

28 June 2026 - 13th Sunday in Ord. Time  
2 Kg 4,8-11. 14-16; Rom 6,3-4. 8-11; Mt 10,37-42  
*Red thread: "Faith that holds in life's storm."*

**May God, who wants to be the centre of our lives, be with you all!**

## INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, during a sudden downpour in a crowded city train station, a young man stood at the entrance watching people rush past. Most had umbrellas—some large, some small, some already turned inside out by the wind. An elderly woman beside him struggled with a broken umbrella that kept collapsing in the rain. Without saying much, he stepped closer, lifted one side of his own umbrella, and quietly shared it with her until they reached the platform together. They never exchanged names. When the train arrived, she simply said, "Thank you for not letting me stand alone in the storm."

It was not a dramatic act. No one took a photo. No one applauded. But something real happened there—

something that felt more human than many grand gestures.

Life is often like that station: crowded, unpredictable, and marked by moments when we either stand alone or allow someone to stand with us. The Gospel we hear today speaks precisely into that reality, where faith is not theory but lived experience.

At the heart of it lies a simple but demanding truth: Christian discipleship is not decoration added to life, but a way of living that is real, costly, and deeply human—like solid wood that holds under pressure, like a love that does not collapse when tested.

In the quiet of our hearts, we recall those moments when we have stood in the storms of life like in that crowded station—aware of the rain, yet slow to share our shelter, quick to protect ourselves, and hesitant to stand with others in their need. We remember times when our faith has been more appearance than depth, when love has

grown selective, and when we have not always been solid and steady when life pressed against us.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you are the solid foundation who holds firm when all else collapses. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you come close to us in our weakness and teach us to welcome and carry one another in love.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you walk with us in the storms of life and call us to a faith that endures. Lord, have mercy.

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May the Lord forgive us for the times we have lived a shallow faith—more appearance than truth, weak when tested, and lacking the strength of real discipleship—and may He who strengthens what is fragile and builds us up in His love have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO THE GLORIA**

Gathered as a people strengthened by God in the storms of life, and called to a faith that is not empty appearance but living truth, let us lift our hearts in praise to the Lord who is our firm foundation, and glorify Him who sustains us when all else is shaken.

### **COLLECT**

O God, who call us not to a faith of appearance but to a life rooted in truth and love, and who strengthen us like solid wood so that we may endure the weight of the cross, look kindly upon your people gathered in the storms and quiet burdens of life.

Grant that we may not build our lives on what is shallow or passing, but on the firm foundation of your Son, who welcomes us as we are and teaches us to welcome others in His name.

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

Red thread: *Christian discipleship is not imitation or superficial, but real, costly, and life-giving love—solid wood faith that carries the cross and becomes visible in hospitality.*

### 1. When faith is tested: what is real?

A furniture salesman once showed a young couple three kinds of oak furniture: imitation, veneer, and solid wood. At first glance, all looked acceptable. But only one could endure pressure, weight, and time. “The real thing,” he said quietly, “always costs more.”

Jesus says something similar today—though far more radically. He speaks of loving Him above all else, of taking up the cross, of losing one’s life to find it. These are not exaggerations. They are a question: *What kind of discipleship is real when life presses against it?*

Because life does press.

A man once walked into a clinic for a routine check-up and walked out with a diagnosis that changed everything. Another family sat silently beside a hospital bed, realizing that no words could fix what was happening. In those moments, faith is no longer an idea—it becomes either solid or it cracks.

One woman who cared for her husband through long illness said: “I thought love would look like shared dreams. I didn’t know it would look like repeating the same sentence ten times a day with patience.”

That is not veneer. That is solid wood.

### 2. The danger of appearance: when faith is only on the surface

But there is another risk Jesus exposes: a life that looks religious but is not rooted.

A student once volunteered in parish activities, but when challenged in university about his beliefs, he stayed silent. “It’s easier not to stand out,” he admitted.

Or a parish group that organizes many events, trips, and social gatherings, but slowly stops praying together.

Everything remains active, but the centre quietly shifts.

Jesus is not interested in religious decoration. He is interested in truth that holds under pressure.

Like veneer furniture: fine at first sight, but fragile when life strikes it.

And so discipleship asks a hard question: *When no one is watching, what remains of my faith?*

3. The cross we do not choose—but do not carry alone

Jesus' words about the cross are often misunderstood as harsh. But He is not glorifying suffering. He is revealing reality.

A nurse once noticed an elderly man who always held his back in pain. One day she asked gently about it. He replied: "It hurts less when someone knows."

That sentence carries a deep truth: suffering becomes heavier in isolation.

A man once said after a long illness: "I stopped praying only for healing. I started praying not to be alone."

And sometimes, that is the real miracle—not the removal of the cross, but the presence of love within it.

A neighbour once began simply greeting a man everyone avoided because of his bitterness. Nothing dramatic changed overnight. But slowly, the man softened. The burden did not disappear—but it was no longer carried alone.

That is already grace.

4. When love reshapes priorities

Jesus also speaks of family and priority: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

This is not a rejection of family. It is a purification of love.

A young woman once felt called to religious life. Her family resisted strongly. It was not lack of love—it was conflict

between two loves. Years later, healing came, but only after tears and time.

Or a young man who chose to become a social worker instead of taking over the family business. The decision caused tension for years. Yet eventually, reconciliation came—because love had been purified, not destroyed.

When God is first, everything else is not less loved—but more rightly loved.

#### 5. Hospitality: where faith becomes visible

And then Jesus shifts the focus in a surprising direction: hospitality.

“Whoever receives you receives me... even a cup of cold water will not lose its reward.”

A missionary once said that a child who gave him a chipped cup of water in a dry region gave him the most refreshing drink of his life.

A teacher once left an extra sandwich on her desk each morning “by mistake” for a hungry student. Years later, that

student said: “It wasn’t the food. It was the feeling that I mattered.”

Hospitality is not about size. It is about presence.

A grandmother once told her grandson: “Every time you welcome someone, you make space for God.”

That is not poetry. It is theology lived in ordinary life.

#### 6. The quiet revolution of ordinary faith

Most discipleship is not dramatic.

It is the parent who remains patient at the end of a long day. The volunteer who continues showing up without recognition. The elderly man who still cycles to Mass despite pain because, as he says, “that is where I remember who I am.”

It is the teacher who defends a bullied student. The neighbour who finally decides to greet someone everyone else avoids. The caregiver who discovers that she is not only serving—but being transformed.

One man who worked in a shelter said: “I thought I was helping people. I didn’t expect to feel welcomed myself.”

That is the Gospel turning direction.

#### 7. Solid wood faith: what endures

At the deepest level, today’s Gospel is not about heroism. It is about authenticity.

Faith like solid wood does not mean perfection. It means integrity—what is inside is not different from what is seen outside.

A carpenter once restored a damaged wooden beam in an old house. Instead of replacing it immediately, he strengthened it from within. “If I remove it too quickly,” he said, “the house falls. If I strengthen it, it can hold again.”

That is what Christ does with human life. Not always removing the cross, but strengthening what carries it.

And often, He does it through others.

A traveller once arrived late at a small rural inn after a long journey. The inn was simple, almost poor. The innkeeper brought him a bowl of soup and bread without ceremony.

The traveller ate quietly and then asked, “Do many people pass through here?”

The innkeeper smiled: “Only those who are hungry.”

After a pause he added, “But I have learned something—no one who comes here is ever only hungry for food.”

The traveller later said that night stayed with him more than any luxury hotel he had ever visited.

Because in that simple act of welcome, he had encountered something real.

Not performance. Not appearance.

But humanity at its best—and God quietly present within it.

Amen.

## INVITATION TO THE CREDO

Having heard the Word that calls us to a faith that is solid,  
enduring, and real—  
a faith that holds firm under pressure and is expressed in  
concrete love and hospitality—  
let us now profess together the faith of the Church,  
that has carried believers through every storm and every  
age.

## ALTERNATIVE CREDO (for personal meditation only)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
who is not distant from my struggles,  
but present in every storm that shakes what I thought was  
stable,  
and who calls me to a faith that is real, not only on the  
surface.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord,  
who did not avoid the weight of the cross,  
but entered fully into human fragility,

to show that love is stronger than suffering,  
and that what is surrendered to God is never lost.

I believe that He walks with me in what is difficult,  
and meets me in the small and hidden places of life—  
in the stranger welcomed, the weary listened to,  
and the simple cup of water given in love.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens what is weak within me,  
and teaches me to live not by appearance,  
but with a faith that endures when tested.

I believe that the Church is called to be a home of real  
encounter,  
where even small acts of love become places where God  
is present,  
and where I am formed to live not for myself alone.

I believe that my life is held by God  
even when it feels like it is being stretched or shaken,  
and that true life is found in fidelity, love, and trust.

Amen.

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

As we bring before the Lord these gifts of bread and wine,  
let us also bring the offering of our lives—sometimes  
fragile, sometimes tested,  
but longing to be made solid in Christ, who turns simple  
gifts and simple hearts into instruments of His love.  
Pray, brothers and sisters...

## **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord, accept the gifts we place upon your altar,  
and transform them—and us—into what we are called to  
be: not polished appearance alone, but living truth;  
not fragile veneer, but faith strengthened in Christ.

May these offerings become for us  
a sign that your grace sustains what is weak,  
and builds up what is broken,  
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 Jesus Christ you reveal a love that does  
not remain distant or superficial,  
but enters the depth of human life,  
where crosses are carried, storms are faced, and hearts  
are tested.

In Him, you show us that true discipleship is not imitation  
or appearance, but a life rooted in truth—solid as wood  
that does not break under pressure, faith that endures  
because it is held by your grace.

Through Him, you teach us that even the smallest act of  
hospitality becomes an encounter with you,  
and that no cup of cold water given in love is ever  
forgotten.

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

## **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

Trusting in the God who does not abandon us in the storm, but strengthens us to endure and teaches us to love in truth, we dare to pray as Christ our Lord has taught us:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, especially from the temptation to live a faith that is only appearance, without depth, without endurance, without the strength of the cross.

In your mercy, strengthen what is weak in us, as solid wood is strengthened to carry weight, so that in the storms of life we may not collapse in fear or superficiality, but remain steadfast in Christ who carries us and calls us forward.

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 await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the peace that holds firm when all human strength fails, the presence that steadies us in suffering and unites us in love.

Look not on our divisions or our weaknesses, but on the faith you have planted in us, that even when fragile, may grow strong in charity.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the One who does not remain distant but comes close to us in our weakness, who strengthens what is fragile and makes firm what is shaken.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

We have received not only bread for the journey,  
but the presence of the One who walks with us in every  
storm.

Christ does not always remove the weight we carry,  
but He transforms how we carry it.

In Him, even the smallest act of love becomes eternal,  
and even a wounded faith can become strong and real—  
like solid wood held in the hands of God.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by your Sacrament, O Lord,  
we pray that what we have received in mystery  
may take root in our daily lives.

Strengthen us where we are weak,  
make us faithful where we are tempted to superficiality,  
and teach us to recognize you in the simple acts of love  
that build your Kingdom among us.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is our firm foundation in every storm,  
strengthen your faith when it is tested,  
deepen your love when it grows weary,  
and make your lives steadfast and true.  
May He bless you with courage to carry your cross,  
and with joy to recognize Him in every act of love and  
hospitality.

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

## DISMISSAL

Go forth, not as people of appearance, but as people of  
truth. Go forth, carrying a faith that is solid,  
and a love that is visible in small and faithful acts.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Faith becomes real not when it is seen,  
but when it is lived— in the storm, in the cross, and in the  
quiet welcome of another human being.

29 June 2026 – Mon., 13th Week in Ord. Time

Sts. Peter and Paul

Day: Acts 12,1-11; 2 Tim 4,6-8;. 17-18; Mt 16,13-19

Red thread: *“Called by Christ, different yet one.”*

## INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, two artists stood on opposite sides of a wide river, each painting the same city. One captured the bustle of the harbour, the other the quiet glow of evening light on the cathedral towers. When they later compared their work, they were surprised: the colours, angles, and details were completely different—yet together they revealed a fuller beauty than either could have seen alone. Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, two great artists of the Gospel, so to speak, whose lives were painted with very different colours by the Lord himself. Like those painters, they looked at the same Christ but from very different life experiences.

Peter, the fisherman from Galilee, and Paul, the learned Pharisee of Tarsus, became the twin pillars of the Church in Rome. Their paths, personalities, and missions differed greatly, yet both were chosen and shaped by Christ for the

same Gospel.

Brothers and sisters,  
the Lord Jesus calls diverse and fragile disciples and unites them in his saving love.

Yet we often resist communion, prefer uniformity, and fail to recognise his work in those who are different from us. Let us acknowledge our sins and ask for healing and reconciliation.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you called Peter from his nets and Paul from his zeal: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you unite what is divided and make one Church from many gifts: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you ask us as you asked Peter, “Do you love me?” and send us as witnesses: Lord, have mercy.

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
who calls the fragile and the fervent alike into the communion of his Church, forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

## INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

With hearts made new in mercy,  
let us join the song of the angels,  
praising the God who calls the different into one  
communion of glory.

## COLLECT

O God, who in the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul  
have given your Church two different yet complementary  
witnesses of faith,  
grant, we pray,  
that we who are strengthened by their teaching and  
example  
may learn to embrace the diversity of your gifts in one  
Spirit  
and be united in the confession of the one Christ.  
Help us to see in one another not rivalry or contrast, but  
the richness of your own calling.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son...  
Amen.

## HOMILY

The gospel today brings us to Caesarea Philippi, where  
Peter makes his bold confession: “You are the Christ, the  
Son of the living God.” It is a moment of insight, not from  
human calculation but from divine revelation. And yet, this  
same Peter will soon misunderstand Jesus’ mission and  
even deny him. The rock is also fragile stone.

Paul, for his part, comes to faith in a very different way. He  
does not walk with Jesus in Galilee or hear him teach the  
crowds. Instead, he encounters the risen Lord on the road  
to Damascus while pursuing those very Christians he once  
persecuted. From that moment, everything changes: the  
persecutor becomes the preacher, the enemy becomes the  
apostle.

The first reading shows Peter imprisoned by Herod, yet  
miraculously freed through the prayer of the Church. The  
second reading presents Paul at the end of his life, saying,  
“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I  
have kept the faith.” One is being rescued; the other is  
preparing for martyrdom. Yet both are held in the same

hand of God.

Their paths even crossed in tension. Paul himself tells us that he once opposed Peter when he saw inconsistency in the early Church's practice. These were not idealised saints floating above reality. They struggled, argued, and saw things differently. Yet neither allowed difference to become division from Christ.

And that is the hidden thread: Christ does not erase their differences; he redeems them. Peter becomes the sign of unity and pastoral authority; Paul becomes the missionary voice to the nations. One receives the "keys," the other travels the world with the message. Together they show that the Church is not built on sameness but on communion.

Their deaths seal this unity. Tradition tells us both were martyred in Rome under Nero, each giving their life for the same Lord in very different ways. Their tombs, now beneath great basilicas, still quietly preach that faithfulness matters more than uniformity.

The Church today, like in their time, carries many voices,

cultures, and perspectives. The temptation is either to impose uniformity or to allow division. But Peter and Paul point to another way: unity rooted not in similarity, but in Christ who calls and holds both together.

There is a story told of two lighthouses standing on different headlands guarding the same harbour. One shone with a steady white beam, the other with a rotating light that swept the sea. Sailors once wondered why two such different signals were needed. But those who knew the coast understood: in stormy nights, one light alone was not enough. Together, they guided ships safely home.

So it is with Peter and Paul. So it is with the Church. So it is with us.

And when the Lord asks each of us, as he asked Peter, "Do you love me?", he is not asking for perfection, but for fidelity. In that love—sometimes strong, sometimes fragile—the Lord continues to build his Church.

## **INVITATION TO THE CREED**

Let us profess the faith of the Apostles,  
the faith handed on through Peter's confession and Paul's  
preaching, one faith in Christ who unites his Church.

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

As Peter and Paul offered their lives entirely for the  
Gospel, let us now offer these gifts in thanksgiving,  
that the Lord may unite us more deeply in the one sacrifice  
of Christ and pray that it may be acceptable to god the  
Father almighty.

## **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord, accept the sacrifice we offer on this feast of your  
Apostles Peter and Paul, and as you united them in one  
mission despite their differences, so gather us into deeper  
communion with you and with one another.

May these gifts of bread and wine become for us the sign  
that your Church is built not on uniformity, but on faithful  
love. 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 built your Church upon the foundation of the  
Apostles, choosing Peter as the rock of unity  
and Paul as the herald of the nations, so that through their  
diverse gifts the one Gospel of your Son might reach the  
ends of the earth.

In their different histories and encounters with your Son,  
you revealed that no background or path lies outside your  
call.

In their weakness you revealed your strength;  
in their difference you manifested communion;  
and in their martyrdom you sealed their witness in one  
love.

And so you continue to form a Church where diversity  
becomes harmony, and tension is transformed into  
mission.

And so, with Angels and Archangels...

## **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

United in the one Spirit who binds together Peter and Paul,  
let us pray to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
and grant peace in our days,  
that through the intercession of the Apostles Peter and  
Paul, who were once divided in outlook yet united in faith,  
we may be kept free from sin and safeguarded in unity,  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ, you prayed that your disciples may be  
one as you are one with the Father;  
look not on our divisions, but on the faith of your Church,  
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance  
with your will.  
Heal in us the temptation to divide what you have joined,  
and make us builders of communion in your name.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God, who calls together Peter's  
confession and Paul's mission into one table of grace.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

The same Lord who transformed a fisherman into a  
shepherd and a persecutor into an apostle  
now comes to us in humility.  
He does not erase our differences but heals them in love,  
so that we too may become signs of unity for a divided  
world.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

May this sacrament we have received, O Lord,  
strengthen us in that same faith and charity  
which united the Apostles Peter and Paul,  
so that, though many in gifts, we may be one in your  
service. And as you nourished them through trials and  
difference, sustain us in fidelity to your call.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## FINAL BLESSING

May God, who founded his Church on the witness of the Apostles, protect you by their intercession and make you steadfast in faith. Amen.

May he who made Peter the rock and Paul the herald build you up in unity and send you forth in mission. Amen.

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

## DISMISSAL

Go forth,  
united in Christ though diverse in gifts,  
to proclaim with your lives the faith of the Apostles.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Christ does not call us to be the same,  
but to be one in him—  
like Peter and Paul,  
different in path, united in love,  
and faithful unto the end.

30 June, 2026 – Tuesday, 13th Week in Ord. Time  
*Amos 3, 1-8. 4,11-12; Mt 8,23-27*

Red Thread: *“Christ remains with us in every storm”*

## INTRODUCTION

A commuter once shared how a routine morning train ride suddenly turned unsettling when an emergency announcement halted the journey mid-route. People looked up from their phones, uncertain, asking one another what had happened. Nothing visible had changed outside the windows, yet anxiety filled the carriages. The interruption exposed how quickly ordinary life can shift into uncertainty without warning.

On this 30th June, the Church also remembers the First Martyrs of the Church of Rome, those early Christians whose quiet faith was suddenly tested by violent persecution. Their witness reminds us that faith is often not lived in calm certainty, but in unexpected disruption and trial.

The prophet Amos in today's first reading reminds us that nothing in history escapes God's gaze: "Does disaster befall a city unless the Lord has caused it?" It is a sobering reminder that even when life feels chaotic, God is not absent, and His word continues to call us to conversion. In the Gospel, we will see how sudden fear can rise even among those who walk closely with Jesus. As we prepare to hear His word, we acknowledge the times we too have panicked, doubted, or failed to trust. We turn now to the Lord who is always present, even when He seems silent, and ask for His mercy and peace.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS**

You raise the storm within us when we forget your presence: Lord, have mercy.

You calm the raging seas of fear by your word of peace: Christ, have mercy.

You awaken our faith when we are overwhelmed by doubt: Lord, have mercy.

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May the Lord Jesus Christ, who stilled the wind and the waves and strengthened the fearful hearts of His disciples, grant us pardon and peace; and by His authority free us from all that separates us from trust in His presence and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

### **COLLECT**

O God, who in the uncertainty of life do not abandon your people but remain present in every trial, grant us, we pray, a faith that does not yield to fear, but holds fast to your Son who is with us in the storm. May we recognize your voice even when all seems silent, and rest in your saving power. 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 child once fell asleep during a long car journey through the countryside. When the car suddenly hit a rough patch of road and began to shake, the child woke up frightened, convinced something terrible had happened. The parent, however, simply steadied the wheel and continued driving, calm and in control. What felt like chaos to the child was still fully under the care of one who knew the road.

In today's Gospel, the disciples find themselves in a very similar situation. A sudden storm breaks over the Sea of Galilee, and their boat is being swamped by waves. Panic sets in. They cry out: "Lord, save us! We are going down!" Yet Jesus is asleep. His sleep is not indifference, but the deep trust of the Son resting in the Father. When He awakens, He rebukes the wind and the sea, and there is calm. Then comes His gentle but searching question: "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?"

This is the tension of faith that Matthew highlights so often—between fear and trust, panic and surrender. The disciples are not unbelievers; they are people "of little

faith," as many of us are. Faith, in this sense, is not the absence of fear, but the decision not to be ruled by it.

Amos' words in the first reading sharpen this message. God is not distant from human history; He speaks, warns, and calls. "The lion has roared—who will not fear?" Yet this divine voice is not meant to terrify but to awaken hearts. Even judgment is a form of divine engagement, a call back to trust and covenant.

The First Martyrs of Rome understood this in the most radical way. Faced with persecution, they did not see chaos as abandonment. Their suffering became a testimony that even in the "storm" of violence and fear, Christ remains Lord. Their courage was not rooted in human strength but in a faith that God was still present in the boat of His Church.

Jesus still speaks into our storms today. He does not always remove them immediately, but He always remains present within them. The real question is not whether storms will come—they will—but whether we believe He is with us in them.

A woman once stood at the shore after a violent storm had passed through her coastal town. Boats were damaged, nets torn, and fear still lingered in the air. Yet she pointed to one small fishing boat that had survived, anchored firmly behind a rocky outcrop. “That one made it,” she said quietly, “because it stayed close to the rock.”

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

Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice, united with the quiet trust of Christ who calms every storm, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Receive, O Lord, the gifts we bring in faith amid the storms of life, and transform them into the sacrament of your abiding presence. As you once calmed the sea, calm also our restless hearts, that we may offer you not only these gifts but our full trust and surrender. 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 are present not only in moments of peace but also in the tempests of human history. In Christ your Son, you have shown that no storm can separate us from your love. He is the One who sleeps in the boat yet reigns over the waters; who shares our fear yet commands the wind and sea.

Through Him you awaken faith in the hearts of the fearful, and reveal your glory even in the midst of trial. 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**

In every storm that unsettles our hearts, we have learned that we are not alone in the boat, for Christ remains with us. With confidence in His presence and with the trust of

children who know the Father does not abandon them, we pray in the words Jesus Himself taught us:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, especially from fear that blinds us to your presence in the storms of life. Graciously grant peace in our days, that, strengthened by the calm authority of Christ who stills the wind and the sea, we may remain steadfast in faith and never be overwhelmed by doubt or despair, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ, who in the midst of the storm spoke peace to the troubled sea and calm to fearful hearts, do not look upon our lack of faith, but upon the trust of your Church, and graciously grant her unity and peace in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the One who is present in our boat even when we do not perceive Him; who feeds us in the storm so that we may not lose heart. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

We have received the Lord who neither abandons nor forgets His people. Like the disciples in the boat, we are reminded that His presence does not always remove the storm, but always transforms it into a place of encounter. What once was fear becomes trust; what was chaos becomes a place where faith can awaken.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant us, O Lord, who have been nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son, the grace to remain steadfast in faith amid every trial of life. May this holy communion strengthen us to recognize your presence in all circumstances, and to trust that you are always with us in the storm. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus, who calmed the raging sea and strengthened the wavering faith of His disciples, strengthen your hearts in every trial, and grant you a trust that does not fail in the storms of life. And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, trusting that Christ remains with you in every storm.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Faith does not mean the absence of storms, but the certainty that Christ is in the boat with us.

1 July, 2026 – Wed. 13th Week in Ord. Time

*Amos 5,14-15. 21-24; Mt 8,28-34*

Red thread: *“When liberation disturbs, we choose comfort over freedom.”*

## INTRODUCTION

A builder once told of a homeowner who hired him to renovate an old, unsafe house. Yet every time he began removing rotten wood or tearing down unsafe structures, the owner stopped him. “Leave that part as it is,” she would say, even when it clearly endangered the rest of the house. In the end, very little was actually changed—because the discomfort of transformation felt greater than the danger of remaining the same.

On this day the Church remembers Saint Oliver Plunkett, bishop and martyr, who refused to compromise truth even when it cost him his life. He chose integrity over comfort, and justice over convenience, becoming a witness to a faith that does not bend to pressure or fear.

The Scriptures today place before us a similar tension: through the prophet Amos, God rejects empty ritual and

demands justice; and in the Gospel, Christ brings liberation, only to be rejected by those who prefer the familiar presence of what is broken.

There are moments when we too resist God's healing because it disturbs our arrangements. We cling to what is known, even when it diminishes life. For these moments of resistance to grace, we turn to the Lord with contrite hearts and ask for pardon and mercy:

### **PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS**

Lord Jesus Christ, you come among us not to confirm our comfort but to set us free, even when your healing disturbs what we have grown used to.

Lord, have mercy.

You confront every form of brokenness that we have learned to tolerate, calling us to truth and conversion.

Christ, have mercy.

You reveal a kingdom where justice flows like living water, even when we prefer the stillness of compromise.

Lord, have mercy.

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

In the mercy of God, who continually calls us out of what confines us and heals what we resist within us, let us entrust ourselves to his forgiveness with humble hearts. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

### **COLLECT**

O God, who in your Son Jesus Christ confront every power that binds and distorts your people, and who desire not empty worship but hearts converted to justice and truth, grant us the grace to welcome your disturbing freedom rather than cling to comfortable captivity, so that, like Saint Oliver Plunkett, we may choose integrity over convenience and fidelity over fear.

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

## HOMILY

A parish priest once visited a small coastal village after a season of unrest. He spent days helping families reconcile, encouraging forgiveness, and praying with those most affected. Yet instead of gratitude, he sensed distance. People were polite but avoidant. Eventually, one elder told him gently, “Father, things were simpler before you came. We prefer how it was.” His presence had not harmed them—but it unsettled arrangements they had grown used to.

This is not far from today’s Gospel. Jesus enters the region of the Gadarenes and meets two violently disturbed men living among the tombs—feared, avoided, excluded. Yet Jesus does not turn away. He heals them, restores them to their humanity. And then comes the shock: the townspeople beg Jesus to leave their region.

On this Wednesday of the Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time, and the memorial of Saint Oliver Plunkett, we face a hard truth. Oliver Plunkett remained faithful when society preferred silence over justice, and today’s Gospel shows a

similar rejection of inconvenient goodness. The people would rather live with manageable brokenness than a power that might change everything.

“When liberation disturbs, we choose comfort over freedom.” The demoniacs are healed, but the town cannot accept what this implies. If Jesus restores such lives, no one remains untouched. God’s presence is never neutral—it calls for conversion.

The prophet Amos is just as clear: “Let justice roll down like waters.” God is not interested in worship that leaves life unchanged. Ritual without conversion becomes noise; praise without justice becomes emptiness.

The real question is not whether Jesus can heal—he can—but whether we are willing to let him stay when his healing unsettles our arrangements. The Gospel shows a town that prefers tombs to transformation.

A missionary once worked in a troubled institution where dysfunction had become normal. When reforms began, tensions rose, and eventually some asked for his removal. One later admitted, “He didn’t do anything wrong. It’s just

that when he started fixing things, we realized we would have to change too.” That is often the choice: comfort or conversion.

“When liberation disturbs, we choose comfort over freedom.” The call of Christ, echoed in Amos and witnessed by Saint Oliver Plunkett, is to let God’s justice and healing remain among us—even when it unsettles us. Only then can what is broken be restored.

And once, in a village church after a storm, a mason found the structure built on unstable ground. To repair it, much had to come down. The parishioners watched uneasily as stone after stone was removed. But he said, “If we keep what is weak, the whole church will fall.” After weeks, the wall stood again—stronger than before, able to hold light instead of fear.

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

As we bring before the Lord these gifts of bread and wine, let us ask him to free us from every attachment that resists his transforming grace, so that our offering may become a sign of hearts open to true conversion, and pray that they may be acceptable to God the Father almighty.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord, look with favour upon these offerings we place upon your altar,  
and cleanse us from the desire to preserve what is broken rather than receive what is healed,  
so that, transformed by your grace, we may become a people who live not for comfort but for your liberating truth.  
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 entered into the places of our fear and resistance, you have come among those who dwell among the tombs of our brokenness,  
and you have not withdrawn from the cost of healing, even when it is rejected.

In him you reveal a love that disturbs what is unjust,  
a mercy that refuses to leave us as we are,  
and a truth that calls us beyond the safety of familiar

chains into the freedom of your kingdom.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, including Saint Oliver Plunkett who bore witness even unto death, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord...

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

Let us pray with confidence to the Father, who does not abandon us to what enslaves us, but leads us into the freedom of his kingdom:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, especially from the fear of conversion that makes us prefer familiar brokenness to the freedom you offer.

Graciously grant peace in our days, that we may not resist the disturbing grace of your Son who heals and restores, even when it unsettles our arrangements.

By the help of your mercy, keep us free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ, who confront fear with healing and disturbance with peace,  
look not upon our reluctance to change, but upon the faith of your Church,  
and graciously grant her unity and peace, so that freed from the fear of conversion, we may live in the freedom of your truth.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God, who does not leave us in the tombs of our brokenness, but comes to heal, to challenge, and to restore; blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

The Lord has entered even our places of resistance and quiet compromise.

He does not destroy us, but rebuilds what is weak, calling us beyond the comfort of what is familiar into the strength of what is true. To receive him is to accept transformation.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

O Lord, who have nourished us with the Body and Blood of your Son, grant that what we have received may not leave us unchanged or secure in old patterns, but may strengthen us to embrace your liberating will, even when it disturbs our comfort. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## **FINAL BLESSING**

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, who calls you beyond fear;  
the Son, who heals and restores even when resisted;  
and the Holy Spirit, who leads you into the freedom of truth. Amen.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go forth in peace, trusting not in what is familiar, but in the Lord who disturbs our comfort in order to heal what is broken and lead us into true freedom.

## **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

When God's liberation disturbs our comfort, the question is not whether he is present—but whether we will let him stay long enough to make us new.

2 July, 2026 – Thursday, 13th Week in Ord. Time

*Amos 7,10-17; Mt 9,1-8*

*“We are carried by the faith that carries us.”*

## **INTRODUCTION**

On a cold evening in a busy city hospital, a nurse noticed an elderly man sitting quietly beside a wheelchair, holding the hand of a younger patient. The younger man was anxious, unable to speak much, but the elderly companion kept whispering: “You are not alone. I am here with you.” Later, the nurse learned they were not related. The older man had simply met him in the waiting room and decided, without explanation, to stay. That quiet companionship stayed in her memory longer than many dramatic medical recoveries.

The Church today remembers Saint Bernardino Realino, a Jesuit priest known for his patient care of the sick and his tireless ministry in bringing people back to peace with God. Like him, we are invited to notice the hidden ways grace moves through ordinary acts of presence and fidelity.

Today’s Gospel of the paralysed man lowered through the roof reminds us that God often works through the faith of others who refuse to let us remain where we are. And so the red thread running through our reflection is this: we are carried by the faith that carries us—a faith that lifts, restores, and opens paths we cannot walk alone.

As we gather for this Eucharist, we recognize moments when we have needed others to believe for us, to pray for us, or simply to stand by us. We also recognize moments when we have failed to be that support for others. With humble hearts, we prepare now to enter into the penitential act, asking the Lord to forgive what has weakened our communion and to renew in us the faith that carries us together.

## **PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS**

You who come to heal the broken-hearted and restore the sinner: Lord, have mercy.

You who forgive sins and lift the weight of what paralyses us within: Christ, have mercy.

You who make us one body, called to bear one another in faith: Lord, have mercy.

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the Lord Jesus Christ, who sees the faith that carries the weak and raises those who are burdened, forgive us all that has made us hesitant to trust in him or to support one another.

May he heal what is paralysed within us, restore us to communion, and lead us by his mercy from isolation into the freedom of his grace and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

## COLLECT

O God, who in your Son reveal the power of faith that lifts the burdened and restores the broken, teach us to recognize how often we are carried by the quiet fidelity of others, and make us willing instruments of that same mercy for those who cannot walk alone.

Grant that, supported by your grace, we may rise from whatever binds us and follow you with freedom of heart. 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 boy once tried to drag his broken toy truck across a playground, frustrated because one wheel kept locking. An older child came over, knelt down, and without many words simply lifted the front so it could move again.

Nothing was fully repaired, yet everything became possible again. Sometimes that is enough.

In today's Gospel (Mt 9:1-8), a paralysed man is brought to Jesus by people who refuse to let him remain cut off from hope. The striking detail is that Jesus "saw their faith"—not first the man's, but the faith of those who carried him. Here lies a profound truth: we are carried by the faith that carries us.

None of us comes to Christ alone. We are brought by others—by family, by friends, by the quiet fidelity of a community. And when our own faith weakens, it is often the steady faith of others that keeps us close to the Lord. Jesus first says, "Courage, child, your sins are forgiven," revealing that the deepest paralysis is interior: guilt, discouragement, separation from God. Only then comes

physical healing. Saint Bernardino Realino, whom we remember today, lived this mystery through his ministry of reconciliation, helping many rise again through forgiveness. Yet the Gospel also turns toward us: we are not only the ones carried, but also the carriers. Someone near us may depend on our patience, prayer, and perseverance without us even knowing it.

The friends who lower the man through the roof remind us that faith is never solitary. We hold one another before God. And so Jesus' final word—"Rise, and go home"—is not only healing, but restoration to belonging. No one is meant to remain alone on the edge of life.

We are carried by the faith that carries us—and called to become that faith for others.

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

As the friends in the Gospel did not hesitate to bring the paralysed man to Christ, so let us now bring before the Lord the needs of the Church and the world, trusting that what we cannot lift alone, faith can still carry to the altar.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord, accept the gifts we bring before you,  
and through this holy sacrifice  
strengthen the faith that carries us when our own strength fails.

May these offerings unite us more deeply as one body,  
ever ready to lift one another toward 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 in your Son you reveal that no one comes to healing alone, but that faith is shared, transmitted, and made visible in love.

You have chosen to let us be instruments of one another's hope, so that the weary may be lifted, the burdened may be carried, and the separated may be restored to communion.

Through Christ, you show us that even hidden acts of fidelity become the path by which grace enters a life.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,  
we praise your glory, as without end we acclaim:  
Holy, Holy, Holy...

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

Trusting not in our own strength but in the faith that carries us, let us pray as the Lord himself has taught us:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
and graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, strengthened by the faith of those who carry us and  
those we are called to carry,  
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 restored the paralysed man to wholeness and gathered him back into the life of communion, look not on our lack of courage or our hesitation to support one another,  
but on the faith that builds your Church into one body.  
Grant us the peace that comes from being lifted and from lifting others. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The Lord does not leave us where we are,  
but draws us into communion that heals and restores.  
Behold the Lamb of God...  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

We have received the Body of Christ,  
the One who is lowered into our brokenness so that we  
might be raised with him.  
Now we are sent as carriers of that same mercy,  
bearing one another in silence, patience, and faith.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Nourished by this holy Sacrament, O Lord,  
we humbly ask that, strengthened by your grace,  
we may continue to support one another in faith  
and be lifted whenever we are weighed down by  
weakness.

Teach us to recognize in every act of quiet fidelity the work  
of your own hand among us. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## **FINAL BLESSING**

May God, who strengthens the weak and raises the fallen,  
fill your hearts with the faith that carries and restores.

May he make you attentive to those who depend on your  
quiet fidelity,

and generous in carrying others toward Christ.

And may the blessing of almighty God,

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

come down on you and remain with you for ever.

Amen.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go now and be for one another the faith that carries,  
so that none may be left alone on the way to Christ.

## **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

We are never closer to Christ than when we allow  
ourselves to be carried by faith—and when we become  
that faith for someone else.

3 July, 2026 – Friday, 13th Week in Ord. Time

St. Thomas, Apostle

*Eph 2, 19-22; Jn 20, 24-29*

Red thread: *From doubt to deeper faith*

## INTRODUCTION

A civil engineer once recalled overseeing the restoration of an old bridge that had partially collapsed after a storm.

Many insisted it should simply be demolished and replaced. Yet, one elderly worker kept pointing to its original foundations, insisting they were still sound. Against advice, they began carefully rebuilding from what remained. Over time, what seemed destined for ruin became a renewed structure, stronger in certain parts than before.

Today the Church celebrates the feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle, a man who also knew what it was to question whether anything solid still remained after collapse—especially after the death of Jesus.

In the first reading (Eph 2:19–22), Paul speaks of believers being “built into a dwelling place of God,” with Christ as the

cornerstone. This image of a living temple reminds us that faith is not static certainty but a growing structure, sometimes repaired in places where doubt has weakened the stones.

Like Thomas, we too are sometimes unsure whether what we believe can still stand in the face of experience, suffering, or silence. Yet the Lord does not abandon unfinished buildings. He comes to dwell within them and restore them from within.

Brothers and sisters, like Saint Thomas who struggled to believe without seeing, we acknowledge before God those moments when our faith has been shaken by doubt, disappointment, or silence. Yet the Lord does not reject the questioning heart; he meets it with peace and patience, as he did in the upper room.

Trusting in his mercy, let us call to mind our sins and ask for healing and renewal.

## **PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS**

Lord Jesus, you enter the locked places of our fear and doubt: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you show your wounds as the path to faith: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you lead us from uncertainty into the confession of your divinity: Lord, have mercy.

## **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May the God who did not turn away from Thomas in his searching, but came to meet him in the very place of his doubt, look with mercy upon us as well.

May he heal what is fractured in our trust,  
quiet what is restless in our questioning,  
and gently rebuild within us a faith that is not afraid to seek, but strong enough to recognize his presence in our midst.

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

## **COLLECT**

O God, who in the Apostle Saint Thomas lead the hesitant heart to the fullness of faith through the encounter with the risen Christ, grant us the grace to bring our doubts before you without fear, so that what is fragile in us may be strengthened by your presence, and what is broken may be rebuilt in the light of your truth.

May we, like living stones, be firmly joined to Christ, the cornerstone, and grow into a dwelling place where your Spirit abides.

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.

## **INVITATION TO THE GLORIA**

With hearts touched by the mercy that meets us in our doubts and restores our faith, let us now give voice to the Church's joyful hymn of praise, glorifying the God who turns hesitation into worship:

*Glory to God in the highest...*

## HOMILY

A young medical student once refused to accept a diagnosis in a textbook because it did not match what she had seen in the hospital ward. “I need to see it myself,” she kept saying. When she finally encountered a real patient with the exact condition, her hesitation did not disappear instantly—but it turned into understanding. What she had questioned became what she now understood and could articulate with conviction.

Thomas in today’s Gospel stands exactly at that threshold between refusal and recognition. He will not accept the testimony of the other disciples—“Unless I see the mark of the nails...” (Jn 20:25). His doubt is not casual disbelief; it is the insistence of someone who wants reality, not hearsay. And the risen Lord does not dismiss him. He enters into Thomas’s conditions and offers his wounds as the place of encounter.

Here we see something profound about Saint Thomas the Apostle, whose feast we celebrate: he is not only the “doubter,” but the one who is led through doubt into one of

the most luminous confessions of faith in all Scripture: “*My Lord and my God!*” Thomas shows us that faith is not the absence of questioning but the transformation of questioning through encounter with Christ.

Saint Paul’s image of the Church as a building “joined together” (Eph 2:21) helps us understand this journey. Even broken stones can become part of God’s dwelling. Doubt, when brought honestly before the Lord, does not exclude us from the Church’s life; it can become part of how God strengthens the structure of faith itself. The risen Christ does not reject Thomas’s questions; he gathers them into a deeper communion.

And this is why Jesus’ words are not a rebuke but an invitation: “Do not be unbelieving, but believe” (Jn 20:27). The Lord does not shame the seeker; he meets him. In fact, as Pope John Paul II reflected, faith and reason are not enemies but companions—each purifying and strengthening the other as we search for truth.

The journey of Thomas mirrors the journey of many believers: from confident expectations, through

disillusionment, into a slow and sometimes painful rebuilding of trust. Yet the Gospel insists that the Risen One is already present in that very process. Faith matures not by avoiding doubt but by allowing Christ to enter it.

A retired fisherman once told how, after a violent storm at sea, he could no longer trust the charts he had used for decades. For weeks he sailed cautiously, always uncertain, always checking the horizon. One morning, in the stillness after dawn, he noticed a familiar lighthouse standing exactly where it had always been. He said he never stopped having questions about the sea—but from that day, he never doubted the light that guided him home.

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

Brothers and sisters, as Thomas brought his questions into the presence of the risen Lord, so let us now bring before God our lives—our faith that is certain and our faith that is still searching—trusting that he receives all we offer and transforms it in love, pray now that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Father almighty.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Lord, accept the gifts we bring with both confidence and uncertainty, and by the grace of this sacrifice, strengthen what is weak in our faith.

May these offerings unite us more closely to Christ, the living cornerstone, so that we may be built up in love and truth as your dwelling place among us.

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 you do not abandon us in the night of doubt, but in your Son Jesus Christ you draw near to every searching heart.

In the Apostle Thomas you reveal that even hesitation can become a path to deeper faith,

when it is met by the living presence of the risen Lord.

For Christ does not reject those who seek him with questions,

but enters into their uncertainty, showing his wounds as signs of mercy and life.

Thus you gather a people once scattered by fear and unbelief and build them into a living temple, founded on Christ the cornerstone.

And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we proclaim your glory as with one voice we sing: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

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

With confidence renewed by the risen Christ who does not turn away from our weakness, but draws us into his peace, let us pray together as he himself has taught us:

### **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and in particular from the paralysis of doubt that keeps us from trusting your risen Son.  
Grant peace in our days, that we may not remain closed in fear or locked in uncertainty, but be opened by the presence of Christ who comes among us with his wounds of love.

In your mercy, keep us 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 said to your Apostles, "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you," look not on our wavering hearts but on the faith you are forming within us, and graciously grant us the peace that grows from trust in your risen presence.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God who meets us even in our questions and feeds us with his life.  
Blessed are those who, like Thomas, seek not only signs but the living Lord himself.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Having received the Body of Christ, we carry within us the same presence that entered the locked room of fear and doubt. Faith is no longer only a search from afar, but a communion from within. Like Thomas, we are called to move from seeing to believing, and from believing to adoration.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

May this holy sacrament, Lord God,  
nourish in us a faith that endures beyond doubt and trial,  
and deepen our communion with Christ, the living  
cornerstone.  
Grant that, transformed by his presence,  
we may be built ever more firmly into your dwelling place.  
Through Christ our Lord.

## **FINAL BLESSING**

May the Lord, who entered the doubts of Thomas with mercy,  
strengthen your faith when it falters,  
and lead you always from questioning into deeper trust in his love.  
And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go and live no longer in the closed spaces of doubt,  
but in the open light of the risen Christ, who sends you forth as witnesses of faith and peace.

## **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

Faith is not the absence of doubt, but the courage to bring our doubts into the presence of Christ—where they are transformed into worship.

4 July, 2026 – Saturday, 13th Week in Ord. Time  
*Amos 9,11-15; Mt 9,14-17*

Saint Elizabeth of Portugal

*Only new hearts can hold new wine.*

## INTRODUCTION

A vintner once discovered that an old oak barrel in his cellar had a tiny, almost invisible crack. When he poured freshly fermented juice into it, expecting it to mature into fine wine, the barrel began to leak. What should have become a celebration of flavour turned into a slow loss of something precious. He learned that what is new and alive often needs a vessel that can truly hold it.

On this day, the Church remembers Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, a queen who lived in the midst of political conflict yet became a vessel of peace. Instead of allowing old rivalries to harden her heart, she chose reconciliation, quietly mending broken relationships between warring family members and nations. Like a new spirit poured into old tensions, she became a living sign that grace can reshape even the most fractured situations.

In the Gospel, the disciples are questioned about fasting, and Jesus responds with the striking image of the bridegroom at a wedding feast. Joy, not mourning, defines the moment of his presence. Yet beneath the celebration lies a deeper call: something new is being born in the midst of Israel, something that cannot be contained by old patterns alone.

This tension between the old and the new—between what we are used to and what God is doing now—touches our own lives as well. We too can cling to familiar forms while missing the living presence of Christ who still comes as Bridegroom. And so we ask for mercy for the times we have resisted the “new wine” of God’s mercy, and we turn to the Lord in the penitential act, asking for hearts made new.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

You are the Bridegroom who brings joy into weary places:  
Lord, have mercy.

You call us from rigid habits into the freedom of new life:  
Christ, have mercy.

You pour out new wine for hearts made willing to receive it:  
Lord, have mercy.

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
and, as he once renewed broken vessels into instruments  
of grace, forgive us our sins and heal the places in us that  
resist his transforming love, so that we may become new  
wineskins able to hold the joy of his Kingdom, and bring us  
to everlasting life. Amen.

### **COLLECT**

O God, who in your Son Jesus Christ reveal yourself as  
the Bridegroom of a renewed humanity,  
and who call us, like Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, to be  
instruments of reconciliation in divided places,  
pour into our hearts the grace that makes all things new,  
that we may not cling to what is worn out in us,  
but receive with joy the new wine of your Spirit.  
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**

The Gospel today places us at a wedding table rather than  
a place of fasting. Jesus speaks of himself as the  
Bridegroom, and his presence transforms everything into  
celebration. The key phrase running through this mystery  
is simple yet demanding: “new wine for new hearts.” It is a  
phrase that runs like a red thread through both the  
prophets and the Gospel, calling us to recognize that God  
is always doing something fresh.

In the prophecy of Amos, we hear the promise of  
restoration: ruined places rebuilt, lives replanted, and hope  
that once seemed lost now flourishing again. This is not  
nostalgia for what once was; it is the creative fidelity of  
God bringing something new to birth. The Bridegroom of  
the Gospel is the fulfilment of that promise. He does not  
merely repair the past—he renews the future.

The disciples of John the Baptist fast because they live in  
expectation. Jesus’ disciples are questioned because they  
live in the presence of fulfilment. Jesus answers with

wisdom: fasting has its time, but not when the Bridegroom is here. Yet he also points beyond the moment, hinting at the time when he will be taken away, and then fasting will return—but now transformed by resurrection hope.

This is where Saint Elizabeth of Portugal quietly illuminates the Gospel. She lived in a world of political fasting—conflict, suspicion, and division—yet she became a woman of “new wineskins.” Instead of allowing bitterness to ferment, she held peace-making love. Her life shows that “new wine for new hearts” is not an abstract idea but a concrete vocation: to receive God’s reconciling grace without letting it spill through rigid, unyielding structures of resentment.

Even today, the risen Christ remains the Bridegroom in our midst. The Eucharist is the ongoing wedding feast where joy and conversion meet. But we are still learning what it means to be vessels capable of holding his presence. When we cling too tightly to habit without openness, or to

discipline without joy, we risk becoming like brittle skins unable to bear the life God offers.

A story is told of a small village preparing for a wedding feast. The elders insisted on following every detail of the old customs, while the younger villagers suggested adapting the celebration to welcome travellers and strangers passing through. At first there was resistance—“This is not how it has always been done.” But on the day itself, a sudden storm brought unexpected guests seeking shelter. The feast was opened wide, the food shared, the music improvised. And what began as anxiety turned into a celebration no one had imagined—because there was room for new wine in willing hearts.

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

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that our offering may become a vessel of true renewal,  
so that, freed from what is old and lifeless,  
we may be found worthy to receive the newness of Christ’s  
life, and be acceptable to God the Father almighty.

## **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Receive, O Lord, the gifts we bring before you,  
and transform them by your Spirit into the wine of the new  
covenant, that our hearts, once hardened by division and  
fear, may be made supple with mercy and peace.  
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, the Bridegroom of the Church,  
you have come to dwell among your people,  
not to preserve what is passing away, but to make all  
things new.

In him, the promise spoken through the prophets is fulfilled:  
ruins are rebuilt, hope is replanted, and joy takes the place  
of sorrow.

He does not merely patch the old fabric of our lives,  
but pours out the new wine of his Spirit,  
calling us to become new wineskins capable of holding his

grace.

And so, with the 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**

At the Saviour's command  
and formed by divine teaching,  
let us dare to pray for hearts made new and for the coming  
of his Kingdom:

## **EMBOLISM**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
and graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, freed from the old patterns of fear and division,  
we may live as a people renewed by the presence of the  
Bridegroom, always open to the new wine of your Spirit.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

## **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ, who in the midst of conflict and expectation bring the peace that heals and reconciles, look not on our hardness of heart, but on the desire you awaken within us to become new vessels of grace; grant us unity and peace in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Bridegroom who comes to dwell among us, who transforms ordinary bread and wine into the sacrament of his abiding presence. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

We have received the new wine of Christ's love. Now the question remains whether our hearts will remain open vessels or return to rigidity. Like Saint Elizabeth, we are sent to be peacemakers, carrying within us the joy that cannot be contained by old divisions.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, O Lord, that nourished by the gift of this sacrament, we may become new wineskins for your grace, and bear in our daily lives the reconciling joy of your Son. May this communion also strengthen in us the courage to let go of what has become rigid, so that your Spirit may freely renew us each day. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **FINAL BLESSING**

May almighty God, who makes all things new in Christ the Bridegroom, enlighten your hearts with the wisdom of his Spirit, and strengthen you to live as instruments of his peace. And may he bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, and become new wineskins for the living Gospel of Christ. **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT** God does not merely repair what is broken—he renews what is willing. The question is not whether the wine is new, but whether our hearts are open enough to receive it.