, “Where will this take place, Lord?” And he answered, “Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather.”

LUKE 17:20-37

Read: Jesus speaks about the coming of the kingdom of God: it is not subject to calculations, because it is “among us,” and of the future will be fully expressed.

Reflect: Do you perceive the manifestation of the kingdom of God in your life? How? Are you ready for the final encounter with the Lord? How?

Pray: Lord God, help me to be attentive to the manifestation of your kingdom and to be prepared for your encounter. Do not allow what is ephemeral to distract me, and drift away from you.

Act: Reflect on the biggest concerns you have in your life. Do they help you be prepared for your encounter with the Lord?

Pray and never lose heart

18¹ Jesus told them a parable to show them that they should pray continually and not lose heart. ²He said, “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor people. ³In the same town there was a widow who kept coming to him, saying, ‘Defend my rights against my adversary!’ ⁴For a time he refused, but finally he thought, ‘Even though I neither fear God nor care about people, ⁵this widow bothers me so much I will see that she gets justice; then she will stop coming and wearing me out.’”

⁶And Jesus said, “Listen to what the evil judge says. ⁷Will God not do justice for his chosen ones, who cry to him day and night, even if he delays in answering them? ⁸I tell you, he will speedily do them justice. But, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

The Pharisee and the tax collector

⁹Jesus told another parable to some people fully convinced of their own righteousness, who looked down on others: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and said, ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people, grasping, crooked, adulterous, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all my income to the temple.’”

¹³In the meantime the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’

¹⁴I tell you, when this man went back to his house, he had been reconciled with God, but not the other. For whoever makes himself out to be great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be raised up.”

LUKE 18:1-14

Read: Jesus tells the parables of the judge and the widow, and of the Pharisee and the tax collector, to invite his listeners to be persevering and humble in prayer.

Reflect: Do you pray to God often? Do you consider yourself worthy of divine grace for being a regular in prayer? Do you talk to God about your worries, problems, and desires? How do you trust in God’s mercy?

Pray: Lord, from my littleness, I recognize your greatness and kindness by taking seriously, as you do, my needs, concerns, problems, and desires.

Act: As thanks for the mercy of God, get close to your family and friends, and share with them a time of attentive listening to their needs and desires.

¹⁵People even brought little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but seeing it the disciples rebuked these people. ¹⁶So Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the children come to me and don’t stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.”

Jesus and the rich ruler

(Mk 10:17; Mt 19:16)

¹⁸A ruler asked Jesus, “Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁹Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: *Do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not accuse falsely; honor your father and your mother.*” ²¹And the man said, “I have kept all these commandments from my youth.”

²²Then Jesus answered, "There is still one thing you lack. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in Heaven. And then come, follow me!" ²³When he heard these words, the man became sad, for he was very rich. ²⁴Jesus noticing this said, "How hard it is for people who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶The bystanders said, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁷And Jesus replied, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

²⁸Then Peter said, "We left everything we had and followed you." ²⁹Jesus replied, "Truly, I tell you, whoever has left home or wife, or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰will receive much more in this present time, and eternal life in the world to come."

³¹Jesus then took the Twelve aside, and told them, "Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything the Prophets have written about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³²He will be delivered up to the foreign power. People will mock him, insult him and spit on him. ³³After they have scourged him, they will kill him, but he will be raised on the third day." ³⁴The apostles could make nothing of this; the meaning of these words remained a mystery to them and they did not understand what he said.

LUKE 18:15-34

Read: Jesus blesses some children, and presents them as an example of welcome to the kingdom of God. When someone refuses an invitation to give up his riches and follow him, Jesus declares that for the rich it is difficult to enter the kingdom. A disciples rewards are found in the kingdom of God.

Reflect: Why do you think that Jesus presents children as an example of welcome to the kingdom of God? What are your greatest riches? Do you feel subject to them? Do you already perceive the enjoyment of the rewards offered by Jesus?

Pray: Lord Jesus, transform my heart to welcome with joy and detachment your kingdom, which you offer us generously, abundant and free.

Act: Live your vocation in constant thanksgiving. Do not cling to what you consider "your riches." Be supportive and generous.

The blind man of Jericho

(Mk 10:46; Mt 20:29)

³⁵When Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging. ³⁶As he heard the crowd passing by, he inquired what was happening ³⁷and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was going by. ³⁸Then he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ³⁹The people in front of him scolded him. “Be quiet!” they said, but he cried out all the more, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁰Jesus stopped and ordered the blind man to be brought to him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹“What do you want me to do for you?” And the man said, “Lord, that I may see!” ⁴²Jesus said, “Receive your sight, your faith has saved you.” ⁴³At once the blind man was able to see and he followed Jesus, giving praise to God. And all the people who were there also praised God.

Jesus and Zaccheus

19¹Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man named Zaccheus lived there. He was a tax collector and a wealthy man. ³He wanted to see what Jesus was like, but he was a short man and could not see him because of the crowd. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree. From there he would be able to see Jesus who was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, come down quickly for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶So Zaccheus climbed down and received him joyfully.

⁷All the people who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone as a guest to the house of a sinner.” ⁸But Zaccheus spoke to Jesus, “Half of what I own, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much.” ⁹Looking at him Jesus said, “Salvation has come to this house today, for he is also a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

LUKE 18:35—19:10

Read: On the way to Jerusalem, in Jericho, Jesus heals a blind man and forgives Zacchaeus. Both, despite their physical limitations, want to be close to him. Jesus gives them what they crave most: sight and forgiveness. Then the blind man, giving glory to God, follows him, and Zacchaeus reforms his life.

Reflect: How do you meet the Risen Jesus in your life? How do you go out to meet him? What do you ask? Do you feel welcomed by him?

Pray: Help me, Lord, to feel your presence in every person that I find on my path and in every situation of life that I have to face.

Act: In prayer, manifest to the Lord the most serious concern you have right now. Like the blind man, ask him “to see,” and like Zacchaeus, let him enter “your house.”

The ten pounds

(Mt 25:14)

¹¹ Jesus was now near Jerusalem and the people with him thought that God’s reign was about to appear. So as they were listening to him, Jesus went on to tell them a parable. ¹² He said, “A man of noble birth went to a distant country in order to be crowned king, after which he planned to return home. ¹³ Before he left, he summoned ten of his servants and gave them ten pounds of silver. He said, ‘Put this money to work until I get back.’ ¹⁴ But his compatriots, who disliked him, sent a delegation after him with this message, ‘We do not want this man to be our king.’

¹⁵ He returned, however, appointed as king. At once he sent for the servants, to whom he had given the money, to find out what profit each had made. ¹⁶ The first came in and reported, ‘Sir, your pound of silver has earned ten more pounds of silver.’

¹⁷ The master replied, ‘Well done, my good servant! Since you have proved yourself faithful in a small matter, I can trust you to take charge of ten cities.’ ¹⁸ The second reported, ‘Sir, your pound of silver earned five more pounds of silver.’ ¹⁹ The master replied, ‘And you, take charge of five cities!’

²⁰ The third came in and said, ‘Sir, here is your money, which I hid for safekeeping. ²¹ I was afraid of you, for you are an exacting person: you take up what you did not lay down and you reap what you did not sow.’

²² The master replied, ‘You worthless servant, I will judge you by your own words! So you knew I was an exacting person, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Why, then, did you not put my money on loan, so that when I got back, I could have collected it with interest?’

²⁴Then the master said to those standing by, ‘Take from him that pound and give it to the one with ten pounds.’ ²⁵But they objected, ‘Sir, he already has ten pounds!’

²⁶The master replied, ‘I tell you, everyone who has will be given more; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ²⁷As for my enemies who did not want me to be their king, bring them in and execute them right here in front of me!’”

LUKE 19:11-27

Read: As Jesus and his disciples draw closer to Jerusalem people think the kingdom of God will come immediately. Jesus tells the parable of the king and the money given to his servants. He exhorts us not to be passive with the gifts received by God; we must invest them and produce, which in the context of the Gospel means giving life in service to others.

Reflect: What are the gifts you consider received from the Lord? What have you done with them? How are you tempted to keep them hidden? What are the risks of investing them in others?

Pray: Lord, may I be fully aware of the gifts and talents you have bestowed upon me. Help me to use them for the greater glory of you: your kingdom.

Act: Identify a gift or talent received from the Lord and use it practically in service to others.

Jesus enters Jerusalem

(Mk 11:1; Mt 21:1; Jn 12:12; Mt 24:2)

²⁸So Jesus spoke, and then he passed on ahead of them, on his way to Jerusalem. ²⁹When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, close to the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples with these instructions, ³⁰“Go to the village opposite; and, as you enter it, you will find a colt tied up that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you untying this colt?’ You shall say, ‘The Master needs it.’”

³²So the two disciples went and found things just as Jesus had said. ³³As they were untying the colt, the owner said to them, “Why are you

untying the colt?" ³⁴ And they answered, "The Master needs it." ³⁵ So they brought it to Jesus and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they mounted Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When Jesus came near Jerusalem to the place where the road slopes down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen; ³⁸ and they cried out, "*Blessed is he who comes as king in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens.*"

³⁹ Some Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Master, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if they were to remain silent, the stones would cry out."

⁴¹ When Jesus had come in sight of the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, "If only today you knew the ways of peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Yet days will come upon you when your enemies will surround you with barricades and shut you in and press on you from every side. ⁴⁴ And they will dash you to the ground and your children with you and not leave a stone upon stone within you, for you did not recognize the time and the visitation of your God."

⁴⁵ Then Jesus entered the temple area and began to drive out the merchants. ⁴⁶ And he said to them, "God says in the Scriptures, '*My house shall be a house of prayer;*' but you have turned it into a den of robbers!"

⁴⁷ Jesus was teaching every day in the temple. The chief priests and teachers of the law wanted to kill him and the elders of the Jews as well, ⁴⁸ but they were unable to do anything, for all the people were listening to him and hanging on his words.

LUKE 19:28-48

Read: Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. He enters in the midst of praises and blessings. He weeps for the future of the city. Then, he expels the merchants from the Temple. The high priests, the scribes and the chiefs of the people look for a way to kill him.

Reflect: How does your "waiting" for Jesus shows in your daily life? What does the following expression suggest: "My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have turned it into a den of robbers"?

Pray: Lord Jesus, help me to be always attentive to your coming, to receive you with joy, to recognize your presence in my life and in the life of the community.

Act: Encourage someone to participate in a parish group, or a prayer group at work.

20¹One day, when Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law came with the elders of the Jews ²and said to him, “Tell us, what right have you to act like this? Who gives you authority to do all this?”

³Jesus said to them, “I also will ask you a question. Tell me: ⁴was John’s baptism of heavenly or of human origin?” ⁵And they argued among themselves, “If we answer that it was a work of God, he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ⁶But if we answer that it was merely something human, the people will stone us, for they all regard John as a prophet.” ⁷So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know,” ⁸and Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you what right I have to act like this.”

The murderous tenants

(Mk 12:1; Mt 21:33)

⁹Jesus went on to tell the people this parable, “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants before going abroad for a long time.

¹⁰In due time, he sent a servant to the tenants to get some fruit from the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him back empty-handed. ¹¹Again the man sent another servant; they beat him as well and treated him shamefully, and finally sent him back empty-handed. ¹²The owner then sent a third servant, but him they injured and threw out of the vineyard.

¹³The owner then thought, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; surely they will respect him.’ ¹⁴However the tenants, as soon as they saw him, said to one another, ‘This is the one who will inherit the vineyard. Let us kill him and the property will be ours!’ ¹⁵So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ¹⁶Now, what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

On hearing this, some said, “God forbid!” ¹⁷Then Jesus looked directly

at them and said, “What does this text of the Scriptures mean: *The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone?*”¹⁸ *Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces and anyone that stone falls on will be crushed.*”

¹⁹The teachers of the law and the chief priests would have liked to arrest him right there, for they realized that Jesus meant this parable for them, but they were afraid of the crowd. ²⁰So they left, looking for another opportunity.

LUKE 20:1-20

Read: Jesus thwarts the attempt of the high priests and lawyers to disavow him. The parable of the evil vinedressers is addressed to them. The biblical quote: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone” is the point.

Reflect: Does current Christian witness validate the authority of Jesus and the Gospel? Why or why not? What things should we improve so that Christian witness be authentic and prophetic.

Pray: O God, I ask you for courage and wisdom to bear faithful witness to the teachings of the Gospel in the world.

Act: Do not be afraid to express your faith in the midst of adverse or compromising situations. Remember that your witness expresses the teachings of the Gospel.

Paying taxes to Caesar

(Mk 12:13; Mt 22:15)

They sent spies who pretended to be honest men, in order to trap him in his words and deliver him to the authority and power of the Roman governor. ²¹They said to him, “Master, we know that you are true in your words and in your teaching and your answers do not vary according to who is listening to you; for you truly teach the way of God. Tell us: ²²are we allowed to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

²³But Jesus saw through their cunning and said, ²⁴“Show me a silver coin. Whose image is this, and whose title does it bear?” They answered, “Caesar’s.” ²⁵And Jesus said to them, “Return to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

²⁶So they were unable to trap him in what he said publicly; they were surprised at his answer and kept silent.

The resurrection of the dead

(Mk 12:18)

²⁷Then some Sadducees arrived. These people claim that there is no resurrection, ²⁸and they asked Jesus this question, “Master, the law Moses told us, ‘If anyone dies, leaving a wife but no children, his brother must take the wife and any child born to them will be regarded as the child of the deceased.’ ²⁹Now, there were seven brothers: the first married but died without children. ³⁰The second married the woman, but also died childless. ³¹And then the third married her and in this same way, all seven died, leaving no children. ³²Last of all, the woman died. ³³On the day of the resurrection, to which of them will the woman be a wife? For all seven had her as a wife.”

³⁴And Jesus replied, “Taking a husband or a wife is proper to people of this world, ³⁵but for those who are considered worthy of the world to come and of resurrection from the dead, there is no more marriage. ³⁶Besides, they cannot die, for they are like angels. They are sons and daughters of God because they are born of the resurrection.

³⁷Yes, the dead will be raised, as Moses revealed at the burning bush when he called the Lord *the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob*. ³⁸For God is God of the living and not of the dead, for to him everyone is alive.”

³⁹Some teachers of the law then agreed with Jesus, “Master, you have spoken well.” ⁴⁰They didn’t dare ask him anything else. ⁴¹So Jesus said to them, “How can people say that the Messiah is the Son of David? ⁴²For David himself says in the book of Psalms, *The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand,* ⁴³*until I put your enemies under your feet!* ⁴⁴David, there, calls him Lord; how then can he be his Son?”

⁴⁵Jesus also said to his disciples before all the people, ⁴⁶“Beware of those teachers of the law, who like to be seen in long robes, and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to take the reserved seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts. ⁴⁷While making a show of long prayers, they devour the property of widows. They will receive a very severe sentence!”

The widow's mite

(Mk 12:41)

21¹ Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury of the temple. ² He also saw a poor widow, who dropped in two small coins. ³ And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them. ⁴ For all of them gave an offering from their plenty; but she, out of her poverty, gave all she had to live on."

LUKE 20:20—21:4

Read: The adversaries of Jesus try to discredit him before the people with trick questions. Jesus answers them definitively and denounces their hypocrisy. He praises the attitude of a widow who offers God not what she has extra, but all that she has.

Reflect: Do you believe that today the Christian faith has adversaries? Who are they? In your opinion, what most discredits the message of the Gospel? What shows the truth of the Gospel?

Pray: Lord Jesus, give us courage and wisdom so that we Christians can give authentic witness to your Gospel in the world.

Act: See how you can help the catechists in your parish. Offer them your support.

Signs before the destruction of Jerusalem

(Mk 13:1; Mt 24:1)

⁵ While some people were talking about the temple, remarking that it was adorned with fine stonework and rich gifts, Jesus said to them, ⁶ "The days will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another of all that you now admire; all will be torn down." ⁷ And they asked him, "Master, when will this be and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?"

⁸ Jesus said, "Take care not to be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he; the time is near at hand!' Do not follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and troubled times, don't be frightened; for all these things must happen first, even though the end is not so soon."

¹⁰ And Jesus said, "Nations will fight each other and kingdom will oppose kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, famines, and plagues; in many places, strange and terrifying signs from heaven will be seen.

¹²Before all these things happen, people will lay their hands on you and persecute you; you will be delivered to the synagogues and put in prison and for my sake, you will be brought before kings and governors. ¹³This will be your opportunity to bear witness.

¹⁴So keep this in mind: do not worry in advance about what to say, ¹⁵for I will give you words and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends and some of you will be put to death. ¹⁷But even though, because of my name, you will be hated by everyone, ¹⁸not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your patient endurance, you will save your souls.

²⁰When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know then that the time has come when it will be reduced to a wasteland. ²¹If you are in Judea, flee to the mountains! If you are in Jerusalem, leave! If you are outside the city, don't enter it!

²²For these will be the days of its punishment and all that was announced in the Scriptures will be fulfilled. ²³How hard will it be for pregnant women and for mothers with babies at the breast! For a great calamity will come upon the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴They will be put to death by the sword, or taken as slaves to other nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled upon by the pagans until the time of the pagans is fulfilled.

LUKE 21:5-24

Read: Jesus predicts the destruction of Jerusalem. He urges his disciples to be attentive, not to be deceived by things that won't help them but rather, to trust in him.

Reflect: Are you aware of what happens in your social, political, economic and cultural environment? Can you perceive the voice of Jesus that invites you to have confidence in him despite the tribulations?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit encourage and strengthen us to live the message of your Gospel at all times, especially in times of adversity.

Act: Express to your parish priest or someone who works in your parish gratitude for the service they give to the community in the midst of so much adversity.

The coming of the Son of Man

²⁵Then there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations, perplexed when they hear the roaring of the sea and its waves. ²⁶People will faint with fear at the mere thought of what is to come upon the world, for the forces of the universe will be shaken. ²⁷Then, at that time, they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

The signs of the times

²⁸So, when you see things begin to happen, stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near.” ²⁹And Jesus added this comparison, “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰As soon as their buds sprout, you know that summer is near. ³¹In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly, I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all this has happened. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴Be on your guard: don’t immerse yourselves in a life of pleasure, drunkenness and worldly cares, lest that day catch you unaware, like a trap! ³⁵For, like a snare, will that day come upon all the inhabitants of the earth. ³⁶But watch at all times and pray, that you may be able to escape all that is going to happen and to stand before the Son of Man.”

³⁷In the daytime Jesus used to teach in the temple; then he would leave the city and pass the night on the Mount of Olives. ³⁸Early in the morning, the people would come to the temple to hear him.

LUKE 21:25-38

Read: Jesus talks about the destruction of Jerusalem and the hope of the coming of the Son of Man. Again he exhorts his disciples to be attentive, ready to resist difficult times and prepared to meet the Son of Man on the last day.

Reflect: Are you aware of the fragility of life? What is really most important in your life? Are you living in a way that prepares you for the final encounter with the Lord?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit help me to live the teachings of your Gospel and be prepared for the final encounter with you.

Act: Make a list of what you feel needs to happen in your life to prepare you for your final encounter with the Lord whenever that happens. Do one of those things today.

The conspiracy against Jesus

(Mk 14:1; Mt 26:1)

22¹The feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was now drawing near, ²and the chief priests and the teachers of the law wanted to kill Jesus. They were looking for a way to do this because they were afraid of the people. ³Then Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve, ⁴and he went off to discuss with the chief priests and the officers of the guard how to deliver Jesus to them. ⁵They were delighted and agreed to give him money; ⁶so he accepted and from that time he waited for an opportunity to betray him without the people knowing.

⁷Then came the feast of the Unleavened Bread, in which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and get everything ready for us to eat the Passover meal.” ⁹They asked him, “Where do you want us to prepare it?” ¹⁰And he said, “When you enter the city, a man will come to you carrying a jar of water. Follow him to the house he enters, ¹¹and say to the owner, ‘The master asks: Where is the room where I may take the Passover meal with my disciples?’ ¹²He will show you a large, furnished room upstairs, and there you will prepare for us.”

¹³Peter and John went off and having found everything just as Jesus had told them, they prepared the Passover meal.

The supper of the Lord

(Mk 14:12; Mt 26:17)

¹⁴When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table and the apostles with him. ¹⁵And he said to them, “I was eager to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I tell you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁷Then they passed him a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, “Take this, and share it among yourselves; ¹⁸for I tell you that, from now on, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God

comes.”¹⁹ Jesus also took bread, and after giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”²⁰ And after the supper, he did the same with the cup, saying, “This cup is the new Covenant, sealed in my blood, which is poured out for you.

²¹Yet the hand of the traitor is with me on the table. ²²Know that the Son of Man is going the way marked out for him. But alas for that one who betrays him!”²³ They began to ask one another which of them could do such a thing.

LUKE 22:1-23

Read: Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples, and in that context, he institutes the Eucharist: the giving of his life for all of humanity.

Reflect: Do you consider that the gesture of Jesus in this paschal meal is reproduced in your daily life? How is your life bread broken for others? How do you share your life and your gifts beyond your family environment?

Pray: O God, may I be generous with my life and with my gifts in service to others. May I share your Eucharist with those I meet in my day to day life.

Act: Invite someone you think might be lonely to dinner in your home. Treat them as if Jesus himself were present in them.

Last conversation with Jesus

(Mk 10:42; Jn 13:1)

²⁴They also began to argue among themselves, which of them should be considered the most important. ²⁵Jesus said, “The kings of the pagan nations rule over them as lords, and the most hard-hearted rulers claim the title, ‘Gracious Lord.’ ²⁶But not so with you; let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the servant. ²⁷For who is the greatest, he who sits at the table or he who serves? He who is seated, isn’t it? Yet I am among you as one who serves.

²⁸You are the ones who have been with me and stood by me through my troubles; ²⁹because of this, just as the kingship has been given to me by my Father so I give it to you. ³⁰You will eat and drink at my table

in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones and govern the twelve tribes of Israel.

³¹Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded to sift you like grain, ³²but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have recovered, you shall strengthen your brothers.” ³³Then Peter said, “Lord, with you I am ready to go even to prison and death.” ³⁴But Jesus replied, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day before you have denied three times that you know me.”

³⁵Jesus also said to them, “When I sent you without purse or bag or sandals, were you short of anything?” They answered, “No.” ³⁶And Jesus said to them, “But now, the one who has a purse or a bag must take it, or even his coat, and sell it and buy a sword. ³⁷For Scripture says: *He was numbered among criminals*. These words have to be fulfilled in me and everything written about me is now taking place.

³⁸Then they said, “See, Lord, here are two swords!” but Jesus answered, “That is enough.”

LUKE 22:24-38

Read: The disciples of Jesus must have the same aspirations as the Master: service. Jesus announces the arrival of somber and disturbing moments: they are the moments previous of his passion.

Reflect: As a Christian, what are your greatest aspirations? How is service to others part of them? Do you consider yourself capable of being faithful to the Lord even in adversities?

Pray: Lord Jesus, grant me the grace to always be at the service of others, to aspire to nothing else but to proclaim and live your Gospel, and that in difficult times I can always be by your side.

Act: Resolve to serve God and neighbor with generous dedication, both in good and bad times.

Gethsemane

(Mk 14:32)

³⁹After this, Jesus left to go as usual to the Mount of Olives and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰When he came to the place, he told them, “Pray that you may not be put to the test.”

⁴¹Then he went a little further, about a stone's throw and kneeling down, he prayed, ⁴²"Father, if it is your will, remove this cup from me; however, not my will but yours be done." ⁴³And from heaven there appeared to him an angel who gave him strength.

⁴⁴As he was in agony, he prayed even more earnestly and great drops of blood formed like sweat and fell to the ground. ⁴⁵When he rose from prayer, he went to his disciples but found them worn out with grief and asleep. ⁴⁶And he said to them, "Why do you sleep? Get up and pray, so that you may not be put to the test."

⁴⁷Jesus was still speaking when suddenly a crowd appeared and the man named Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him ⁴⁸and Jesus said to him, "Judas, with a kiss you betray the Son of Man?"

⁴⁹Those with Jesus, seeing what would happen, said to him, "Master, shall we use the sword?" ⁵⁰And one of them struck the High Priest's servant and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹But Jesus ordered him, "No more of this!" He touched the man's ear and healed him.

⁵²Then Jesus spoke to those coming against him, the chief priests, officers of the temple and elders; and he said to them, "Are you looking for a thief, a robber? Do you really need swords and clubs to arrest me? ⁵³Day after day I was among you, teaching in the temple and you did not arrest me. But this is the hour of the power of darkness; this is your hour."

LUKE 22:39-53

Read: Jesus goes to his usual place of prayer and asks his disciples to pray that they will not fall into temptation, but they fall asleep. He, on the other hand, abandons himself to the will of the Father who sends an angel to comfort and prepare him. Judas betrays Jesus and he is taken to the house of the high priest.

Reflect: Do you trust the strength of prayer? Do you use it in times of difficulty? In your prayer do you abandon yourself to the will of God, or ask God to do what you want?

Pray: Father, I put myself in your hands. Do what you want, whatever it is I thank you. I accept everything because you are my Father.

Act: Gather your family and pray together with them for people who feel lonely and abandoned.

The trial of Jesus, Peter's denial

(Mk 14:53; Mt 26:57)

⁵⁴Then they seized him and took him away, bringing him to the High Priest's house. Peter followed at a distance.

⁵⁵A fire was kindled in the middle of the courtyard where people were gathered and Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶A maidservant noticed him. Looking at him intently in the light of the fire, she exclaimed, "This man also was with him!" ⁵⁷But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him!"

⁵⁸A little later someone who saw him said, "You are also one of them!" Peter replied, "My friend, I am not!" ⁵⁹After about an hour another asserted, "Surely this man was with him, for he is a Galilean."

⁶⁰Again Peter denied it: "My friend, I don't know what you are talking about!" He had not finished saying this when a cock crowed. ⁶¹The Lord turned around and looked at Peter and Peter remembered the word which the Lord had spoken: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." ⁶²Peter went outside, weeping bitterly.

⁶³Now the guards who had arrested Jesus mocked and beat him. ⁶⁴They blindfolded him, struck him and then asked him, "Who hit you? Tell us, prophet!" ⁶⁵And they hurled many other insulting words at him.

⁶⁶At daybreak, the council of the elders of the people, among whom were the chief priests and the teachers of the law, assembled again. Then they had Jesus brought before them and they began questioning him, ⁶⁷"Tell us, are you the Christ?" Jesus replied, "You will not believe if I tell you ⁶⁸and neither will you answer if I ask you. ⁶⁹But from now on, *the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.*"

⁷⁰In chorus, they asked, "So you are the Son of God?" And Jesus said to them, "You are right, I am."

⁷¹Then they said, "What need have we of witnesses? We have heard it from his own lips."

LUKE 22:54-71

Read: Peter denies Jesus three times. As Jesus looks at Peter, he runs away and weeps for his cowardice. Jesus, on the other hand, despite the insults of his adversaries, reaffirms himself as the Son of God.

Reflect: Is it easy to feel empathy with Peter? What would you do in such circumstances? Is it difficult for you to share your faith in your environment? Do you try to hide that you are a Christian?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit help me to proclaim at all times my condition as a disciple of yours, not only with words, but above all with my way of life.

Act: Share with someone what it means for you to be a disciple of Jesus. Do not be afraid to talk about your faith.

Jesus before Pilate

(Mt 27:11; Mk 15:1; Jn 18:28)

23¹The whole council rose and brought Jesus to Pilate. ²They gave their accusation: “We found this man subverting our nation, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ the King.”

³Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “You said so.” ⁴Turning to the chief priests and the crowd, Pilate said, “I find no basis for a case against this man.” ⁵But they insisted, “All the country of the Jews is being stirred up by his teaching. He began in Galilee and now he has come all the way here.”

⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷Finding the accused to come under Herod’s jurisdiction, Pilate sent Jesus over to Herod who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time.

⁸Herod was delighted to have Jesus before him; for a long time he had wanted to see him because of the reports about him and he was hoping to see Jesus work some miracle. ⁹He piled up question upon question but got no reply from Jesus.

¹⁰All the while the chief priests and the scribes remained standing there, vehemently pressing their accusations. ¹¹Finally, Herod ridiculed him and with his guards mocked him. And when he had put a rich cloak

on him, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹²Pilate and Herod, who were enemies before, became friends from that day.

LUKE 23:1-12

Read: Jesus is led before Pilate and then before Herod, the political authorities of Judea and Galilee respectively. They do not find any guilt in Jesus, but this does not change their minds.

Reflect: Can a Christian proclaim the Gospel and not commit to justice? Can we be indifferent to the hunger, misery, and suffering of the poorest? What can we Christians do in these circumstances?

Pray: Oh Father, may the power of your Spirit encourage us to assume the inescapable commitments that faith in your Son Jesus implies.

Act: Talk to your people about how important it is for the Christian to practice justice.

¹³Pilate then called together the chief priests and the elders and the people ¹⁴and said to them, “You have brought this man before me and accused him of subversion. In your presence I have examined him and found no basis for your charges; ¹⁵and neither has Herod, for he sent him back to me. It is quite clear that this man has done nothing that deserves a death sentence. ¹⁶I will, therefore, have him scourged and then release him.” (¹⁷At Passover, Pilate had to release a prisoner.)

¹⁸Shouting as one man, the crowd protested, “No! Away with this man! Release Barabbas instead!” ¹⁹This man had been thrown into prison for an uprising in the city and for murder.

²⁰Since Pilate wanted to release Jesus, he appealed to the crowd once more, ²¹but they shouted back, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” ²²A third time Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? Since no crime deserving death has been proved, I shall have him scourged and let him go.”

²³But they went on shouting and demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their shouts grew louder. ²⁴So Pilate decided to pass the sentence they demanded. ²⁵He released the man they asked for, the one who was in prison for rebellion and murder, and he handed Jesus over in accordance with their wishes.

LUKE 23:13-25

Read: Jesus is condemned to death. Pilate succumbs to the pressure of the crowd and condemns the innocent Jesus to be crucified.

Reflect: Do you know cases of people unjustly condemned? Have you ever felt pressured by the opinion of others and have not done what justice should do? Is it easy for a Christian to act with justice in the current circumstances?

Pray: O God, as disciples of your Son, animated by your Spirit, let us always work for your kingdom and its justice, and make our world a world that is more just, more human.

Act: Collaborate with institutions and agencies that promote justice and reconciliation in your city or country. Pray for those people who are unjustly condemned.

The way of Calvary

(Mt 27:32; Mk 15:16)

²⁶When they led Jesus away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, arriving from the countryside, and laid the cross on him to carry it behind Jesus.

²⁷A large crowd of people followed him; among them were women beating their breasts and grieving for him, ²⁸but Jesus turned to them and said, “Women of Jerusalem, do not weep for me! Weep rather for yourselves and for your children, ²⁹for the days are coming when people will say, ‘Happy are the women without child! Happy are those who have not given birth or nursed a child!’ ³⁰And they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ ³¹For if this is the lot of the green wood, what will happen to the dry?”

³²Along with Jesus, two criminals also were led out to be executed. ³³There, at the place called the Skull, he was crucified together with two criminals—one on his right and another on his left. (³⁴Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”) And the guards *cast lots to divide his clothes among themselves*.

³⁵The people stood by, watching. As for the rulers, they jeered at him, saying to one another, “Let the man who saved others now save himself, for he is the Messiah, the chosen one of God!”

³⁶The soldiers also mocked him and, when they drew near to offer him bitter wine, ³⁷they said, “So you are the King of the Jews? Save yourself!” ³⁸Above Jesus, there was an inscription in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, which read, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹One of the criminals hanging with Jesus insulted him, “So you are the Messiah? Save yourself, and us as well!” ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, “Have you no fear of God, you who received the same sentence as he did? ⁴¹For us, it is just: this is payment for what we have done. But this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³Jesus replied, “In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

⁴⁴It was almost midday. ⁴⁵The sun was hidden, and darkness came over the whole land until mid-afternoon, and at that time the curtain of the Sanctuary was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus gave a loud cry, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” And saying that, he gave up his spirit.

⁴⁷The captain, on seeing what had happened, acknowledged the hand of God. “Surely this was an upright man!” he said. ⁴⁸And all the people who had gathered to watch the spectacle, as soon as they saw what had happened, went home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹But those who knew Jesus, and the women who had followed him from Galilee, remained there at a distance. They witnessed all these things.

LUKE 23:26-49

Read: Crucifixion and death of Jesus. Jesus reveals his power by comforting the women who mourn for him, welcoming the repentant thief, forgiving his executioners, and surrendering to the Father.

Reflect: What does Jesus’ attitude suggest? Can mercy overcome injustice? Can evil be overcome by doing good? What does the phrase “Father, in your hands I commend my spirit” suggest?

Pray: Lord Jesus! I put all my trust in you. From my weakness, I fear everything, but I expect everything from your kindness. May Christians continue to bear witness to your love in the world.

Act: Support without fear and with conviction everything that promotes and defends life, even when it is publicly rejected by others.

⁵⁰Then a member of the Jewish supreme council intervened, a good and righteous man named Joseph, ⁵¹from the Judean town of Arimathea. He had not agreed with the decision and action of his fellow members, and he lived uprightly in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God. ⁵²Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³He then took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid it in a yet unused tomb cut out of a rock.

⁵⁴It was the day of preparation and the Sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵So the women, who had come with Jesus from Galilee, followed Joseph to see the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶Returning home, they prepared perfumes and ointments. And on the Sabbath day, they rested, as the law required.

LUKE 23:50-56

Read: Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish Council, claims the body of Jesus to give him a worthy burial. The women (disciples) who had accompanied the Master from Galilee are present.

Reflect: And the disciples, the males, where are they? Is not the same thing happening in our current parishes? Are not women (our grandmothers, mothers, wives, and daughters) the ones who participate the most and make ecclesial life possible? What does all this suggest?

Pray: Lord, give me courage and deep inner attitude to bear witness to you, and to actively collaborate in the life of my parish.

Act: Speak openly and joyfully to your own people of the necessary participation of all in the parish life. The Christian faith is a faith that is lived in community.

The Lord has risen

(Mk 16:1; Mt 28:1; Jn 20:1)

24¹On the Sabbath the women rested according to the commandment, but the first day of the week, at dawn, the women went to the tomb with the perfumes and ointments they had prepared. ²Seeing

the stone rolled away from the opening of the tomb, ³they entered and were amazed to find that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there.

⁴As they stood there wondering about this, two men in dazzling garments suddenly stood before them. ⁵In fright, the women bowed to the ground. But the men said, “Why look for the living among the dead? ⁶You won’t find him here. He is risen. Remember what he told you in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man had to be given into the hands of sinners, to be crucified and to rise on the third day.” ⁸And they remembered Jesus’ words.

⁹Returning from the tomb, they told the Eleven and all the others about these things. ¹⁰Among the women who brought the news, were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. ¹¹But, however much they insisted, those who heard did not believe the seemingly nonsensical story. ¹²Then Peter got up and ran to the tomb. All he saw, when he bent down and looked into the tomb, were the linen cloths laid by themselves. He went home wondering.

LUKE 24:1-12

Read: The women come to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body and hear the news he has been raised from the dead. They become the first apostles who announce Jesus is risen. When they tell the disciples Jesus is risen from the dead, their message is disregarded as idle tales women tell.

Reflect: When you hear that Jesus is risen, what do you think? What do you believe? What do you doubt? Can God triumph over evil? Notice the women are the first ones entrusted with the news of the resurrection.

Pray: Lord, I believe. But increase my faith!

Act: Read something today that will help you deepen and expand your faith.

The road to Emmaus

(Mk 16:12)

¹³That same day, two followers of Jesus were going to Emmaus, a village seven miles from Jerusalem ¹⁴and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and

debating these things, Jesus himself approached and began to accompany them,¹⁶ but their eyes were not able to recognize him.

¹⁷He asked, "What is it you are talking about?" The two stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then the one named Cleophas answered, "Why, it seems you are the only traveler to Jerusalem who doesn't know what has happened there these past few days." ¹⁹And he asked, "What is it?"

They replied, "It is about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, you know, mighty in word and deed before God and the people. ²⁰But the chief priests and our rulers sentenced him to death. They handed him over to be crucified. ²¹We had hoped that he would redeem Israel.

It is now the third day since all this took place. ²²It is also true that some women of our group have disturbed us. When they went to the tomb at dawn, ²³they did not find his body; and they came and told us that they had had a vision of angels, who said that Jesus was alive. ²⁴Some of our people went to the tomb and found everything just as the women had said, but they did not find a body in the tomb."

²⁵He said to them, "How dull you are, how slow of understanding! Is the message of the prophets too difficult for you to understand? ²⁶Is it not written that the Christ should suffer all this and then enter his glory?" ²⁷Then, starting with Moses and going through the prophets, he explained to them everything in the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸As they drew near the village they were heading for, Jesus made as if to go farther. ²⁹But they prevailed upon him, "Stay with us, for night comes quickly. The day is now almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When they were at table, he took the bread, said a blessing, broke it, and gave each a piece.

³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he vanished out of their sight. ³²And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us when he was talking to us on the road and explaining the Scriptures?"

³³They immediately set out and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were greeted by these words: "Yes, it is true, the Lord is risen! He has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then the two told what had happened on the road to Emmaus and how Jesus had made himself known when he broke bread with them.

LUKE 24:13-35

Read: Two disciples return disillusioned to their village after the death of Jesus. But Jesus meets them and on the way, he explains the Scriptures. Afterward, they invite him to stay and at the table, when he breaks the bread, they recognize his presence and immediately return to Jerusalem to announce what happened.

Reflect: Do you discover the presence of God in the difficult moments of your life? How? Is the Eucharist a central event in your experience of faith? Which of the details in this story resonate with you, and why do you think that is?

Pray: Stay with us, Lord! Enter our home, share our table, open our eyes to discover your life-giving and close presence, which encourages us to witness to your resurrection.

Act: Go to Mass and then, at mealtime, share with your family how you recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus appears to the apostles

(Jn 20:19)

³⁶While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood in their midst. (He said to them, “Peace to you.”) ³⁷In their panic and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost, ³⁸but he said to them, “Why are you upset, and how does such an idea cross your minds? ³⁹Look at my hands and feet, and see that it is I myself! Touch me and see for yourselves, for a ghost has no flesh and bones as I have!” ⁴⁰(As he said this, he showed his hands and feet.)

⁴¹Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it as they were astonished; so he said to them, “Have you anything to eat?” ⁴²And they gave him a piece of broiled fish. ⁴³He took it and ate it before them.

Last instructions

⁴⁴Then Jesus said to them, “Remember the words I spoke to you when I was still with you: Everything written about me in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And he said, ⁴⁶“So it was written: the Messiah had to suffer and on the third day rise from the dead. ⁴⁷Then repentance and forgiveness in his name would be proclaimed to all nations beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And that is why I will send you what my Father promised. So remain in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰Jesus led them almost as far as Bethany; then he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹And as he blessed them, he withdrew and was taken to heaven. ⁵²They worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem full of joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple, praising God.

LUKE 24:36-53

Read: Jesus appears to the disciples, gives them a guarantee of his resurrected presence, and after leading them to Bethany, blesses them and ascends to heaven. The disciples, on the other hand, return to Jerusalem and spend their time blessing God.

Reflect: Since you have not enjoyed the opportunity of touching the Risen Lord’s body and having lunch with him, why do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus? Do you feel the living presence of the Lord in the midst of your life? How? How do you share your experience of the Risen Lord with others?

Pray: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit encourage us so that we can bear witness with our lives that you are alive and risen, that you have conquered death, and that the kingdom of your Father becomes more and more present in our world.

Act: May your life witness at every moment the victory of Jesus, of life over death. Alleluia!

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