

21 June 2026 – 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 20:10–13; Rom 5:12–15; Mt 10:26–33

Red thread: “From fear to trust in God, and from trust to courageous, light-filled witness.”

Jesus Christ, who takes away our fear and in whom we may place our trust—may his closeness and his strength be with you!

INTRODUCTION

A man once lost his way while hiking in unfamiliar terrain. As evening approached, anxiety began to rise. The path seemed to disappear, and every direction looked the same. Just as panic was setting in, he noticed a small light in the distance—a cabin window. That light did not remove the darkness around him immediately, but it gave him direction, hope, and the courage to keep walking.

In many ways, that experience mirrors our lives. We all encounter moments of uncertainty, fear, and hesitation—about the future, about others, and even about ourselves.

At times, we feel the pressure to withdraw, to remain silent, to keep what matters most hidden.

Today’s readings speak directly into that reality. Again and again, we hear the words of Jesus: “*Do not be afraid.*” Not because life is without difficulty, but because God’s light is already present. We are seen, known, and deeply valued—more than we often dare to believe.

And yet, we also recognize how often fear still shapes us—how we hold back, remain silent, or hide from truth within us. So we begin this Eucharist by bringing our fears, our failures, and our need for courage before God, trusting in His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus Christ,

- you call us out of fear into the light of truth and trust: Lord, have mercy.
- you know our hidden struggles and our reluctance to witness openly: Christ, have mercy.
- you remain faithful even when we fail and call us back again: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins, and lead us from fear into trust,
from darkness into light, and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

In God's presence, fear gives way to trust,
and trust breaks into praise.
With hearts lifted from worry to wonder, let us glorify the
Lord: *Glory to God in the highest...*

COLLECT

Loving Father,
you know us completely and call us by name.
In your Son, you free us from fear
and teach us to trust in your constant care.
Grant that, strengthened by your grace,
we may walk in the light of your truth
and bear witness to your love with quiet courage.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ... Amen.

HOMILY

A man once told me that every morning, before the day began, he would step into his small garden with a cup of coffee. It wasn't much—just a few shrubs, a narrow strip of grass, and a simple bird feeder—but beyond it rose tall trees belonging to the grounds of a nearby church. And in those branches, almost unnoticed at first glance, were sparrows.

"Nothing special," he said at first. "Just ordinary birds." But then he began to pay attention. And when he did, something changed. The stillness of the morning was no longer empty—it was alive. Their movement, their chirping, their hidden presence in the trees filled the air in a way he had never noticed before.

And one morning, a quiet thought came to him, almost like a question he didn't expect:
If God notices these small, ordinary birds... could it be that He notices me in the same way?

That question, simple as it sounds, opens the door into today's Gospel.

Jesus speaks about sparrows—so common in his time that they were almost economically worthless, two sold for a penny. And yet He says:

“Not one of them falls to the ground without your Father knowing it... You are worth more than many sparrows.”

Before anything else—before courage, before moral effort, before witness—this is where everything begins: you are seen, known, and held by God.

Not in theory. Not vaguely. But personally, attentively, completely.

And yet, even when we hear that, fear remains close to the surface.

A woman once admitted that whenever conversations at work turned to faith, she would quietly step back. Not because she didn't believe—but because she didn't want to stand out. “It's easier,” she said, “to just stay silent.”

That quiet hesitation is not unusual. It rarely looks like persecution or open hostility. More often it is subtle: the

pressure not to differ too much, not to name faith too openly, not to appear “out of step.”

And into that very ordinary human experience, Jesus speaks words that echo again and again like a steady heartbeat:

“Do not be afraid.”

Not once. Not casually. But repeatedly—because He knows how deeply fear roots itself in the human heart. But if we are honest, fear is not only about what others might think of us.

There is another fear—more hidden, more personal.

A man once said he avoided silence at all costs. Music in the car. Television in the background. Constant activity. When asked why, he hesitated, and then finally admitted: “Because when everything is quiet, I start to see things in myself I don't want to face.”

That is a deeper layer of today's Gospel.

St. Paul calls it the “old Adam”—that inner wound in us that resists truth, resists love, and often prefers hiding to healing. We see it in many forms: irritation we cannot

explain, resentment we quietly nurture, excuses we repeat, or simply silence when we should speak.

And the instinct is always the same: manage it, suppress it, avoid it.

But the Gospel gently reveals a different truth: what is hidden does not heal.

That is why Christ does not only say, “Do not be afraid” about others.

He also calls us into courage within ourselves: the courage to step into truth, into light, into honesty before God.

There is a story of a man who struggled for years with sudden outbursts of anger. Most of the time he was calm, even gentle—but then something would trigger him, and it was as if another person took over. Afterwards came shame, confusion, regret. “I don’t recognise myself,” he said. “It’s like I lose control completely.”

He tried everything: discipline, strategies, self-control, even avoidance of certain situations. Nothing lasted.

Until one day, almost without dramatic emotion, he prayed a very simple prayer:

“Lord, be the Lord of my life.”

At the time, nothing seemed to happen.

But something had begun.

Months later, those around him noticed the difference before he did. The anger was still there in memory, but no longer in power. It no longer ruled him.

And when he reflected on it later, he said something striking:

“It was as if something old in me stepped back—and something new quietly took its place.”

That is what St. Paul means when he speaks of Christ as the “new Adam.”

The Christian life is not primarily about trying harder in the dark.

It is about opening the door to light—and letting Christ take His place.

Because darkness does not disappear by force. It disappears when light enters.

And yet, even when something changes within us, another step remains: the step outward.

It is one thing to believe in Christ privately. It is another to stand by Him openly.

A young pastor once stood trembling before preaching. Secret police were in the church, listening carefully for anything that might be used against him.

“I’m afraid,” he whispered to an older priest beside him.

The older man answered quietly:

“I am more afraid not to preach—because God is here.”

That moment becomes a turning point in the Gospel.

Because when God becomes more real than the fear of human opinion, something shifts. Fear does not vanish—but it loses its authority.

Still, the Gospel is not naïve about us.

We do not always succeed in this courage.

Peter did not.

At the decisive moment, when pressure came, he denied Jesus—not once, but three times. Fear spoke louder than faith.

And yet—that was not the end of his story.

Peter wept. He returned. He was restored. And Jesus entrusted him again:

“Feed my sheep.”

That matters deeply.

Because it tells us something essential: failure is not final.

Fear is not the last word.

There is always a way back into the light.

Let me offer one final image.

Imagine a dark room. You try to push the darkness out—open doors, wave it away, struggle against it. Nothing changes.

Then you light a small candle.

At first, it seems almost insignificant. But slowly, quietly, the darkness begins to withdraw—not because it was defeated, but because it was outshone.

Light does not fight darkness.
It simply enters.
And darkness cannot remain where light is present.

And so we return once more to the garden.
To the sparrows.
To the quiet, almost hidden truth that runs beneath
everything today:
You are seen.
You are known.
You are held.
From that trust, something begins to grow.
Fear loosens its grip.
The heart opens.
And slowly, gently, a different kind of life becomes visible.
Not loud. Not forced. Not dramatic.
But real.
And unmistakably light-filled.

So the Gospel remains—simple, strong, and deeply
personal:
Do not be afraid.
Not of others.
Not of yourself.
Not of your future.
Because you are held.
And what is held by God
can no longer be lost in darkness.
And what has been touched by light
can no longer remain hidden. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE CREED

God sees us more closely than we see ourselves,
and calls us from fear into faith.
With trust in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
let us profess our faith:
I believe in one God...

ALTERNATIVE PROFESSION OF FAITH (for personal meditation)

I believe in God, who gives us a future, who will bring the history of humanity, the life of every individual, and all creation to a good fulfillment.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who will come again to complete the Kingdom of his Father and to bring us home.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who seeks to plant joy, love, hope, and confidence in our hearts.

I believe in the communion of saints, in the great family of all God's children in heaven and on earth, united in faith, hope, and love. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that trusting in God who sees even the smallest sparrow, we may offer our lives with confidence and courage, and that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Loving God,
receive these gifts we bring before you.
Transform our fear into trust
and our hesitation into faithful witness,
so that our lives may reflect the light of Christ.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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 know each of us more deeply than we know ourselves, and your care extends even to the smallest of your creatures.
In your Son, you have called us out of fear into the freedom of trust and the courage of truth.
When we were lost in darkness, you gave us light.
When we were silent in fear, you invited us to witness with love. And so, with angels and saints, we proclaim your glory as we say:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Gathering all our fears, hopes, and trust into one prayer,
and confident that we are held in the Father's care,
we dare to say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and free us from the fears that close our hearts.
Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, trusting in your loving care,
we may live as witnesses to your light,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you stand among your fearful disciples and say:
Peace be with you.

Look upon us who so often live in fear—fear of others, of
failure, of the future, and of what lies within us.

Look also upon your Church,
often hesitant and afraid, yet called to be a sign of your
courage and peace in the world.

Enter into that fear with your light.

Heal what is divided in us, and free our hearts from what
holds us back.

Give us not a fragile peace based on security or approval,
but the deep peace that comes from knowing we are loved
and held by the Father.

And make us instruments of that peace—
free from fear, and ready for faithful witness.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who knows us, calls us, and leads us from fear into trust.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

We have received Christ, who knows us completely and yet does not turn away.

And again He speaks quietly within us: *Do not be afraid.*

Not because life is without fear,

but because we are no longer alone in it.

What we have received is stronger than fear:

the life and light of Christ within us.

And so we go from this Eucharist not as people who have mastered fear,

but as people who are held.

That changes everything—

how we speak, how we act, how we trust.

And step by step,

fear loses its grip,

and light begins to guide our way.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Loving God,

you have nourished us with the Body of Christ and strengthened us with your presence.

Help us to live what we have received:

to trust more deeply,

to fear less,

and to bear witness to your love in our daily lives.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

May the God who knows you and loves you free you from all fear.

May Christ, the light of the world, shine in your hearts and guide your steps.

May the Holy Spirit give you courage to live and witness with trust.

And may almighty God bless you,

the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace,
and do not be afraid to let the light of Christ be seen in
your lives.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

You are worth more than many sparrows.
Live this week not from fear—but from trust.

22 June 2026 – Mon., 12th Week in Ord. Time

Sts. John Fischer and Thomas More

2 Kg 17,5-8. 13-15. 18; Mt 7,1-5

Red Thread: Clear sight through humble hearts

INTRODUCTION

A man once stood in a courtroom convinced he had been wronged. He spoke with certainty, describing in detail the fault of another. Only later did it emerge that he had misunderstood what he saw; what he thought was guilt was in fact an accident. His confidence had clouded his vision.

Today the Church remembers Sts. John Fisher and Thomas More, two men who refused to bend their conscience under pressure. They were not men quick to judge others, but men who insisted on first standing before the truth of God as they understood it, even at the cost of their lives.

The readings today echo that same call to clarity. In 2 Kings, Israel's downfall is linked to its refusal to listen and its turning away from the Lord. In the Gospel, Jesus uses a

sharp but almost humorous image: the person with a plank in their eye trying to remove a splinter from someone else's.

Before God, we are invited into that same honesty. Like Fisher and More, we are asked not to live by illusion or accusation, but by truth—beginning with the truth about ourselves.

Let us now acknowledge how often our sight is clouded by pride and misunderstanding, and how quickly we judge others while remaining unaware of our own blindness.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you call us to humility of heart and clear sight:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you reveal the truth that heals rather than condemns: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you free us from the planks that distort our vision: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
who so often confuse our own judgments with your truth,
and forgive us the ways we have looked at others with
smudged and self-assured eyes.

May he heal what is distorted within us,
remove the planks that block our vision of ourselves,
and lead us, like Sts. John Fisher and Thomas More,
to a conscience rooted not in pride or fear, but in honest
truth before him. And thus, freed from blindness of heart,
may he bring us to everlasting life.

COLLECT

O God, light of those who walk in darkness and teacher of
the humble heart, grant that we may see ourselves
truthfully before you, so that, freed from illusion and pride,
we may look upon others with the same mercy we seek
from you.

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 woman once joked that she finally understood today's Gospel when she cleaned her reading glasses properly. "I spent half the day annoyed at everyone else," she said, "until I realised I was seeing them through a layer of smudges." Jesus' image of the plank and the splinter carries that same quiet humour—but it lands a serious truth: we often misread others because we have not yet seen ourselves clearly.

This is where the message of Sts. John Fisher and Thomas More speaks so powerfully. They lived in a time of fierce accusation and division. Yet neither man built his life on condemning others. Instead, they examined their own conscience before God and chose to stand in truth as they understood it. Their greatness was not in judging others, but in refusing to lose sight of God while so much around them became distorted.

The first reading from 2 Kings shows what happens when a people lose that inner clarity. They stop listening, stop reflecting, and begin to live as though they alone can see

rightly. Jesus warns against that illusion. "Take the plank out of your own eye first," he says—not to humiliate us, but to heal our vision.

And here lies the real challenge: it is easier to correct others than to correct ourselves. Yet the Gospel invites a different order—first to stand before God, then to stand before ourselves, and only then to look at others. When we do, judgment gives way to humility, and criticism slowly turns into compassion.

A gardener once spent a morning angrily pulling weeds from a neighbour's fence line, convinced the neighbour was careless. Only later did he realise the weeds had spread from his own untended corner, hidden from his view. It was a small discovery, but it changed how he looked at everything in the garden.

The same quiet discovery awaits us in the Gospel today: when we ask for clearer sight, we begin not with the faults of others, but with the mercy God is already offering us.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Let us now bring before the Lord these gifts of bread and wine, asking him who purifies the heart to remove from us all false judgment and self-deception, so that our offering may be made in sincerity and truth.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the gifts we bring in humility of heart, and cleanse us from every blindness that prevents us from seeing your will.

May this sacrifice draw us into greater honesty before you and shape us into instruments of your mercy toward others. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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 have given your people a law of truth and a light for the conscience,

and in your Son Jesus Christ you reveal not only the sins we must abandon

but the mercy that heals what we cannot see in ourselves.

In the witness of your martyrs, Sts. John Fisher and Thomas More,

you show us that a clear conscience is more precious than earthly security,

and that truth embraced in humility is stronger than fear or power.

Through Christ, you teach us to remove first the plank from our own eye,

so that purified in heart we may see your face in every brother and sister.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions,

and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,

we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

With hearts made more aware of our own need for mercy,
let us turn to the Father who alone teaches us to see
rightly,
and in the words Christ himself has given us, we pray:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and grant us clear hearts that are free from judgment and
pride, that, helped by your mercy, we may always live in
truth and peace, as we await the blessed hope and the
coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now
and for ever.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us that a humble heart sees
more clearly than a proud one, do not look upon our
blindness and quick judgments, but upon the faith of your
Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in
accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who opens the eyes of the blind and heals the hearts that
judge too quickly.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Lord who is Truth itself,
we are invited to see anew—with purified hearts and
humbled spirits.

In this silence, the Holy Spirit continues the gentle work of
removing what blinds us,
so that we may recognize God's presence in others without
distortion or fear.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this holy communion, O Lord,
cleanse us from every trace of pride and
misunderstanding, and make us steadfast in humility of
heart, so that, seeing clearly in your light,
we may live always in truth and charity.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May God, who alone sees with perfect clarity,
free you from every blindness that clouds your judgment of
others and of yourselves.

May he give you the courage of Sts. John Fisher and
Thomas More,
to stand firm in truth without harshness,
and to live with a conscience formed in humility before him.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, with hearts made humble and eyes made
clear by the light of Christ.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Only a humbled heart sees others as they truly are—and
sees itself as God lovingly reveals it.

23 June, 2026 – Tuesday, 12th Week in Ord. Time

2 Kg 19,9-11. 14-21. 31-36; Mt 7,6. 12-14

Red thread: *“Choosing God’s way means moving from
self-focus to life-giving trust and love.”*

INTRODUCTION

A teacher once gave her students a simple exercise: write
down one thing they would change about the world if they
could. Many wrote about peace, fairness, or kindness. One
child wrote only this: “I would change how quickly people
give up on each other.” The teacher kept that sheet for
years, saying it contained more wisdom than many books.
We often notice how quickly trust can erode—in families,
communities, even nations. In the first reading today, King
Hezekiah is faced with overwhelming threat, yet instead of
giving in to fear or despair, he turns to prayer. He places
the situation before God rather than allowing panic to
decide his response.

That same question quietly accompanies us each day:
where do we place our trust when things are beyond our
control, and how do we decide what is worth holding on to

and what must be let go?

As we gather for this Eucharist, we acknowledge those moments when we have trusted too little, judged too quickly, or chosen the easier path over the life-giving one. We ask the Lord for mercy and for the grace to walk more faithfully in his ways.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you call us from self-focus to life-giving trust in God's will: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you teach us to see our own faults before judging others: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you lead us through the narrow gate that leads to life: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us and forgive us our sins. As we stand before him, often tempted by easier paths and quick judgments, may he free us from self-focus and fear, and strengthen us to walk the narrow way of truth, trust, and love that leads to life. And bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, strength of those who place their trust in you, you guided Hezekiah in his distress and Abraham in his journey of faith:

grant us a heart that does not yield to fear or self-interest, but learns to walk the narrow path of your wisdom with courage and love.

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 mountain climber once came to a fork in a high alpine trail. One path was wide, well-trodden, and reassuring; the other was narrow, steep, and uncertain, barely visible between rocks. The guide simply said, "The wider path is safer—but it does not reach the summit." The climber hesitated, then chose the narrow track.

Jesus' words today are much the same: "Enter by the narrow gate." He does not disguise the fact that his way demands attention, discipline, and courage. It is not the

most popular road, but it is the one that leads to life. Not everything that is easy is good, and not everything difficult is to be avoided.

The reflections deepen this. There is a constant temptation to judge others harshly while excusing ourselves. Jesus' image of the speck and the log is almost humorous—but painfully true. Clear sight begins not with correcting others, but with honest self-examination. Only then can we walk together without pride or resentment.

This is especially important when life is in transition.

Abraham, called at seventy-five, sets out on a journey he never planned. He goes “as the Lord told him.” Faith is not static; it is movement into unfamiliar territory. Communities too are called into such journeys, learning patience with one another along the way.

Jesus' “golden rule”—treat others as you would like them to treat you—reminds us that discipleship is practical and relational. It asks us to place ourselves in the position of another before we act. That simple moral imagination can change families, parishes, and societies.

Yet Jesus also warns: do not throw pearls before swine. Not everything sacred is to be exposed where it cannot be received. Wisdom is needed to know when to speak and when to remain silent, when to offer and when to hold back. Discipleship is not only generosity—it is discernment. Here the red thread becomes clear: choosing God's way means moving from self-focus to trust and love. The narrow gate is not restriction, but freedom from what distorts love and clouds judgment.

St Joseph Cafasso, whose quiet ministry served prisoners and those on the margins, understood this well. He accompanied those trapped by their past, helping them rediscover the narrow path that leads to mercy and new life.

So the question remains personal: what gate am I choosing today—habit or conversion, ease or truth, self-justification or grace?

One evening, a young woman stood at a railway station with two tickets in her hand. One train went to a familiar city where everything was predictable; the other to a place

she had never been, where a small community needed help she felt unqualified to give. She boarded the second train. Years later she said, "I thought I was taking a risk. In truth, I was finally learning how to live."

That is the quiet wisdom of the Gospel: the narrow gate is not the loss of life, but its beginning.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we bring forward these gifts, let us ask the Lord to purify our intentions, that what we offer may come not from habit or convenience, but from hearts that seek the narrow way of true love and trust.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, receive the offerings we bring before you, and transform them into the sacrament of your Son's self-giving love.

May this sacrifice strengthen us to choose your will over our own comfort, and to walk faithfully in the way that leads to life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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 do not abandon your people in fear or uncertainty, but you call them to trust you even when the path is narrow and unclear.

You guided Abraham into a future he could not yet see, and you upheld Hezekiah when all seemed lost.

In your Son Jesus Christ, you have shown us the way of life,
not by ease or popularity, but by truth, love, and the courage of the cross.

Through him, you teach us to discern wisely, to judge ourselves honestly,
and to walk with one another in patience and mercy.
And so, with angels and saints, we praise you as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus teaches us that the narrow gate is entered not by pride or self-reliance, but by trust in the Father who knows our needs before we speak.

With confidence in his care, and seeking the wisdom to treat others as we ourselves wish to be treated, we pray as the Lord has taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and grant us the freedom to choose your ways over our own comfort, so that, guarded from the blindness of self-focus and guided by your wisdom, we may walk securely along the narrow path that leads to life.

We ask this as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Way that leads us through what is narrow and demanding into the peace of the Kingdom. Do not look on our hesitation or our divided hearts, but on the faith you awaken within us; and graciously grant your Church the peace that comes from trusting you completely, so that, freed from fear and rivalry, we may learn to walk together in love. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who calls us away from fear and self-centredness into the freedom of his love.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Body of Christ, we are strengthened not for the easy road, but for the true one.

The Lord nourishes us so that we may choose trust over anxiety, truth over appearance, and love over self-interest. Each Communion becomes a quiet invitation to step again through the narrow gate.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by this sacred gift, we humbly ask you, Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may shape our daily choices and guide us in your wisdom, so that we may walk always in the way that leads to life.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May he turn your hearts from fear to trust, and lead you always in the way of his wisdom.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth, choosing the narrow path of trust and love, and glorify the Lord by your life.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The narrow gate is not a restriction on life, but the beginning of truly living in God's trust and love.

24 June, 2026 – Wed. Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Is 49,1-6; Acts 13,22-26; Lk 1, 57-66 .80

INTRODUCTION

A young couple in a maternity ward were preparing to register their newborn daughter. The grandmother insisted on a traditional family name, one carried by generations. But the parents had already chosen something different—“Hope.” The room grew tense: arguments about identity, belonging, and expectation filled the air. In the end, the parents quietly held their ground, convinced that the name expressed something deeper than custom.

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist. His very naming was a moment of conflict and revelation. Neighbours and relatives expected continuity—“Zechariah” would be the natural choice—but God was already introducing something new: “John,” meaning *God is gracious*. In him, a new chapter of salvation history was being written, one that would point beyond family expectation to divine initiative.

The life of John the Baptist is inseparable from his mission:

to prepare the way for the Lord, to step aside so that Christ might be seen more clearly. As the saint of today once said of Jesus, “He must increase, I must decrease.” John becomes the voice that points, the witness who directs attention away from himself towards the saving presence of God in Christ.

The question raised in today’s Gospel—“What will this child turn out to be?”—is not only about John. It quietly turns towards each of us. What is God calling us to become? Where have we resisted God’s direction because it challenged our expectations or control?

As we now prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, we acknowledge our need for conversion of heart and turn to the Lord with humility and ask the Lord for mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the Word through whom God calls us into newness of life: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You are the Voice through whom the Father reveals His gracious will: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You are the Light toward whom all witnesses

point and before whom all must step aside: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, who calls us not according to our expectations but according to His gracious plan. May He forgive us for the times we have resisted His newness, clinging instead to what is familiar or self-centred, and lead us into the freedom of those who, like John the Baptist, exist to point beyond themselves to Christ. And may He bring us to everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

The birth of John the Baptist reveals a God who does not simply repeat our expectations but breaks into history with gracious surprise, naming and calling each life for His saving purpose. With hearts opened to this divine initiative, and rejoicing that the Lord prepares His people and sends His messenger before Him, let us give glory to God who alone brings light out of silence and newness out of promise: Glory to God in the highest...

COLLECT

O God, who raised up Saint John the Baptist to prepare a people fit for Christ the Lord, and who inscribed even his name as a sign of your gracious initiative, grant that we may not resist the newness of your saving work in our lives, but, like him, learn to point beyond ourselves to your Son who comes to increase among us.

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 parish once prepared for a baptism where the parents had chosen the name “John” for their son. A well-meaning relative objected strongly, insisting the child should carry the grandfather’s name to preserve family tradition. The discussion grew heated until the parish priest gently remarked, “Sometimes a name is not just about memory, but about mission.” The room fell quiet, and the parents kept the name they believed they had been inspired to choose.

In today’s Gospel, the same tension unfolds around the birth of John the Baptist. Neighbours and relatives expect conformity: “No one in your family has that name.” Yet Elizabeth insists, and Zechariah confirms in writing, that the child is to be called John—“God is gracious.” At that moment, Zechariah’s silence is broken, and a new song of praise begins, because God is doing something new in Israel.

John’s entire life is contained in that moment of naming. He is not the centre of the story; he is the one who points beyond it. His greatness lies in transparency—his ability to make space for Another. This is the meaning of his later testimony: Christ must increase, and he must decrease. The saint of today does not compete with Christ; he clears the path towards Him.

The red thread running through the feast is simple yet demanding: *God’s gracious initiative calls us to step aside so that Christ may be seen more clearly in our lives.*

And this is not abstract. A young teacher once worked with a troubled student who was constantly seeking attention

through disruption. Instead of confronting him with force, she gradually began highlighting his strengths in quiet, consistent ways. Over time, the student changed—not because he became the centre, but because someone else helped him discover a better centre than himself. He later said, “She made room for something better in me than I could see myself.”

John the Baptist does something similar, but on a much greater scale. He helps Israel—and us—to recognise the presence of Christ already among us. He is the friend of the Bridegroom, not the Bridegroom; the voice, not the Word; the lamp, not the Light.

And so we return to the question that echoes through his birth and through our own lives: *What will this child turn out to be?* The answer is not written in advance. It unfolds in the measure that we, like John, allow our lives to point beyond ourselves—to Christ who alone gives life its true direction.

A farmer once stood at the edge of his field at dusk, watching the fading light settle over the land. He whispered

to himself, “The sun is setting, but the harvest is coming.” John the Baptist lived his whole life like that horizon—fading, yes, but only so that a greater Light could rise.

INVITATION TO THE CREED

The naming of John reminds us that our lives are not self-authored but received as vocation from the God who calls us by grace. As we prepare to profess the faith of the Church, we do so in the awareness that we, like John, are not the centre of the story but witnesses to the One who comes after us and yet is before us. Strengthened by this faith, let us now profess together the mystery of our salvation: *I believe in one God...*

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we bring these gifts to the altar, let us remember John, who offered his entire life not as self-assertion but as testimony. May we also learn to place before God not our need for recognition, but our desire to serve His gracious plan. Let us pray.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the offerings we bring on the feast of Saint John the Baptist, and grant that, freed from the need to centre ourselves, we may become true witnesses of your Son, who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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 the birth and mission of Saint John the Baptist you reveal the mystery of your gracious initiative, which precedes all human expectation and reshapes all human identity. Before he had spoken a word, you had already given him his name; before he had performed a sign, you had already given him a mission. In him the resistance of human convention gives way to the surprising freedom of your saving plan.

You formed him not as the centre of the story, but as its threshold—not the light itself, but the voice that prepares

hearts to receive the Light. And even in his silence and humility, you made him a prophet who teaches your people that true greatness is found not in self-assertion, but in making space for your Son to increase among us.

And so, with the company of angels and saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

The Father who named John as a sign of His grace also calls us each by name into a mission that is greater than ourselves. Trusting that His will alone gives true direction to our lives, let us pray with the confidence of children who are learning to step aside so that Christ may be more clearly seen in us: Our Father...

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, sustained by your mercy, we may learn from John the Baptist to decrease in self-will and increase in faith, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who sent John as a herald of reconciliation and peace, look not on our hesitations to step aside from ourselves, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who is the fulfilment toward whom John pointed from his mother's womb.

Blessed are those called to the banquet of the Lord, where grace is not merely named but received in fullness.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this Eucharist, we receive the One whom John announced but did not possess. Like him, we are not called to be the centre, but to become transparent—lives through which Christ may be seen more clearly. Where we step aside in humility, Christ increases in us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son on this feast of Saint John the Baptist, we may learn, as he did, to live not for our own affirmation but for the revelation of your grace in Christ. Free us from the need to hold ourselves at the centre, and shape in us the humility that allows your Son to increase in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May God, who named John as a sign of His grace, lead you always to recognise His newness in your life, strengthen you to step aside for Christ, and bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go and announce not yourselves, but the Lord who comes to increase in all things. Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

John was not the light, but the witness to the Light. Our lives find their meaning not in being remembered, but in revealing Christ.

25 June, 2026 – Thursday, 12th Week in Ord. Time

2 Kg 24,8-17; Mt 7,21-29

Red Thread: "Hearing Christ and doing his word builds a life that endures every storm."

INTRODUCTION

A pilot once described a night landing when all external visibility suddenly disappeared. The runway lights had failed, the weather had closed in, and for a moment there was nothing to guide him except his instruments. He said later that what mattered most in that moment was not how experienced he felt, but whether he trusted the instruments he had trained himself to follow. When visibility is gone, you discover what you are truly relying on.

Life can feel like that at times—moments when familiar markers fade, and what once seemed stable is suddenly uncertain. The first reading from 2 Kings speaks of a people facing collapse and exile, not because of one bad moment, but because their inner foundations had been neglected over time. What appears strong on the surface can fail when what lies beneath is weak.

The Church today also remembers St William of Vercelli (Montevergine), a man who sought stability not in outward success but in a life rooted in God. He gathered disciples, formed communities, and built a spiritual foundation that endured because it was centred not on himself, but on the Lord. His life quietly echoes the Gospel invitation to build on rock rather than sand.

Brothers and sisters, as we come before the Lord, we acknowledge that at times we have heard his word but not always built our lives upon it. We have chosen convenience over depth, words over action, and in doing so have allowed cracks to form in what we present to God.

Let us ask forgiveness for the times we have built on shifting ground rather than on Christ the rock.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you speak words that give life, but we have not always acted upon them. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us to build our lives on your teaching, but we have often preferred easier paths.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you alone are the rock that endures every storm, yet we have trusted fragile foundations.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us the times we have heard his word without putting it into practice,
and cleanse us from all that weakens the foundation of our lives in Christ.

May he free us from every false security,
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, strength of those who build their lives on your word, grant that we may not only hear the teaching of your Son but put it into practice with faithful hearts,
so that when the storms of life arise we may stand firm in him who is our sure foundation.

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 small coastal village once ignored repeated warnings about building too close to the shoreline. The houses looked beautiful—bright, modern, inviting. For years, nothing seemed wrong. But when a severe storm arrived, the sea revealed what had long been hidden: the ground beneath many of those homes had been slowly undermined. What looked secure was not.

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks in a similar way. A house built on rock and a house built on sand may look the same from the outside. The difference only appears when the storm comes. What matters is not appearance, but foundation—whether life is built on hearing his word and doing it.

There is a quiet warning at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: it is possible to call Jesus "Lord" and even listen to his words, without living them. Faith can become verbal but not real, heard but not obeyed. And when that happens, life becomes like sand—unable to hold when pressure comes.

A farmer once learned this the hard way after building a shed quickly on shallow ground. It looked perfect, but after months of rain, one corner began to sink. "I built for summer," he said, "not for winter." Discipleship, however, is not built for fair weather but for storms.

The tragedy of exile in the first reading echoes this truth: when a people disconnect hearing from doing, collapse does not come all at once, but it comes. What is not rooted in God cannot ultimately endure.

St William of Vercelli shows the opposite path: a life not built on success or appearance, but on fidelity to God's word lived out in community and prayer. His life quietly reflects the Gospel's call to build on rock.

So the question remains: when the storm comes—and it will—what will stand? Built on Christ, we stand when storms come.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, as we bring these gifts to the altar, let us remember that true worship is not only in words but in lives shaped by Christ. Let us now pray that what we offer

may become a foundation of grace in us.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, receive the gifts we bring before you with humble hearts,

and transform us through this Eucharist,

so that hearing your word and living it faithfully,

we may be built ever more firmly upon Christ your Son.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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 have spoken to us in your Son, not only to be heard but to be lived,

and in him you reveal the wisdom that no storm can destroy.

He teaches us that those who hear his word and act upon it are like a house founded on rock,

unshaken when winds rise and waters beat against it.

Through him you call us away from fragile foundations and invite us into a life rooted in truth, fidelity, and love.

And so, with all the angels and saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Let us pray to the Father who teaches us not only to listen to his Son but to live by his word, and as Christ himself has taught us, we say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days,

that strengthened by your word and built firmly on Christ the rock,

we may be free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our

Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who teach us that only what is built on your word endures every storm,
look not on our instability but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant us peace in our hearts, in our families,
and in our communities.

Give us that peace which is not fragile like sand nor
shaken by fear,
but rooted in obedience to your word and in trust that does
not collapse when trials come.

When confusion rises and the winds of life test our resolve,
keep us steady in doing what we hear from you, so that we
may become instruments of your lasting peace in the
world. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the sure
foundation upon which our lives are built. Blessed are
those called to the supper of the Lamb, for in him we find
strength to stand when the storms of life arise.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this holy Communion, Christ himself becomes our
foundation anew.

What we have received is not only nourishment, but
strength to live his word.

We are reminded again that faith is not only hearing, but
doing—

not only listening in calm moments, but standing firm when
everything shakes.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by this sacred mystery, we humbly ask you,
Lord,
that through the power of this Eucharist we may be
strengthened to hear your word and faithfully put it into
practice,
so that our lives may remain firm in Christ in every trial.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord strengthen your faith so that what you hear from his word may become what you live in your daily life. May he make you firm when storms arise, and steady when life is uncertain.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth, glorifying the Lord by your life, and build your days on the word you have heard. Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

What we truly build our lives on is revealed not in calm weather, but in the storms we endure.

26 June, 2026 – Friday, 12th Week in Ord. Time

2 Kg 25,1-12; Mt 8,1-4

Red Thread: *“No one is beyond the Lord’s reach.”*

INTRODUCTION

A well-known story is told of a young boy who once stood outside a hospital ward with a sign he had made himself: “Can I give you a smile?” Patients and visitors paused, some in tears, because in that small gesture the boy crossed an invisible boundary—between healthy and sick, between comfort and suffering, between presence and isolation. He had no cure to offer, but he offered closeness, and that alone changed the atmosphere of the place.

The Gospel places before us a very different kind of encounter, yet with the same movement of courage and compassion. In the time of Jesus, physical suffering often meant social exclusion, and religious interpretation added layers of shame and distance. Yet in Christ, we discover a God who does not remain at the safe margins of human pain.

Brothers and sisters, the Gospel shows us a leper who

dares to come close to Christ, trusting that no distance is greater than mercy. Yet we also recognize the ways we keep distance—from God, from others, and from the places in our own lives that feel unworthy of healing. Let us ask the Lord to draw near to us in compassion and to heal what we have kept hidden.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you come close to those whom others keep at a distance: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you touch what is wounded and restore what is broken: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you reveal the Father's desire that no one be excluded from love: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life, and draw us ever closer to his Son, who reaches out to all who feel distant, excluded, or unworthy of his love. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in your Son reveal that no one is beyond your healing reach,
and who restore the excluded to communion by the power of your mercy,
grant that we may come before you with humble and trusting hearts,
never doubting your desire to draw near to us in our need.
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

In the Gospel, a leper steps out of isolation and into risk. He approaches Jesus with a faith that is both strong and fragile: “Lord, if you want, you can make me clean.” It is not doubt about Christ's power, but uncertainty about Christ's willingness. That question—*“if you want”*—echoes in many human hearts when suffering has lasted too long, when prayers seem unanswered, when life feels like exclusion. Jesus answers not only with words but with action. “Of

course I want to,” he says, and then he does what no one else would dare: he touches the untouchable. In that touch, distance collapses. What law and fear had separated, mercy now unites. Healing is not only a restoration of skin, but a restoration of belonging. The excluded is returned to communion.

Here the lives of Saints John and Paul, whom we commemorate today, quietly illuminate the same mystery. They lived in a time when faith could easily lead to rejection. Yet they chose closeness to Christ over safety, fidelity over convenience. Their martyrdom is not only a story of endurance, but of refusing to let fear define the limits of love. Like the leper, they discovered that drawing near to Christ is never met with rejection.

The Gospel reveals a deeper truth: Jesus does not manage distance; he removes it. He does not stand safely apart from human brokenness. He enters it. The leper’s “if you want” is answered by a divine “I do.” And that “I do” continues in every Eucharist, every prayer, every moment when a wounded heart dares to come close again.

The question that remains is not whether Christ is willing, but whether we are willing to approach. Many forms of leprosy still exist—loneliness, shame, resentment, hidden sin, fear of not being accepted. Yet none of these places are beyond his reach. The only real isolation is the one that refuses contact with mercy.

A striking modern story is told of a man who had not spoken to his estranged father for over a decade. When the father became seriously ill, the son stood outside the hospital room for hours, unable to enter. Finally, he walked in expecting awkward silence or rejection. Instead, his father simply stretched out his hand and said, “I’ve been waiting.” That moment broke years of distance—not because the past was erased, but because presence finally overcame pride. In a similar way, Christ always stands on the side of “I’ve been waiting.”

And so the Gospel leaves us with a simple but demanding truth: no one is beyond the Lord’s reach, and no distance is stronger than his desire to draw near.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Dear brothers and sisters, as we bring forward these gifts, we also bring our own lives—especially those places we keep distant from the Lord. Let us trust that nothing offered in faith is ever beyond his transforming touch, and pray that our sacrifice may draw us more deeply into his communion.

Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept the gifts we bring before you, and by their offering draw us out of every isolation into the communion of your love.

May what we present in faith become for us a sign that in your Son no one is ever beyond your reach.

Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

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 you have shown us that your mercy does not remain distant from human suffering, but enters into it with healing power. He does not avoid the excluded, but draws near to those who are cast aside; he does not fear human brokenness, but restores it with a touch of compassion.

In him, we discover that no wound is too deep, no shame too great, no distance too wide to be reached by your love. And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

With confidence in the Father who draws near to the excluded and restores the broken to communion, let us pray in the words our Saviour gave us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the healing touch of your mercy, which draws near to every human wound, we may be freed from the fear that keeps us distant from you and from one another, and, strengthened by your grace, we may live in confident hope as we await the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who touched the untouchable and restored the excluded to peace with God and neighbour, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who draws near to every human wound and takes away the sins of the world.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this holy communion, we have received the One who does not stand at a distance from our lives. Christ comes close—not to observe our brokenness, but to heal it from within. What once felt excluded is now held within his mercy. There is no place in us where he does not wish to dwell.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this heavenly banquet, O Lord, restore in us the fullness of communion with you and with one another, so that, healed by your presence, we may never doubt that we are held within your reach. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you close to his heart, may he make his face shine upon you and draw you out of every place of isolation, and may he turn his countenance toward you and grant you peace.

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

DISMISSAL

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord,
that no one is beyond the reach of his mercy.
Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

No place in your life is too far for Christ to enter—
and no person is ever beyond the reach of his love.

27 June, 2026 – Saturday, 12th Week in Ord. Time

Lam 2,2. 10-14. 18-19; Mt 8,5-17

St Cyril of Alexandria

Red Thread: *“Only say the word, and distance disappears.”*

INTRODUCTION

A distress call once came from a fishing vessel caught in a sudden storm far out at sea. The crew could see no rescue boat on the horizon, only towering waves and fading daylight. Yet, through a crackling radio signal, they spoke their need. From the shore, the coastguard responded with calm authority: “Help is on the way. Stay where you are.” Hours later, against all odds, they were brought safely home. What saved them was not proximity, but a word carried across distance.

In many ways, our daily lives have become familiar with this kind of “distance”. We speak to loved ones through screens, we solve problems through messages, we receive help without physical presence. Distance is no longer a

barrier to relationship, action, or even care. What matters is whether the word reaches us—and whether we trust it.

Today we remember St Cyril of Alexandria, a great teacher and defender of the mystery of Christ, especially of the power of the Word made flesh. For Cyril, Christ is not distant from the world but actively present through his divine Word, sustaining and healing creation. The Church still draws from his witness whenever we speak of Christ as true God and true man—near to us even when unseen.

As we prepare to hear today's Gospel, we recognize how often we rely on our own certainty, our own control, and our need for visible signs. Yet the Lord invites us into a deeper trust: that his word is enough. For the times we have doubted that presence, or lived as if God were far away, we turn now and ask for mercy as we prepare for this Eucharist.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you speak and your word heals across every distance: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you revealed the Father's nearness in your flesh, bridging the gulf between God and humanity:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the Word spoken for our healing and our peace: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

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

May he draw near to us with the power of his Word, heal what is broken in us, and dispel every distance that sin has placed between us and his love, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in your Son Jesus Christ have spoken the word that crosses every distance and heals every separation,
grant that we, like the centurion of the Gospel, may trust

not in our own worthiness but in the power of your word alone.

As we remember your servant Cyril, who defended the mystery of the Word made flesh, strengthen our faith when you seem distant, and draw us ever closer through trust in your saving presence. 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 hospital administrator once received an urgent overnight call: a specialist surgeon was needed hundreds of kilometres away for a critical case. There was no time to travel. Instead, through a secure video link, the surgeon guided the team step by step. There was no physical presence—yet a life was saved because authority and trust bridged the distance.

This is the world of today's Gospel. A Roman centurion comes to Jesus for his servant. He understands authority,

but he also recognises something greater in Christ: a power that does not depend on physical presence. "Only say the word and my servant will be healed." Jesus is astonished: "Nowhere in Israel have I found such faith." This is faith that trusts God's word across every distance.

The first reading from Lamentations gives voice to those who feel God is far away, surrounded by loss and ruin. Yet even there rises a plea: Lord, do not remain distant—look upon us and restore us. Faith begins in that tension between felt absence and hoped-for nearness.

St Cyril of Alexandria helps us understand this mystery. In Christ, God has already crossed the greatest distance—not only space, but the divide between divine and human. If the Word has become flesh, then no situation is beyond his reach. The same Word that healed the centurion's servant is the Word we receive in every Eucharist: "Only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

The centurion's humility is key. He knows he is not entitled, not in control, yet he trusts completely. That openness

becomes the place where healing enters. Faith is not about bringing God closer by effort, but trusting that he is already near in his Word.

And so the question returns to us: where do we still think God cannot reach? The centurion invites us into a different way—one that simply trusts the Word, and finds that it is already at work.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, trusting that the Lord's word alone is enough to sanctify what we bring, let us present our gifts, confident that he is already near to receive them and transform them.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept these offerings we bring before you in faith, just as the centurion trusted your word from afar, and grant that what we place on this altar may become for us the sacrament of your nearness and healing presence. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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 you have spoken the one Word that overcomes every distance:
the Word who heals the servant from afar, who enters the house of suffering, and who raises up those bowed down by despair.

In him you have shown that your power is not limited by space, and your mercy is not restrained by absence, but that wherever faith is spoken, there your saving presence is already at work.

And so, with the centurion who believed without seeing, with St Cyril who proclaimed the Word made flesh, and with all the angels and saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

With the trust of the centurion, who believed that a word from the Lord was enough to heal across every distance, and with hearts strengthened by Christ who is never far from us,

let us now pray to the Father as his beloved children:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, strengthened by the word of your Son who reaches us across every distance, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who are not distant from our suffering but speak and it is healed, look not on our separation from you or from one another, but on the faith you awaken in our hearts, and graciously grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who speaks his word and it is done,
who enters not only under our roof but into our very lives.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

We have received not a distant promise, but the living Word who comes close to us in hidden form.
Like the centurion, we do not see everything we desire, yet we are invited to trust that his word is enough.
What seemed far away is now present within us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this holy communion, O Lord,
which unites us to Christ your Son, the Word who heals across every distance,
strengthen our faith and deepen our trust,
so that we may recognize your nearness even in what we do not yet understand.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord who speaks and it is done,
who bridges every distance with his Word made flesh,
bless you, protect you, and keep you close to himself, now
and for ever. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth, trusting in the Word who is near to you,
and live in the confidence that no distance can separate
you from his love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The Word of Christ does not need proximity to be
powerful—only faith to receive it.