

## 4th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A

*Zep 2,3 & 3,12-13; 1 Cor 1,26-31; Mt 5,1-12*

*The Beatitudes rebuild our hearts and make us signs of God's peace, mercy, and righteousness.*

### INTRODUCTION

A traveller once stopped at a construction site and asked an elderly mason, “What are you building?”

Without looking up, the mason replied, “I am shaping a place where people I will never meet may one day find shelter.”

The traveller realized that this man was not just laying stones—

he was building something that would outlast him.

Our lives are much the same.

Day by day, choice by choice, we form the inner house where our hearts will live.

Some days we build well; other days we rush or cut corners.

Yet God, in His patience, keeps offering us a blueprint—a way to build with meaning and joy.

Today's Gospel gives us that blueprint: the Beatitudes, Jesus' surprising vision of a fulfilled life.

They are more than promises; they are invitations—to live gently, to seek what is right even when it costs, to carry mercy into wounded places, and to trust God with a humble heart.

As we begin our celebration, let us ask the Lord to touch what needs rebuilding in us, so the house we form with our days may be strong, beautiful, and filled with His blessing.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you show us the path of humility and trust.  
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you heal our wounds with mercy and patience. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you plant in us the desire for righteousness and peace. Lord, have mercy.

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who knows the secret corners of our hearts pour upon us His mercy, remove the weight that burdens our souls, and restore in us the joy of being His beloved children, so that we may stand before Him with renewed hearts ready to hear His Word and walk in His peace. Amen.

## INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

With grateful hearts let us praise the God who blesses the poor in spirit, comforts the sorrowing, and lifts up the meek. Let us give glory to the One whose love reshapes our world.

## COLLECT *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

God of the humble and the pure of heart, your Son has opened for us the way to a life that is deep, joyful, and full. Plant within us the desire to seek your righteousness, the courage to live with mercy, and the quiet strength of a heart anchored in you. Shape our thoughts and choices with the wisdom of the Beatitudes, so that we may recognize your blessing in every moment of our lives. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## HOMILY – Standards for a Fulfilled Life: God's Congratulations

There was once an elderly carpenter who had worked faithfully for decades. One day his employer asked him to build one last house. The carpenter agreed—but his heart was no longer in it. He chose cheaper materials, rushed

the work, and cut corners everywhere.

When the house was finished, the employer handed him the keys and said,

“You built this house for yourself. It is my thank-you gift to you.”

The carpenter stood speechless—his own poor work now became his home.

Life is the house we build.

Jesus gives us the Beatitudes so that our lives—our inner house—become solid, beautiful, and fulfilled.

The Beatitudes are Jesus' standards for a fulfilled life ... and God's congratulations to all who live them.

Let us walk through several of them today, each accompanied by a small story.

### 1. “Blessed are the meek”—The Strength of Nonviolence

Years ago, a university professor entered his classroom to find two students arguing loudly. One was aggressive, ready to fight; the other stood calmly and said, “I refuse to insult you back—you’re my friend even if you don’t feel like

one right now.”

His calmness disarmed the conflict. The angry student burst into tears:

“I just needed someone to not fight me today.”

Meekness is not weakness.

It is strength under control—the courage to resist violence, including the violence of words.

We see this on a global scale in Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance, in Martin Luther King Jr., and in the peaceful prayer movements of 1989.

The meek inherit the world because they transform it.

Blessed are the meek—blessed are the nonviolent—blessed are the disarming.

### 2. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”—Longing for God’s Way

A businessman once paid for the groceries of a struggling mother who stood in front of him at the checkout, unable to afford her food.

When she asked, “Why would you help me?” he answered,

“I want to live in a world where people do the right thing—so I’ll start with myself.”

That small act reveals what Jesus means: to long deeply for what is right not just for oneself, but for the world.

Biblical righteousness is not simply justice—it is right relationship with God, and therefore with others.

Jesus promises:

*“If you hunger for God’s righteousness, you will be satisfied.”*

Not maybe. Not someday.

You will.

### **3. “Blessed are the merciful”—The Power of a Soft Heart**

A young nurse once shared how she cared for an elderly man who often complained harshly. Other nurses avoided him, but she said, “I think he’s lonely.”

One day he whispered, “Thank you for not giving up on me.”

His heart softened. Hers softened. Mercy transformed both.

Mercy means this:

- I don’t treat people only as they deserve.
- I give what God gives me: patience, warmth, understanding.

When Jesus says, *“They will obtain mercy,”* He is saying: “Give God’s heart to others, and God will give His heart to you.” Mercy is the gentle currency of God’s kingdom.

### **4. “Blessed are the pure in heart”—Seeing God with New Eyes**

A little girl once asked her grandmother, “How do you see God?”

The grandmother answered, “When your heart is quiet, you start noticing Him everywhere.”

The child paused and whispered, “I think I saw Him in the sunrise today.”

Purity of heart does not mean being flawless.

It means having a heart that is undivided, where Jesus alone dwells.

A pure heart sees the world differently:

- Where others see coincidence, it sees providence.
- Where others see nature, it sees a Creator.
- Where others see tragedy, it sees God's hidden nearness.

"One sees clearly only with the heart," wrote Saint-Exupéry.

The pure in heart begin to see God already in this world.

## 5. "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—Standing Before God With Empty Hands

A wealthy woman once met Mother Teresa and said, "I want to help the poor. What can I give you?"

Mother Teresa replied, "Your hands."

The woman looked confused.

"Yes," Mother Teresa smiled. "Use them to serve. That is a gift no money can buy."

Poverty of spirit means:

"I depend entirely on God. Everything is gift."

It is childlike trust:

"Father, I need You in everything."

Those who stand before God with empty hands—grateful hands—are the ones He can fill.

Jesus says:

*"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Not will be—is.

They live in God's world already.

## 6. "Blessed are those who mourn"—Hearts That Cannot Ignore Suffering

A young teacher noticed that one of her students always came to school hungry and tired. Instead of ignoring the problem, she began arriving early to give him breakfast and a safe place to rest before class.

Her colleagues said, "You're taking too much on yourself." She answered, "I cannot look away."

This is what Jesus means by mourning:  
not sadness,  
but compassion that refuses to ignore suffering.

Such people will be comforted—  
not with mere words,  
but with God's action, God's strength, God's intervention.

### Mary – The Perfect Example

If you compare the Beatitudes with Mary's Magnificat, you will see they mirror one another.

Mary is:

- poor in spirit—"He has looked upon the humility of His servant,"
- pure in heart—"Let it be done to me,"
- merciful—she brings Jesus, the face of mercy, to the world,
- hungry for righteousness—"He lifts up the lowly,"
- meek—she never forces, only offers,
- among those who mourn—she suffers with Christ for the world.

No wonder she says:  
"All generations will call me blessed."  
God's congratulations rests fully upon her.

### Jesus' Dream of a New World

The Beatitudes are Jesus' dream—God's dream—for a new world. At first they seem unrealistic. But they describe the completed human person—the one fully alive in God.

Living this way may bring misunderstanding, criticism, even suffering. But it also brings freedom, joy, and inner strength—the kind the world cannot give.

When we live the Beatitudes, even imperfectly, a new world begins to grow within us, and then around us.

### The Man Planting an Olive Tree

There is an old story from the Middle East of a man planting an olive tree.

A passerby laughed,

“Why plant an olive tree? You will never live long enough to eat its fruit!”

The man smiled and replied,

“Others planted trees before me, so I could eat.

Now it is my turn to plant for those who come after me.”

That is the spirit of the Beatitudes.

We live them not only for ourselves,  
but to help build the world Jesus dreams of—  
a world where mercy, purity of heart, humility,  
righteousness, and peace take root.

Blessed are you—God’s congratulations to you—when you choose this way of life. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO THE CREED**

The Beatitudes call us to live differently.

Let us now profess the faith  
that guides our steps,  
shapes our hope,  
and makes us one family in Christ. Together we proclaim:

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Brothers and sisters,

as we place bread and wine upon the altar,

let us also place our desire

to live the Beatitudes with sincerity and courage.

Let us pray that God will accept these gifts  
and transform our hearts.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS** *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

God of every blessing,

receive the gifts we bring

and the intentions we carry in our hearts.

As these simple elements become the Body and Blood of Christ, make us a people who hunger for what is right, who offer mercy without hesitation, and who bring peace where life is wounded.

May this sacrifice draw us closer to the heart of your Son, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

## PREFACE (Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)

It is truly right to give you thanks and praise,  
God of promise and God of blessing.

In every age you call your people  
to walk the path of trust  
and to build their lives on your Word.

You sent your Son Jesus  
to reveal the beauty of a heart shaped by you:  
a heart that is poor in spirit,  
gentle in strength, radiant with mercy,  
and steadfast in righteousness.

Through Him you open for us  
the way of the Beatitudes—  
the way that leads to freedom, meaning, and joy.

And so, with all who have embraced your promise,  
with Mary who heard your Word,  
and with the saints who lived your blessing,  
we join the unending hymn of your glory:

Holy, Holy, Holy...

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER II

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, the fount of all holiness.

(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only: *Lord, before we ask your Spirit to come upon these gifts, we remember the blessing your Son proclaimed on the mountain.*

*He showed us that true happiness is found  
not in possessions or power,  
but in hearts open to you—  
in the meek, the merciful, the pure of heart,  
and all who hunger for what is right.  
As we approach this holy mystery,  
shape in us the attitudes of Christ  
so that our lives may reflect the blessing He spoke).*

Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,  
by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so  
that they may become for us  
the Body and + Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the time he was betrayed

and entered willingly into his Passion,  
he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,  
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,  
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,  
he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks,  
he gave it to his disciples, saying:  
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,  
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,  
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,  
WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR  
MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.  
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

*The mystery of faith.*

Therefore, as we celebrate  
the memorial of his Death and Resurrection,  
we offer you, Lord,  
the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation,

giving thanks that you have held us worthy  
to be in your presence and minister to you.

*(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation  
only: Lord, remembering the death and resurrection of your  
Son, we ask you to renew within us  
the courage to live the Beatitudes each day.  
May this sacrifice strengthen all who mourn,  
lift up the lowly,  
and make us instruments of peace in our families and  
communities.  
As Christ's Body, gathered around this table,  
may we become a blessing to the world you love).*

Humbly we pray  
that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ,  
we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.  
Remember, Lord, your Church,  
spread throughout the world,  
and bring her to the fullness of charity,  
together with N. our Pope  
and N. our Bishop, and all the clergy.

Remember also our brothers and sisters  
who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection,  
and all who have died in your mercy:  
welcome them into the light of your face.  
Have mercy on us all, we pray,  
that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,  
with blessed Joseph, her Spouse  
with the blessed Apostles,  
and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the  
ages, we may merit to be coheirs to eternal life, and may  
praise and glorify you through your Son, Jesus Christ.  
Through him, and with him, and in him...Amen.

### **INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER**

With the confidence of children  
who know they are loved,  
let us pray to the Father  
who blesses the humble  
and accompanies the broken-hearted.  
United in one voice, we dare to say:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, from every snare  
that steals our peace and clouds our hearts.  
Keep us faithful in times of trial, gentle in moments of  
conflict, and steadfast when righteousness seems costly.  
Grant that your kingdom—  
the kingdom promised to the poor in spirit—  
may grow in our midst, as we await in joyful hope the  
coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you called the peacemakers blessed  
and promised them the joy of being your children.  
Look not on our failures  
but on the longing for peace you have planted within us.  
Heal what divides us, calm what troubles us,  
and guide our steps to the paths that lead to reconciliation.  
Grant your Church and our world  
the peace that rises from humility and mercy.  
You live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Blessed are we  
who are invited to the supper of the Lamb—  
the One who feeds the hungry,  
comforts the sorrowing,  
and strengthens the humble of heart.

## MEDITATION AFTER THE COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,  
you come to us hidden in this simple bread,  
yet bringing the fullness of heaven.

Quiet our hearts  
so that the seeds of the Beatitudes you plant today  
may take root in our words, in our choices,  
and in the silent corners of our daily lives. Amen.

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

God of all blessing,  
you have fed us with the Bread of Life  
and strengthened our hearts with your presence.

As we leave this table,  
help us to carry into our world the spirit of the Beatitudes:  
to act justly, to speak gently, to forgive quickly,  
and to walk humbly with you.  
May the gift we have received  
bear fruit in lives that reflect your love.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SOLEMN BLESSING

May the God who blesses the poor in spirit  
fill your hearts with trust and peace. Amen.

May the God who comforts those who mourn  
strengthen you with hope that never fades. Amen.

May the God who calls the merciful, the meek,  
and the pure of heart “blessed”  
shape your life with His grace. Amen.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son  and the Holy Spirit,  
come down upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

## DISMISSAL

Go forth and build the house of your life  
on the blessing of Christ. Go in peace.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Every day you build the inner house of your life.  
Let each choice become one more stone shaped by the  
Beatitudes.”

## 2. Feb. Monday – The Presentation of the Lord (Year 2)

*Mal 3,1-4 (or Heb 2,14-18); Lk 2,22-40*

## INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, an elderly woman was asked what kept her going after the death of her husband and the departure of her children. She smiled and said, *“Every morning I light a candle and say: ‘Lord, today again.’ As long as there is light, there is a reason to hope.”*

Today, forty days after Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas. Since the winter solstice, the days have slowly grown longer—light is gaining ground over darkness.

In the Temple of Jerusalem, two elderly people, Simeon and Anna, recognise in a small child the Light they have waited for all their lives. Their joy teaches us that hope does not grow old, and that God’s promises never expire.

Let us welcome Christ, the Light of the world, into our lives and into our darkness.

## PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters,  
the Light has come into the world,  
yet often we prefer the comfort of shadows.  
Let us ask the Lord for mercy.

Lord Jesus, Light of the nations,  
you shine into our darkness.

*Lord, have mercy.*

Christ Jesus, Salvation of the world,  
you come to meet those who wait in hope.

*Christ, have mercy.*

Lord Jesus, Glory of God's people,  
you call young and old to walk in your light.

*Lord, have mercy.*

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who sent his Son as Light from Light,  
have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and lead us from darkness into eternal life. Amen.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GLORIA

Today is a feast of joy and light.  
With Simeon and Anna,  
with angels and saints,  
with the Church on earth and in heaven,  
let us raise our voices and sing:  
Glory to God in the highest...

## COLLECT (as in the Missal)

## HOMILY

“The Day Hope Walked into the Temple”

Some years ago, I met an elderly man in a nursing home who had only one request. He said, *“Father, when I can no longer speak, make sure a candle is lit beside my bed.”* When I asked why, he replied quietly, *“Because light says what I may no longer be able to say—that I am still waiting for God.”* - That man understood Simeon.

Today's Gospel is not really about a ritual. It is about waiting—and recognising.

The Temple that day was busy, noisy, and ordinary. Many parents came with children. Many prayers were said. Nothing looked extraordinary.

And yet, hope walked in quietly—carried in the arms of Mary.

### 1. Two People Who Never Gave Up Waiting

Simeon and Anna are not sentimental figures. They are old. Very old.

Anna is eighty-four. Simeon has waited so long that he believes he will not die until his hope is fulfilled.

And this is important:

they do not recognise Jesus because they are clever, or educated, or powerful.

They recognise him because they have spent a lifetime praying.

People who pray learn to see differently. They are not blinded by appearances.

They are not discouraged by delays.

They are not scandalised by small beginnings.

Where others see *a poor child*, Simeon sees salvation.

Where others see *another family*, Anna sees deliverance.

Hope has trained their eyes.

### 2. A Meeting of Generations

This Gospel is one of the most beautiful intergenerational scenes in the Bible.

A young couple.

A newborn child.

Two elderly believers.

The young bring new life.

The old bring wisdom and recognition.

The Church needs both.

Many parents today bring their children for baptism with the same gesture Mary and Joseph make here:

*“Lord, this child is not only ours. This child belongs to you.”*

And often, standing quietly nearby, are grandparents—  
people who have prayed for decades, who carry the  
memory of faith when enthusiasm grows tired.

Simeon and Anna represent all grandparents, elders,  
religious men and women, consecrated souls—people who  
hold the faith steady when others are still learning to walk.

Without them, the child might pass unnoticed.

### 3. Light Is Recognised in Darkness

This feast is called Candlemas for a reason.

It comes when winter is not yet over.

The days are longer—but the cold remains.

That is how faith often works.

God does not wait until life is perfect.

He enters while the world is still broken.

While wars continue.

While young people are anxious about the future.

While older people wonder what remains.

Simeon does not say, “*Now the world is fixed.*”

He says, “*Now I have seen salvation.*”

Light does not erase darkness instantly.

Light gives meaning in the darkness.

That is why Simeon can say, “*Now, Lord, let your servant go in peace.*”

Not because everything is solved—but because hope has a face.

### 4. The Cost of Light

And then Simeon says something unexpected.

This child will be a sign that is rejected.

Light reveals.

And not everyone wants to be seen.

Some will stumble over Christ.

Some will turn away.

Some will prefer smaller, safer lights.

But the light of Christ is not diminished by rejection.  
It shines even from the cross.  
It shines from the empty tomb.  
And today, it shines quietly again—on this altar.

## 5. What This Feast Asks of Us

This feast asks us three things:

- To keep praying, even when answers are delayed.
- To keep hoping, even when the world grows tired.
- To keep carrying the light, even when it seems small.

Every candle we bless today says:

*Darkness is real—but it is not final.*

### Ending Story

There is an old custom in some families: when someone is dying, a candle is placed in their hands.

Not to light the room—but to say:

*You are going toward the Light.*

Simeon held a child that day.  
But in truth, the Child was holding him.

May Christ hold us too—  
in our waiting,  
in our ageing,  
in our uncertainty.

And may we leave this church as people  
who recognise hope when it appears,  
and who carry the Light  
until we too can say:

“My eyes have seen your salvation.”

### INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Let us now present our gifts,  
as Mary and Joseph once presented their child,  
asking the Lord to accept our lives  
as an offering of light and love.

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS (as in the Missal)

### PREFACE *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

It is truly right and just,  
our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For today your Son, eternal with you in glory,  
was presented in the Temple  
and revealed by the Spirit  
as the glory of Israel  
and the Light of the nations.

In him, heaven meets earth,  
hope meets fulfilment,  
and humanity is welcomed into your saving plan.

And so, with angels and saints,  
we proclaim your glory,  
as without end we acclaim:  
Holy, Holy, Holy...

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER II

*(Original text unchanged)*

*(Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord,  
as Simeon once received Christ into his arms,  
so now we ask you to send your Spirit  
upon these gifts,  
that what we place on this altar  
may become the Light of the world  
and the Bread of life for us.

*(Insertion after the Anamnesis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Remember, Lord,  
that your Son was first offered in the Temple  
before he offered himself on the cross.  
Make us a people who present our lives daily to you,  
so that our worship may be not only in words,  
but in lives shaped by love and hope.

## INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

United as one family,  
young and old,  
those who hope and those who wait,  
let us pray with confidence  
to the Father of Light.

## EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
and gently lead us out of all that darkens our hearts.  
Grant peace in our days,  
that, upheld by your mercy,  
we may be free from sin  
and fearless in hope,  
as we walk in the light of your Son  
and await the fulfilment of your promises,  
the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour,  
Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you are the Light that shines in the darkness  
and the peace for which every heart longs.  
Look not on our sins, nor on the fears that divide us,  
but on the faith of your Church,  
which waits for you with Simeon's trust  
and Anna's perseverance.  
Fill us with the peace that comes from your presence,  
a peace the world cannot give,  
so that, walking in your light,  
we may become instruments of reconciliation  
in a wounded world. You who live and reign for ever and  
ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Light from Light,  
you have entered our hands and our hearts.

Remain with us, Lord,  
so that what we have received in faith  
may shine through our lives in love.

## **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (as in the Missal)**

### **SOLEMN BLESSING**

May God,  
who today revealed his Son  
as the Light of the nations,  
fill your hearts with his peace.

May Christ,  
whom Simeon recognised with joy,  
guide your steps in hope and faith.

May the Holy Spirit  
make you bearers of light  
for a world longing for hope.

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son,  and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life,  
and carry his light into the world.

### **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

Do not underestimate a small light.  
A candle in the Temple changed two old lives.  
Christ in your heart can still change the world.

## Tuesday, 3 Feb. – 4th Week in Ordinary Time (Year II)

2 Samuel 18:9–10, 14, 24–25, 30–19:3; Mark 5:21–43

### INTRODUCTION

A nurse once shared how, during a hectic hospital shift, she was rushing down a corridor when an elderly patient gently caught her sleeve and whispered, “Please don’t hurry past me—I feel invisible.”

She stopped. She listened. She held the patient’s hand. Later she said, “*That interruption changed my whole day.*” Today’s readings speak of such interruptions—moments when pain breaks into life. King David weeps bitterly for his lost son. Jairus pleads desperately for his dying child. A woman, suffering silently for twelve years, reaches out in secret, hoping not to be noticed.

Like them, we come today with hidden worries, family griefs, long illnesses, and quiet fears.

In this Eucharist, Christ does not hurry past us. He allows himself to be interrupted. He lets himself be touched. And from him flows healing, dignity, and new life.

Let us place ourselves before the Lord with trust and humility.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters,  
the Lord comes close to the broken-hearted and raises up those who feel overwhelmed.

Let us acknowledge our need for his mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the love of God made flesh.  
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you allow yourself to be touched by human suffering. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you raise the fallen and call us your sons and daughters. Lord, have mercy.

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God  
have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**COLLECT** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

God of compassion,  
in Jesus of Nazareth you have come close to human  
suffering and revealed your life-giving love.  
Open our hearts to his presence among us today.  
Let his word strengthen us, his touch heal us,  
and his Spirit renew us,  
so that we may become signs of hope for others.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. Amen.

**HOMILY**

*“Do Not Be Afraid—Only Believe”*

A father once waited outside an operating theatre while his child underwent surgery. Hours passed. Every sound made his heart race. He later said, *“The waiting was worse than the fear. I felt completely powerless. All I could do was hope someone inside was doing what I could not.”*

That sense of powerlessness runs through today's readings.

In the first reading, King David weeps uncontrollably for his son Absalom. He is a powerful king, yet completely helpless before death. In the Gospel, we meet Jairus, a respected synagogue official, who falls at Jesus' feet. Titles, influence, and reputation mean nothing when a child is dying. Desperation levels all of us. Suffering makes us equal.

And then, in the middle of Jairus' urgent plea, comes an interruption.

A woman, unnamed and unnoticed, pushes her way through the crowd. For twelve long years she has suffered, not only physically but socially and religiously. She has been labelled *unclean*, kept at a distance, made to feel invisible. She does not dare to speak or ask. She hopes for the smallest possible contact—just a touch of Jesus' cloak. *“If only I touch his garment, I shall be healed.”* Jesus stops.

He could have hurried on. Jairus' situation is critical. Time is precious. Yet Jesus allows himself to be interrupted. He refuses to treat this woman as a problem on the way to something more important. For Jesus, compassion is never a delay; it *is* the mission.

He turns, looks at her, and speaks to her. And in that moment she receives more than physical healing. She receives dignity. Jesus calls her "Daughter." With one word, she is restored to relationship, belonging, and community. What she tried to do secretly, Jesus brings into the light—not to shame her, but to affirm her faith.

While this is happening, the worst news reaches Jairus: "*Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?*"

But Jesus speaks words that are meant not only for Jairus, but for all of us:

"Do not be afraid; only believe."

Fear says: *It's too late.*

Faith says: *Trust me anyway.*

Jesus goes to the house, takes the child by the hand, and speaks tenderly: "*Talitha koum—Little girl, arise.*" The touch that healed the woman now restores life itself. The final boundary—death—is not too much for him.

At the end of that long surgery, the doctor finally came out and said to the waiting father, "*You can see your child now.*" He later said, "*In that moment, everything changed. Hope returned.*"

That is what Christ offers us today.

He sees us in the crowd.

He stops for our hidden wounds.

He is not disturbed by our interruptions.

He touches what we thought was lost and whispers again:

"Do not be afraid. Only believe."

## **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Trusting in the Lord who welcomes every cry of the heart, let us place our lives, our wounds, and our hopes upon the altar.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

Lord God,  
receive these gifts  
as signs of our trust in your healing love.  
As we offer bread and wine,  
receive also our fears and interruptions,  
and transform them through the sacrifice of your Son,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

**PREFACE** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Christ our Lord.  
  
For he entered fully into our human condition,  
was moved by suffering,  
and allowed himself to be touched by pain and faith alike.  
By his word and by his touch

he brought healing to the sick,  
hope to the excluded,  
and life where death seemed final.

In him, fear gives way to trust,  
and despair opens to hope.  
And so, with angels and saints,  
we proclaim your glory,  
as we sing:

**EUCARISTIC PRAYER II**

*(Original text unchanged)*

*(Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord, as we prepare to invoke your Spirit upon these gifts,  
we remember how your Son allowed power to flow from  
him  
to all who reached out in faith.

May this same Spirit touch our lives now—

healing what is wounded,  
awakening what is asleep,  
and restoring hope where it has faded.

*(Epiclesis continues unchanged)*

*(Insertion after the anamnesis - Adapted to the readings of  
the day for personal meditation only)*

As we proclaim the mystery of faith,  
we remember that Christ's death and resurrection  
have broken every boundary—  
even the boundary of death itself.  
May this saving mystery give us courage  
to trust him in every interruption,  
and to believe that his life is stronger than our fears.

*(Prayer continues unchanged)*

## **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

As beloved sons and daughters,  
restored to dignity and hope,  
let us pray with confidence to our Father:

## **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, from every fear that paralyses us,  
from every grief that overwhelms us,  
and from every darkness that hides hope from our eyes.  
Grant us peace in our days,  
that, supported by your mercy,  
we may live in trust  
and await the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you spoke peace to frightened hearts  
and life to those thought lost.  
Look not on our fears,  
but on the faith of your Church,  
and graciously grant her peace and unity  
in accordance with your will.

For you live and reign for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who allows himself to be touched so that we may be healed.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this Eucharist, Christ has stopped for us.

He has met us personally.

May the touch we have received  
give us courage to rise, to trust again,  
and to become gentle interruptions  
of hope in the lives of others.

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord God, through this sacrament  
you have touched our lives with your saving love.  
Strengthen our faith, restore our hope,  
and send us forth as witnesses  
to the power of your compassion.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SOLEMN BLESSING

May the God of life bless you  
and turn your fear into trust. Amen.

May Christ, who allowed himself to be touched,  
heal what is wounded in you. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit  
give you courage to believe  
even when the way is unclear. Amen.

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son,  and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace,  
and let your faith touch the lives of others.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

What feels like an interruption today  
may be the very place  
where Christ wants to meet you—and bring life.

**4 February 2026 – Wednesday of the 4th Week in**

**Ordinary Time - 2 Sam 24:2, 9–17; Mk 6:1b–6**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many years ago, a small village proudly spoke of a young man who had grown up among them. He had been clever, kind, and helpful. But when he later returned as a successful doctor, offering free treatment, some whispered, *“Who does he think he is?”* Others said, *“We know him too well.”* In the end, many refused his help—not because he lacked skill, but because they could not accept greatness from someone so familiar.

Something very similar happens in today’s Gospel. Jesus returns to his hometown. The people are amazed—and yet offended. Their familiarity becomes a wall instead of a doorway.

Today we come before the Lord who knows what rejection feels like, who understands our disappointments, and who still continues his mission of love. We also ask the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, trusting in God’s healing grace for body and soul.

## **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Let us now acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy.

- Lord Jesus, you came among your own, yet you were not recognised. Lord, have mercy.
- Christ Jesus, you brought healing and hope, yet you were met with doubt. Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, you remained faithful to your mission even when rejected. Lord, have mercy.

## **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May almighty God,  
who knows our weakness and understands our struggles,  
have mercy on us.

May he forgive us our sins,  
heal our blindness of heart,  
and strengthen our faith,  
so that we may walk in his light  
and come to everlasting life. Amen.

**COLLECT** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

**Option I (Weekday):**

God our Father, you created us, yet we often fail to recognise you. You love us, yet we doubt your closeness.

Reveal yourself to us anew.

Open our eyes to see your presence,  
our hearts to trust your ways,  
and our lives to reflect your love.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Option II (Saint Blaise – optional):**

Eternal God,  
your Son shared our human life  
and knew both joy and rejection.

Through the intercession of Saint Blaise,  
strengthen us in faith,  
heal what is wounded within us,  
and help us remain united with Christ  
in good days and in difficult days.

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

**HOMILY**

A young woman once said, “I wish God would speak to me clearly.” When asked where she looked for God, she replied, “In big moments—miracles, retreats, extraordinary signs.” Yet she overlooked the quiet encouragement of a friend, the patience of her mother, the daily strength that carried her through difficult days.

In Nazareth, something similar happens. Jesus teaches with wisdom. He heals. He speaks with authority. And yet the people stumble—not over what he says, but over who he is. “Is he not the carpenter?” Familiarity blinds them. The extraordinary hides behind the ordinary.

The Gospel tells us something striking: *“He could work no miracle there.”* Not because Jesus lacked power, but because their hearts were closed. Faith makes space for God; resistance shuts the door.

The first reading shows another form of blindness. King David realises too late the consequences of his actions.

Recognition comes through pain, but it leads him back to humility and trust in God's mercy.

How often do we miss God because he comes to us too quietly, too familiarly—in people we know well, in ordinary routines, in simple invitations to love?

Saint Ignatius speaks of the Examen, the prayer of loving attention. When we look back on our day honestly and gently, we may discover moments of disappointment—but also quiet traces of God's presence. God asks us not to drink from the dark waters of discouragement, but from the clear water of inner joy that gives courage for the next step.

A man once complained that God never answered his prayers. Later he realised that God had been speaking all along—through small chances, gentle nudges, and ordinary people. “God was there,” he said, “but I was looking somewhere else.”

May we not miss the Lord because he comes too close, too familiar, too humble. May we see the divine in the ordinary—and give God room to work miracles among us.

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Trusting that God works through simple signs and humble gifts, let us place our lives upon the altar.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS** (*Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

Lord God,  
accept these offerings we bring before you.  
May they express our trust in your presence  
even in the ordinary moments of life.  
Strengthen our faith  
so that your grace may bear fruit in us.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PREFACE** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your Son, Jesus Christ,  
you revealed your glory  
not in power and splendour,  
but in humility and closeness.

Rejected by his own,  
he remained faithful to your will  
and continued to proclaim your Kingdom of love.

In his human weakness  
we discover your divine strength;  
in the ordinary events of life  
we encounter your saving presence.

And so, with Angels and Saints,  
we proclaim your glory, as we sing:

Holy, Holy, Holy...

**EUCHARISTIC PRAYER II**

(*Original text unchanged*)

(*Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

Lord,  
as we gather around this altar,  
we acknowledge our need for open hearts and living faith.  
Send your Spirit upon us,  
so that we may recognise your presence  
and allow your grace to transform us.

(*Epiclesis – unchanged*)

(*Institution Narrative – unchanged*)

(*Insertion after the Anagnosis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

Remember, Lord,  
how often your Son was rejected,  
and yet how faithfully he continued his mission.  
Strengthen us when we face doubt or disappointment,

and make us instruments of your healing and hope  
in the ordinary places of our lives.

*(Intercessions and Conclusion – unchanged)*

### **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

Jesus knew what it meant to be rejected,  
yet he trusted completely in the Father's love.  
With that same trust, let us pray:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
especially from the blindness that keeps us  
from recognising your presence among us.  
Graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, supported by your mercy,  
we may walk forward with courage and faith  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you came to your own,  
yet you did not withdraw your love.  
Look not on our sins,  
but on the faith of your Church,  
and grant us peace—  
the peace that opens hearts,  
heals wounds,  
and makes room for your presence.  
You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God, who comes to us  
in humble and familiar signs.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord Jesus,  
you have come to us quietly,  
under simple signs of bread and wine.

Open our eyes to recognise you  
not only here at the altar,  
but in the ordinary moments of our lives.  
May this communion strengthen our faith  
and renew our trust in your presence.

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER** *(Adapted to the readings  
of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord God,  
you have nourished us with the Bread of Life.  
Help us to recognise your grace  
at work within us and around us.  
May what we have received in faith  
bear fruit in love and service.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**SOLEMN BLESSING**

May God bless you with eyes that see his presence  
and hearts that trust his ways.  
May Christ strengthen you  
when faith is tested by familiarity or doubt.

May the Holy Spirit guide you  
to recognise the extraordinary in the ordinary.  
And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son,  and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace,  
glorifying the Lord by your life.

**TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

Do not miss God because he comes quietly.  
Faith opens the door for miracles.

## Thursday of the 4th Week in Ordinary Time

### Memorial of St. Agatha

1 Kings 2:1–4, 10–12; Gospel: Mark 6:7–13

### INTRODUCTION

A young missionary once arrived in a remote village carrying nothing but a small backpack and a Bible. A villager looked at him and asked, “Where is the rest of your luggage?” The missionary smiled and replied, “If I brought everything, I would never learn to trust you—or God.” That missionary stayed for years, not because of his words alone, but because people saw in him a life that matched his message.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus sends His disciples out with almost nothing—no money, no spare clothes, no provisions. He teaches them that the credibility of the Gospel does not rest on what we carry, but on how we live. Their very dependence on God and on one another becomes their message.

Today we also remember Saint Agatha, a young woman who lived her faith with courage and integrity. She refused to compromise her conscience, even at the cost of her life. Like the disciples, she carried no weapons, no power, no protection—only faith.

As we gather for this Eucharist, let us ask the Lord to make our lives credible witnesses of His Gospel, so that our faith may speak even before our words.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters, the Lord calls us to be witnesses not only with our lips, but with our lives. Aware of our failures and trusting in God’s mercy, let us now acknowledge our sins.

Lord, you call us to trust more in you than in ourselves.  
Lord, have mercy.

Christ, you send us to proclaim your Gospel with humility and courage.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you remain faithful even when our witness is weak.  
Lord, have mercy.

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May the God of mercy,  
who sends us again and again despite our weakness,  
forgive us our sins,  
renew our trust in Him,  
and strengthen us to live the Gospel with integrity,  
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

### **COLLECT** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

God of mission and mercy,  
your Son sent His disciples out in trust and simplicity,  
so that the world might encounter your saving love.  
Free us from fear and self-reliance,  
and make our lives credible witnesses of the Gospel.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. Amen.

### **HOMILY**

A father once stood at the doorway watching his daughter leave for her first day of work. She was nervous and asked, “What if I fail?” He replied gently, “Then you will learn. Just go—and be who you are.”

That is exactly what Jesus does in today’s Gospel. He does not send His disciples out fully prepared by human standards. Instead, He sends them before they feel ready, before they feel strong, before they feel secure. He sends them not with plans, but with trust.

Jesus knows something important: the Gospel does not spread by control, but by surrender.

The disciples are told to take almost nothing. Why? Because the moment they rely on money, possessions, or status, the message becomes about them. Jesus wants them to stand *behind* the message, not in front of it. Their poverty becomes their credibility.

They are also sent two by two. Faith is never a solo project. Shared joy becomes stronger; shared rejection becomes bearable. Even today, when faith is often treated as a private matter, Jesus reminds us that belief grows in community.

And Jesus prepares them for rejection. “If they do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet.” This is not bitterness—it is freedom. The Gospel cannot be forced. Our task is faithfulness, not success.

Saint Agatha understood this deeply. She did not argue, manipulate, or compromise. She simply remained faithful. Her witness was credible because her life matched her faith.

Years later, the same missionary was asked why he never left that remote village. He replied, “Because I arrived with empty hands—and God filled them with people.”

The question for us today is simple and challenging: Am I ready to go—trusting God more than my own security, and living a faith that others can believe in?

## INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Trusting not in our own strength but in God’s generosity, let us place our lives on the altar as we present these gifts.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord God,  
accept these offerings  
as a sign of our desire  
to live simply, trust deeply,  
and serve faithfully.

May this sacrifice strengthen us  
to be credible witnesses of your Gospel,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## PREFACE *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you send your Son to proclaim the Kingdom  
not with power and riches, but with humility and trust.  
You call disciples to share His mission,  
sending them forth in weakness  
so that your strength may be revealed.

In the courage of Saint Agatha  
and in the witness of all your saints,  
you show us that faith lived with integrity  
becomes a light for the world.

And so, with Angels and Saints,  
we proclaim your glory and sing: Holy, Holy, Holy...

## **EUCARISTIC PRAYER II**

*(Original text unchanged)*

*(Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of  
the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord, as you once sent the Twelve into the world with  
nothing but trust,  
so now you gather us at this altar,

poor in spirit yet rich in hope,  
ready to receive the life you alone can give.

*(Epiclesis – unchanged)*

*(Anamnesis – unchanged)*

*(Insertion after the Anamnesis - Adapted to the readings of  
the day for personal meditation only)*

As we remember Christ's saving death and resurrection,  
renew in us the courage to be His witnesses,  
faithful in rejection, humble in success,  
and united in mission as one body in Him.

*(Rest of Eucharistic Prayer II unchanged)*

## **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

Jesus sent His disciples out trusting in the Father's care.  
With the same trust, let us pray as He taught us:

## EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
especially from fear, discouragement, and self-reliance.  
Grant peace in our days,  
that, helped by your mercy,  
we may always be free to serve your Gospel  
and never lose heart in doing good.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you sent your disciples into a divided world  
with nothing but peace in their hearts.  
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,  
and grant us the peace  
that enables us to walk together  
and witness together.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
who sends us into the world nourished by His own life.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

We came with empty hands.  
We received the Bread of Life.  
Now we are sent—  
not to impress,  
but to witness;  
not to control,  
but to trust;  
not alone, but together.

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord God, we have been nourished by this sacrament.  
Strengthen us to live what we have received,  
so that our lives may proclaim your Gospel  
with courage, humility, and love.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SOLEMN BLESSING

May God strengthen your faith  
when you are welcomed or rejected. Amen.

May Christ walk beside you  
as you go forth in His name. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit  
make your life a credible witness of the Gospel. Amen.

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace,  
glorifying the Lord by your life.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The Gospel does not need perfect messengers—  
it needs believable ones.

**Friday, 6 February 2026 – 4th Week in Ordinary Time**

**Sacred Heart Friday (Paul Miki and Companions)**

*First Reading: Sirach 47:2–11*

*Gospel: Mark 6:14–29*

## INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, a young seminarian was asked why he still wanted to become a priest after reading the stories of martyrs. He answered simply: *“Because love is stronger than fear.”*

That answer captures today’s celebration.

On this Sacred Heart Friday, we stand between two banquets. One is Herod’s birthday feast—full of music, pride, and deadly compromise. The other is the banquet of the Heart of Jesus—pierced, silent, faithful, and life-giving.

We remember today Saint Paul Miki and his companions, crucified on a hill in Nagasaki in 1597. Like John the Baptist, they spoke the truth without hatred and remained faithful without violence. Their lives remind us that the

Heart of Christ beats strongest not in palaces of power, but in hearts that dare to love to the end.

We come before the open Heart of Jesus, aware of our fears, compromises, and half-truths. Let us ask for mercy, courage, and freedom of heart.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you are faithful even when we are afraid to stand for the truth. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you gave your life rather than compromise love. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, your pierced Heart remains open to sinners and saints alike. Lord, have mercy.

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May the God of compassion, whose Heart is rich in mercy, forgive us our fear and our compromises, heal what is wounded within us, and strengthen us to walk in truth and love, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

### **COLLECT** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

Lord our God,  
form our hearts according to the Heart of your Son.  
Free us from fear and self-interest,  
give us courage to stand for truth and love,  
and help us remain faithful even when it costs us  
something.  
Through the witness of your martyrs  
and the grace flowing from the Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
lead us to eternal life.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. Amen.

### **HOMILY**

A man once said, “*I knew what was right—but I didn’t want to look foolish in front of others.*”  
That single sentence explains Herod.

Herod knew John was a good and holy man. He listened to him. He was disturbed, yet attracted by the truth. And still—he chose honour over conscience, appearance over life, power over truth. The prison held John, but fear imprisoned Herod.

#### Reflection

The Scriptures today place before us two figures: David, praised despite his great sins, and John the Baptist, killed for his faithfulness. One failed deeply and repented. The other remained faithful to the end. Both found a place in the Heart of God.

Our lives lie somewhere in between. We are not heroic martyrs, nor hardened tyrants. We know the good, but we hesitate. We hear God's word, but we fear the consequences. Like Herod, we stand at the crossroads between our better self and social pressure.

On this Sacred Heart Friday, we look not to Herod's banquet of death, but to Christ's banquet of life. His Heart was pierced—not because he feared people, but because

he loved them to the end. John the Baptist lost his head for the truth; Jesus lost his life for love. Saint Paul Miki died with the name of Jesus on his lips.

#### Ending with a story

At his execution, Paul Miki preached from the cross: *"I forgive those who condemn me. I ask you to seek the true God."*

That is the power of the Sacred Heart: not fear, not revenge, not compromise—but love that remains faithful even on the cross.

May we learn to choose that Heart.

#### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Let us now place on the altar not only bread and wine, but also our fears, our compromises, and our desire to be faithful, and ask the Lord to transform them.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS** (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

Lord God,  
receive these gifts and the offering of our lives.  
May the sacrifice of your Son,  
born from a Heart obedient unto death,  
strengthen us to live in truth, courage, and love.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**PREFACE (Sacred Heart / Martyrs)** - (*Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

It is truly right and just,  
our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
  
In the Heart of your Son,  
pierced on the cross,  
you revealed the depth of your mercy

and the cost of faithful love.

From that Heart flow forgiveness, courage, and new life.

In your martyrs, especially Paul Miki and his companions,  
you showed that love is stronger than fear,  
truth stronger than power,  
and faith stronger than death.

Therefore, with angels and saints,  
we proclaim your glory  
and sing without end: Holy, Holy, Holy...

**EUCARISTIC PRAYER II**

(*Original text unchanged*)

(*Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only*)

As we stand before you, Father,  
we remember the courage of John the Baptist  
and the witness of your martyrs.  
May this Eucharist strengthen us

to resist fear, speak the truth in love,  
and offer our lives with Christ.

*(Epiclesis – original text)*

*(Insertion after the Anamnesis - Adapted to the readings of  
the day for personal meditation only)*

As we proclaim the death and resurrection of your Son,  
we place before you the struggles of your Church,  
the victims of unjust power,  
and all who suffer for truth and conscience.  
Keep us faithful to the Gospel,  
until we share the fullness of life in your Kingdom.

### **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

With trust in the Father whose love never fails,  
and united with the Heart of Christ,  
let us pray as he taught us.

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil,  
especially from fear that silences truth

and pride that compromises love.  
Grant peace in our days,  
that, strengthened by your mercy,  
we may remain faithful and free,  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you chose the way of the cross  
rather than the safety of compromise.  
Look not on our fears,  
but on the faith of your martyrs  
and the love of your Sacred Heart.  
Grant us your peace—  
a peace rooted in truth, courage, and mercy.  
You live and reign for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
whose Heart was pierced for our salvation.  
Blessed are those invited to the banquet of life.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The Heart that was pierced is now given to us.  
May the love we receive  
become the courage we live.

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord God,  
you have nourished us with the Bread of Life.  
May the grace we received  
shape our hearts after the Heart of Christ,  
so that we may live faithfully,  
love courageously,  
and bear witness to your truth  
in the world.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SOLEMN BLESSING

May the God of mercy  
strengthen your hearts in truth and love. Amen.  
May the Heart of Christ  
give you courage in times of fear. Amen.

May the witness of the martyrs  
lead you safely to eternal life. Amen.

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace,  
glorifying the Lord by your life.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Herod feared losing honour.  
John lost his life.  
Jesus gave his Heart.  
Whose way will I choose this week?

**February 7, Samstag der 4. Woche im Jahreskreis /**

**1 Kön 3,4–13; Mk 6,30–34**

## **INTRODUCTION**

“Come away by yourselves and rest a while.” With these gentle words Jesus invites his disciples — and he invites us as well. So often our days are filled with activity, demands, and expectations. We move from one task to another, scarcely noticing what truly matters, feeling at times like a *perpetuum mobile*, always in motion and yet rarely at rest.

In today’s readings we encounter two powerful images. In the Gospel, Jesus recognizes that his disciples need silence, distance, and time to let their experiences settle, to return to their inner source and be renewed in God’s presence. In the first reading, the young King Solomon stands at the beginning of a great responsibility. When God invites him to make a wish, he does not ask for success, power, or security, but for a listening heart — the wisdom to discern good from evil and to serve his people well.

We, too, know the feeling of being pulled in many directions. After long and demanding hours, we long for a moment of rest, yet it often seems as if others’ needs and expectations are waiting for us precisely then. We care, we listen, and we respond — but we can only give what we ourselves have received.

As we begin this Eucharist, let us pause. Let us allow God to quiet our restlessness, to fill our hearts anew with his word and loving presence, and to lead us back to the source from which we live.

## **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Brothers and sisters, we come before the Lord who knows our weariness and our distractions. Let us acknowledge our sins and open our hearts to his mercy.

- Lord Jesus, you invite us to come away and rest in you.  
Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, you see our compassion grow tired and renew it with your love.  
Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, you teach us to listen with the heart.  
Lord, have mercy.

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who knows our weakness and our longing for rest,  
forgive us our sins,  
restore us in his peace,  
and lead us back to the source of life,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## COLLECT *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

God of wisdom and compassion,  
you gathered us into your presence  
and call us to listen with attentive hearts.  
Help us to recognize who we are before you,  
to believe what we pray,

and to live what you command.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## HOMILY

After returning from a demanding mission, the disciples are full of stories, emotions, and questions. Anyone who has returned from intense work knows that moment: words tumble over each other, noise fills the air, and there is no space to breathe. Jesus notices something important — not their success, not their fatigue alone, but their need to stop.

Jesus invites them to a lonely place, not as an escape from people, but as a return to themselves and to God. Yet the story takes an unexpected turn: the crowds arrive first. The planned rest disappears.

And here we see the heart of today's Gospel. Jesus holds two truths together:

- We must not lose ourselves in constant activity.

- We must not close our hearts to the needs of others.

In the first reading, Solomon stands at the beginning of his reign. He could ask for power, security, or long life. Instead, he asks for a listening heart — a heart able to discern, to understand, to serve. That request reveals great wisdom.

Our lives, too, require this balance: silence and service, prayer and compassion, rest and responsibility. Without listening, our service becomes mechanical. Without compassion, our rest becomes selfish.

There is a saying: “*You cannot pour from an empty cup.*” Jesus teaches us something even deeper: when we let God refill our cup, we can share even when our plans are interrupted. The disciples did not get the rest they expected — but they witnessed compassion in action.

May we learn to pause when God invites us to pause, and to serve when God calls us to serve — with listening hearts like Solomon, and compassionate hearts like Christ.

## INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Let us place on the altar not only bread and wine, but also our weariness, our longing for rest, and our desire for listening hearts.

### PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord God,  
receive these gifts and the lives we bring with them.  
Renew us by your Spirit,  
that strengthened by this sacrifice,  
we may serve you and one another  
with wisdom, compassion, and joy.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### PREFACE *(Adapted to the readings of the day for personal meditation only)*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For he invites the weary to find rest in him  
and teaches us to listen before we act.

In him we see the shepherd  
who is moved with compassion for the crowd  
and the Son who withdraws to pray before the Father.

Through him you show us  
that wisdom is born from listening  
and love is renewed in silence.

And so, with angels and saints,  
we proclaim your glory, saying:  
Holy, Holy, Holy...

## **EUCARISTIC PRAYER II**

*(Original text unchanged)*

*(Insertion before the Epiclesis - Adapted to the readings of  
the day for personal meditation only)*

Lord, as we stand before you,  
we remember that we come not only to do something for  
you, but first to receive from you.  
Send your Spirit upon us,

that our restless hearts may find rest  
and our distracted minds may learn to listen.

*(Epiclesis – unchanged)*

*(Insertion after the Anamnesis - Adapted to the readings of  
the day for personal meditation only)*

As we proclaim the mystery of faith,  
renew within us the wisdom of Solomon  
and the compassion of Christ.

May this Eucharist shape our lives,  
so that our service flows from prayer  
and our love from communion with you.

*(Remainder unchanged)*

## **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

United as one family,  
resting in God's mercy  
and trusting in his wisdom,  
let us pray as Jesus taught us.

## EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
from all that unsettles our hearts  
and robs us of inner peace.

Free us from the restlessness  
that keeps us constantly busy  
but rarely attentive to your voice.

Graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, by the help of your mercy,  
we may be always free from sin  
and safe from all distress,  
as we wait in joyful hope  
for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you said to your apostles: *Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.*  
You know our tiredness, our worries,  
and the many demands that weigh upon us.

Look not on our sins,  
nor on our impatience or inner unrest,  
but on the faith of your Church.

Graciously grant her peace and unity  
in accordance with your will.

May your peace dwell in our hearts,  
teach us to listen before we speak,  
and help us to serve without losing ourselves.  
You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
who feeds the hungry  
and gives rest to the weary.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

If there were a fairy who could grant us one wish,  
what would we ask for?  
More years? Perfect health? Wealth without worry?  
Deep down we know these do not satisfy.

Solomon knew it too.

He asked not for more life, but for more wisdom;  
not for control, but for a listening heart.

In this Communion we receive not magic, but Christ  
himself.

Let us ask him today  
for open ears and open hearts,  
so that we may truly understand one another  
and live in genuine communion.

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER** *(Adapted to the readings  
of the day for personal meditation only)*

God of mercy,  
you have refreshed us at the table of your Son.  
Strengthen us through this sacrament,  
that renewed in mind and heart,  
we may live with wisdom, compassion, and trust.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**SOLEMN BLESSING**

May God bless you with silence that listens,  
wisdom that discerns,  
and compassion that never grows tired.

May Christ lead you to places of rest  
and teach you to serve with love.

May the Holy Spirit renew you daily  
and guide you to the source of life.

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace,  
listening to God,  
serving one another,  
and resting in Christ.