

19 July, 2026 - 16th Sunday in Ord. Time
Wis 12,13. 16-19; Rom 8,26-27; Mt 13,24-43

INTRODUCTION

Today the Lord speaks to us through the images of a field, a mustard seed, and a little yeast hidden in dough. Jesus reminds us that God works patiently in our world and in our hearts. Wheat and weeds grow together for a time, yet God never stops caring for His field. He sees possibilities where we often see failure.

We live in a world that wants instant results. We can become discouraged by the evil around us, by weaknesses in the Church, in our families, and even within ourselves. Yet today Jesus invites us not to despair. The Kingdom of God often grows quietly, slowly, and invisibly, like a tiny mustard seed becoming a great tree.

The Lord also warns us against harsh judgment. Only God sees the whole truth of every human heart. While we are quick to condemn, God remains patient and merciful, giving time for repentance, healing, and growth.

As we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us

ask forgiveness for the times we have sown discouragement instead of hope, judgment instead of mercy, impatience instead of trust.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus,

You are the patient farmer who never abandons the field of our lives: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus,

You sow the small seed of hope and faith within our hearts: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,

You call us to trust in Your mercy and to persevere in goodness: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who is patient with our weakness, rich in mercy, and always ready to lead us back to Himself, forgive us our sins, strengthen the good He has planted within us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

Because God does not abandon His people but continues to work patiently in our lives and in our world, let us now lift our voices in praise and sing together:

Glory to God in the highest...

COLLECT

O God,
who patiently nurture the seeds of Your Kingdom
within the weakness and struggles of human hearts,
grant us the grace to persevere in faith,
to sow hope in a weary world,
and to trust in Your merciful wisdom
when we cannot yet see the fullness of the harvest.
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 farmer once told the story of a young boy who eagerly wanted to help in the family garden. One morning the boy proudly came running to his grandfather and said, “I pulled out all the weeds!”

The grandfather smiled nervously and walked to the garden. To his horror, the boy had pulled up not only the weeds but also many of the young vegetable plants. The child simply could not yet tell the difference. What looked useless to him was actually precious and alive.

The old farmer gently said, “You must learn patience before you can judge what belongs in a garden.”

That simple lesson lies at the heart of today’s Gospel.

Jesus speaks about a field where wheat and weeds grow together. Normally, a few weeds in a field are unavoidable. Every farmer expects that. But in the parable, something shocking happens: an enemy deliberately sows weeds among the wheat during the night. It is an act of malice, sabotage, revenge. By the time the plants begin to grow, the damage is already done. The weeds are intertwined

with the wheat.

The servants immediately ask the obvious question: “Shall we pull them out?”

But the master surprises them: “No. Let both grow together until the harvest.”

At first, this sounds strange. Why allow weeds to remain? Why tolerate what is harmful?

Because the master knows something the servants do not: if they act too quickly, they may destroy the wheat as well.

And Jesus is not really speaking about agriculture. He is speaking about the human heart, about the Church, about the world, and about the patience of God.

The reality Jesus describes is painfully familiar.

Wherever God sows good seed, evil tries to sow weeds.

We see this already in the opening pages of Scripture. God creates a beautiful garden and gives humanity life in abundance. Trust, harmony, friendship with God — these are the good seeds God plants. But immediately the serpent comes and sows another seed: suspicion.

“God is holding something back from you.”

And from that moment, distrust enters the human heart.

The same pattern continues throughout history.

Jesus founded His Church to be a sign of love and unity in the world. The early Christians were so filled with charity that people said in amazement, “See how they love one another.” That was God’s wheat growing in the world.

But then the enemy sowed weeds: division, gossip, pride, scandals, power struggles, resentment. Even today, alongside extraordinary holiness, there is also weakness and sin within the Church.

And the same struggle exists within families.

Parents sincerely plant seeds of faith in their children. They teach them to pray, bring them to Mass, teach them kindness and honesty. Yet later the children sometimes choose paths that deeply wound the hearts of their parents. The parents ask themselves, “Where did this come from? We did not sow this.”

No, they did not. But another sower is also at work in the

world.

This is why Jesus tells us the parable. He wants us to understand reality without losing hope.

There is another temptation hidden in this Gospel — the temptation to become harsh judges.

Sometimes we look at the world, the Church, or even our own families and think: “Wouldn’t it be easier just to remove all the bad people? Separate the good from the bad right now?”

The disciples themselves once fell into that temptation. When a Samaritan village rejected Jesus, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven upon them?”

Jesus rebuked them.

Human beings are often eager to purify, condemn, exclude, and uproot. But history shows how dangerous that zeal can become when it loses humility and mercy. Because the truth is: the line between wheat and weeds does not simply run between “us” and “them.” It runs

through every human heart.

There is wheat in us — goodness, generosity, faith, love. But there are weeds too — pride, selfishness, impatience, anger, fear.

Even Saint Peter shows us this mystery. In one moment Jesus says to him, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.” A few verses later Jesus says to the same Peter, “Get behind me, Satan.”

Which was Peter? Wheat or weed?

The answer is: both realities were struggling within him. And that is true for us too.

One of the great dangers in spiritual life is believing that we can perfectly judge another person. Only God sees the whole field. Only God sees the hidden struggles, wounds, motives, and possibilities within a soul.

That is why today’s first reading says something so beautiful about God:

“You judge with mildness.”

God is strong enough to be patient.

A priest once told of visiting a prison where he met a man convicted of terrible crimes. At first the priest found it difficult even to speak kindly to him. But during their conversations, the prisoner began to weep and said, “Father, everyone sees what I have done. No one sees the little boy I once was.”

The priest later said, “At that moment I realised that God never stops seeing the person hidden beneath the sin.”

That does not mean evil is unimportant. Jesus is very clear: there will indeed be a harvest. There will be judgment. Good and evil are not the same. Our choices matter eternally.

But now — now is still the time of mercy.

As Saint Paul says elsewhere, “Do you not realise that God’s patience is meant to lead you to repentance?”

God delays judgment not because He is indifferent, but because He hopes for conversion.

Then Jesus gives us two more parables: the mustard seed and the yeast.

The mustard seed in Israel was tiny — almost invisible.

One priest described showing an actual mustard seed from the Holy Land during a retreat. It was so small that an elderly woman with poor eyesight leaned closer and closer trying to see it. Finally, she accidentally blew it away with her breath — and they never found it again.

Yet Jesus says this tiny seed becomes a great shrub where birds make their nests.

What is Jesus teaching us?

That the Kingdom of God often begins in small, hidden, unnoticed ways.

A quiet prayer.

A child learning the sign of the cross.

A word of forgiveness.

A faithful marriage.

A visit to the sick.

A hidden sacrifice.

A lonely person continuing to trust God.

None of these things seem dramatic. Yet the Kingdom

grows precisely through such small seeds.

We live in a world obsessed with instant results. We want everything immediately: success, holiness, renewal, answers. But every farmer knows that after sowing a seed, you cannot dig it up every day to check whether it is growing. If you do, you destroy it.

Growth requires patience.

The same is true in spiritual life.

Sometimes people become discouraged because they cannot see immediate change — in themselves, in the Church, or in society. Yet God is often working silently beneath the surface.

Think how much has changed over generations. There were times when Christians of different traditions treated one another with suspicion and hostility. Today many pray together, serve together, and seek unity together. What once seemed impossible slowly began to grow like a mustard seed.

God's work is often quiet, gradual, and hidden.

And perhaps that is the word many of us need to hear today.

Do not despise small beginnings.

Do not lose hope because the field still contains weeds.

Do not judge too quickly.

Do not give up on yourself.

Even when we feel weak, confused, or mixed within ourselves, Saint Paul reminds us in today's second reading:

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness."

God does not wait for perfect people before He begins His work. He works precisely in the middle of our weakness.

I close with another story.

A woman once bought an old abandoned house with a neglected garden behind it. The soil was dry, the plants overgrown, and weeds covered almost everything. Her neighbours laughed when she said she wanted to restore it.

But every day she worked quietly. She watered. She

planted seeds. She removed what she could, patiently and carefully. For months nothing impressive seemed to happen.

Then one spring morning the garden suddenly burst into colour. Flowers bloomed everywhere. Birds returned.

People stopped and stared in amazement.

Someone asked her, “How did this happen?”

She answered, “It was growing long before anyone could see it.”

That is the Kingdom of God.

God is still working in the hidden soil of the world.

God is still working in His Church.

God is still working in your heart.

So be patient.

Be watchful.

Keep sowing seeds of hope.

And trust the Divine Gardener, who alone knows how to bring forth a harvest in His time.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE CREDO

United in the faith planted in us at Baptism, and trusting in the God whose Kingdom continues to grow among us, let us now profess our faith together:

PROFESSION OF FAITH (for personal meditation only)

We believe in God the Father almighty,

Creator of heaven and earth,

the patient and merciful Lord

who continues to care for the field of this world

and never ceases to sow seeds of goodness, truth, and hope

in the hearts of His children.

We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,

who became the small mustard seed planted in the soil of humanity,

born in humility,

crucified in weakness,

and raised in glory for our salvation.

He revealed the Kingdom of God

through mercy, forgiveness, and compassion.

He taught us not to judge harshly,
but to trust in the wisdom and patience of God.
He will come again in glory
to gather the harvest of His people
and to establish His Kingdom for ever.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who works silently like yeast in the dough,
strengthening us in our weakness,
helping us when we do not know how to pray,
guiding the Church through every age,
and bringing growth from the hidden seeds of grace within
us.
We believe in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church,
called to be a sign of unity, love, and hope in the world.
Though wheat and weeds grow together for a time,
Christ never abandons His Church
but continues to purify and renew her through His grace.
We believe in the forgiveness of sins,
in the victory of mercy over despair,
in the resurrection of the dead,

and in the life of the world to come,
where God will gather His faithful people
into the joy of His eternal harvest. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts, like seeds
placed into the soil, may become for us signs of God's
patient love and saving grace, and that my sacrifice and
yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord,
receive the gifts we place before You
and make them fruitful by the power of Your grace.
As You patiently bring forth a harvest
from the small and hidden seeds of the earth,
so may these sacred offerings deepen within us
the life of faith, hope, and charity.
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,
through Christ our Lord.

For in Your wisdom and mercy
You guide the growth of Your Kingdom among us.
You do not abandon the field of this world
because of sin and weakness,
but with patient love You continue to sow goodness,
calling sinners to repentance
and strengthening the faithful in hope.
In Christ Your Son,
the tiny seed of the Kingdom became for us
the source of eternal life.
Through His Death and Resurrection
You bring forth a rich harvest of grace
from the hidden struggles and trials of human life.
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 Lord...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Trusting in the Father who patiently cares for His children
and who never ceases to nurture the seeds of grace within
us, let us pray with confidence 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 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 taught us to be patient and merciful,
to resist judgment and to sow peace and hope in the world.
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 patiently gathers the wheat into His Kingdom
and nourishes us with the Bread of eternal life.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
Lord, I am not worthy...

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,
You enter quietly into our hearts
like the mustard seed hidden in the soil,
like the yeast working silently in the dough.

Strengthen the good You have planted within us.
Teach us patience with ourselves and with others.
When we become discouraged by the weeds in the field of
life,
remind us that Your grace is still at work.
May this Eucharist help us to sow hope instead of fear,
mercy instead of judgment,
faith instead of despair,
until the day You gather us into the harvest of Your
Kingdom. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received these sacred mysteries,
we humbly pray, O Lord,
that You may continue to strengthen within us
the seeds of grace and holiness
planted by this Eucharist,
so that, growing in patience, faith, and love,
we may one day share fully
in the joy of Your heavenly harvest.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord,
who patiently tends the field of His people,
strengthen the good He has planted within your hearts.

Amen.

May He help you to sow seeds of hope, mercy, and peace
wherever you go.

Amen.

And may He bring you safely to the harvest of eternal life.

Amen.

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 in peace,
and by your patience, mercy, and faith,
help the Kingdom of God grow in the world.

Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Do not lose hope because there are weeds in the field.

God is still at work beneath the surface.

Keep sowing seeds of faith, mercy, and hope —
the harvest belongs to Him.”

Can you formulate a profession of faith based the theme of
the homily?

20 July, 2026 – Mon., 16th Week in Ord. Time

Micah 6,1-4. 6-8; Mt 12,38-42

God is already here—greater than we seek elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we live in a world constantly searching for greater signs, clearer certainties, and extraordinary experiences. Yet today the Word of God gently reminds us that the Lord is already near. Like the Queen of the South who sought wisdom and the people of Nineveh who responded to Jonah's preaching, we too are invited to recognise the presence of God already standing before us in Christ.

The prophet Micah cuts through every illusion and tells us plainly what God asks of us: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God. Often we overlook these simple but demanding paths because we are searching for something more dramatic, while the Lord quietly waits to be recognised in the ordinary duties of love, mercy, and fidelity.

There are also moments when life leaves us fearful and

trapped, like Israel standing before the sea. We become anxious, restless, and eager to force solutions. Yet the Lord says to us as He said through Moses: "The Lord will do the fighting for you; you have only to be still." In trusting silence, we discover that God is already at work before us. As we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge the times we failed to recognise the Lord already present in our lives, in His Word, in others, and in the quiet call to holiness. Let us ask pardon and peace in the penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the Wisdom greater than Solomon, yet we often seek other signs while ignoring Your presence among us. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You call us to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God, yet we resist the quiet demands of love. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You remain with us in every trial and ask us to trust when the way forward is hidden from our eyes.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who in His mercy never ceases to draw near to His people, forgive us for seeking Him far away while failing to recognise His presence already among us; may He strengthen us to trust Him in stillness, to walk humbly in His ways, and to live lives marked by justice and mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who have revealed in your Son the fullness of wisdom and mercy, grant us the grace to recognise your presence already at work within our daily lives, that by acting justly, loving tenderly, and walking humbly before you, we may remain steadfast in trust even in moments of fear and uncertainty. 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 well-known story from Scripture helps frame today's Gospel. The Queen of the South travelled from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and the people of Nineveh responded to the preaching of Jonah with repentance. Yet now, Jesus says, something infinitely greater is standing before them, and still they ask for proof. The irony is sharp: distant seekers recognise wisdom and warning, while those closest to the mystery of God remain unmoved.

Jesus is not simply another prophet pointing to God; He is the Word made flesh. He is not merely a wise teacher like Solomon; He is the Wisdom of God. He is not just a messenger like Jonah; He is the message of mercy itself. And yet the demand persists: "Give us a sign." The Gospel exposes a subtle temptation in all religious life—the desire to outsource faith to spectacle, rather than recognise grace already present in the ordinary encounter.

Micah's words break through this illusion. God's will is not hidden in the extraordinary but revealed in the ethical

simplicity of daily fidelity: justice, mercy, humility. These are not small things; they are the shape of a life that recognises God already at work. The problem is not that God is silent, but that we often prefer louder answers than the quiet demands of love.

There are moments, too, when life itself feels like the Israelites at the shore of the sea—pharaoh behind, sea ahead, and panic rising. In those moments, the instinct is to act, to fix, to force a way forward. Yet Moses' words echo through such situations: "The Lord will do the fighting for you; you have only to be still." Stillness here is not passivity, but trust—an act of surrender to the God who is already acting when we cannot see the path.

The deeper invitation today is to recognise that we are not without signs. The greatest sign has already been given in Christ Himself, who meets us not only in moments of clarity but in the ordinary fabric of our lives. The question is whether we have eyes to see what is already before us. And so we return, finally, to another moment of quiet strength. Saint Paul, writing from prison, no longer able to

travel or preach as he once did, discovered a freedom deeper than movement. In his confinement he learned a new certainty: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." The outward activity had ceased, but the inward presence had not. There, in the stillness of limitation, he found that the Lord was not elsewhere—He was already there, sustaining him from within.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, through which Christ Himself comes among us as the greatest sign of the Father's love, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the gifts we place upon your altar,
and teach us through this holy offering
to recognise your presence
not only in extraordinary moments
but in the faithful living of justice, mercy, and humble trust.
May these sacred mysteries strengthen us
to remain still before your providence

and confident in your saving power.
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,
through Christ our Lord.

For in Him you have given the greatest sign of your love:
not a distant message,
but your own Son dwelling among us.
When humanity searched for wisdom,
He came as Wisdom itself;
when the world longed for mercy,
He came as mercy made flesh.
In every age you teach your people
that your presence is not hidden far away,
but revealed in lives shaped by justice, tenderness, and
humble trust.
In moments of fear and uncertainty,

you remain near to those who wait upon you in faith,
strengthening them with quiet courage
and leading them along paths they cannot yet see.

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 Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say, trusting that the Father who is already near
to us knows our needs even before we ask:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant
peace in our days, that amid the fears and uncertainties of
life we may trust in your hidden work and recognise your
presence already guiding us; 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 said to your Apostles:

Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.

In moments when fear surrounds us like the sea before

Israel,

teach us to trust in your quiet presence already at work
among us.

When we seek signs and certainties,

help us to recognise you in the ordinary paths of daily
fidelity,

in justice, mercy, humble love, and persevering faith.

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, behold Him who is already
among us, the Wisdom of the Father and the Bread of Life.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,

so often we searched for You in distant signs

while You waited quietly beside us—

in Your Word,

in the Eucharist,

in the hidden demands of love,

and in the stillness of trust.

Remain with us in the ordinary paths of life.

Teach us to recognise Your presence

when the way ahead is unclear,

to trust You when fear rises within us,

and to believe that Your grace is already at work

even before we see the answer.

Like Saint Paul in his imprisonment,

may we discover that true strength

comes not from our own control
but from Your presence within us.

For truly, Lord,
You are already here.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Sacrament of salvation,
we humbly pray, O Lord,
that through this holy Communion
you may open our eyes to recognise your Son
present in the ordinary moments of life
and strengthen us to persevere in justice, mercy, and
humble trust.

May we learn to rest confidently in your providence,
knowing that you are always near to your people.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you with eyes that recognise His
presence already at work in your life.

Amen.

May He grant you the grace to walk humbly, act justly, and
love tenderly each day.

Amen.

And when fear or uncertainty overwhelms you, may He
strengthen you with quiet trust and inner peace.

Amen.

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 in peace, glorifying the Lord by recognising Him in the
ordinary moments of daily life.

Take-Home Thought

The greatest sign from God is not somewhere far away or
still to come. Christ is already here—in the Eucharist, in His
Word, in quiet trust, and in the daily call to justice, mercy,
and humble love.

21 July, 2026 – Tuesday, 16th Week in Ord. Time

Is 7,1-9; Mt 12,46-50

Red thread: True family is formed in doing the will of God.

INTRODUCTION

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, life often places us at crossroads where we must choose between what feels safe and what God is asking of us. Like the mountaineer trusting the unseen guide through the storm, faith calls us to rely not on certainty, but on the voice of the Lord who leads us forward.

In today's readings, King Ahaz stands in fear before threatening circumstances, yet God urges him not to lose heart. In the Gospel, Jesus opens before us a deeper understanding of belonging: true kinship is not merely of blood, but of hearts united in doing the will of the Father. The Lord reminds us that discipleship sometimes requires leaving behind fear, attachment, and self-interest so as to enter the wider family God is forming. When we trust his will, we discover a communion deeper than anything the world can offer.

Yet there have been moments when we resisted God's call, preferred comfort over trust, and held back from surrendering ourselves fully to his will. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

Penitential Act with Kyrie Invocations

Lord Jesus, you call us beyond fear into trusting obedience to the Father's will: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you gather into one family all who hear the word of God and keep it: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you lead us from attachment to deeper communion in your Kingdom: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who calls us to trust in him and to walk faithfully in his will, forgive us the times we have chosen fear over faith and selfishness over love, strengthen us by his mercy, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who reveal that true communion is found
in listening to your word and doing your will,
grant us the grace to trust you beyond our fears
and to follow your Son with generous hearts,
so that we may become one family in your 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.

HOMILY

A young passenger once arrived at a busy airport with just minutes to spare. She had to choose: remain with her family, who were reluctant to see her leave for a new assignment abroad, or board the plane that would take her into the work she had long felt called to do. With tears and embrace, she finally stepped away and walked toward the gate, knowing that love sometimes requires letting go in order to be faithful to a deeper calling.

In the gospel, we find Jesus in a similar moment of decision. His mother and relatives arrive, concerned for him, perhaps hoping to draw him back into the safety of familiar bonds. But Jesus uses the moment to reveal something greater: “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he declares that those who do the will of his Father are his true family. It is not a rejection of his earthly family, but a revelation that a new family is being formed—one not bound by blood, but by obedience to God’s will.

This is the heart of the Gospel message today, and it connects deeply with the first reading. Ahaz is afraid, threatened by forces beyond his control, yet God calls him beyond fear into trust. Jesus similarly calls his hearers beyond the limits of natural belonging into the freedom of spiritual belonging. Both readings ask the same question: will we remain enclosed within what is familiar, or step into what God is forming beyond our comfort?

The red thread running through both readings is simple yet demanding: *true family is formed in doing the will of God.*

That will often requires an “exodus”—a leaving behind of what is safe, expected, or emotionally secure. Like Jesus, like Ahaz is invited to be, and like the disciples are becoming, faith means allowing God to redefine where we ultimately belong.

At times, this will create tension. We may feel the pull of loyalty to people, habits, or expectations that are good in themselves. Yet the Gospel does not diminish those bonds; rather, it purifies and deepens them by placing them within the wider horizon of God’s purpose.

A story is told of St. Francis of Assisi. Before crowds and followers, there was a moment in the town square when he returned everything to his father—his wealth, his inheritance, even his garments—choosing instead to belong entirely to God. It was a painful severing of one kind of family bond, but it opened him to another: a universal brotherhood where all creation became his family in God. That radical step did not diminish love; it expanded it beyond measure.

And so the question returns to us: where is God calling us

to move beyond fear, beyond attachment, beyond even what is good, in order to enter more deeply into his will? For in that place—sometimes uncertain, sometimes costly—we discover not isolation, but a deeper communion: the family of those who live in the Father’s will.

Invitation to the Prayer over the Offerings

Pray, brothers and sisters, that as we place these gifts upon the altar, we may also offer to God our fears, attachments, and desires, so that our lives may be shaped ever more fully according to his holy will, and that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the offerings of your people,
and through these sacred mysteries
teach us to trust your providence above our own security
and to seek our true belonging in the family of 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 never abandon your people in their fears,
but guide them with wisdom and mercy.
When hearts grow uncertain and anxious,
you invite us to place our trust in your promises.
Through your Son, Jesus Christ,
you have revealed that true greatness is found
not in earthly power or privilege,
but in faithful obedience to your will.
He gathered around himself a new family,
formed not by blood alone
but by hearts open to your word and ready to follow you.
In him, you teach us that surrender to your will
does not diminish love,
but widens it into a communion that embraces all.
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 Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

As children gathered into one family through obedience to
the Father's will, and trusting in the love that unites us
beyond every fear and attachment, let us pray with
confidence in the words our Saviour gave us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant
peace in our days, that, trusting in your providence and
faithful to your will, we may be freed from fear and become
ever more united as one family in Christ, as we await the
blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us that all who do the Father's will
belong to your family of peace and love.
Free us from the fears and divisions that keep us apart,
and unite our hearts in faithful obedience to your word.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who gathers into one family all who trust in the
Father's will.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,
in this Eucharist you have drawn us close to yourself
and to one another.

You remind us that we are not alone,
for all who seek the Father's will
become brothers and sisters in your Kingdom.
Teach us to trust you when the path is uncertain,
to let go when attachment holds us back,
and to walk courageously wherever your voice leads.
May this communion strengthen us
to live not for ourselves alone,
but as members of your holy family,
bound together in faith, hope, and love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the sacrament of salvation,
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that through this heavenly gift
you may strengthen us to trust in your will
and to live as faithful members of the family of Christ.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord strengthen your hearts in every trial and free you from fear.

Amen.

May he guide you always in the path of his will and draw you deeper into the communion of his family.

Amen.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by trusting in his will and living as one family in Christ.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

True belonging is not found merely in what is familiar or comfortable, but in faithfully doing the will of God. Where trust leads us beyond fear, there we discover the deeper family of Christ.

22 July, 2026 – Wed. 16th Week in Ord. Time

St. Mary Magdalene

Song 3,1-4 or 2 Cor 5,14-17; Jn 20,1-2. 11-18

Red Thread: “The Lord who calls us by name turns seeking into encounter and grief into mission.”

INTRODUCTION

A woman once lost her wedding ring while working in her garden. In panic she searched frantically through the soil, convinced it was gone forever. A neighbour quietly advised her to stop searching blindly and retrace her steps carefully. When she did, she suddenly noticed the ring glimmering in a place she had overlooked. What was lost had not truly disappeared; she needed new eyes to recognise what was already near.

Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb with a similar heart. She searches through the darkness of grief, convinced that death has taken everything from her. Even when Jesus stands before her, sorrow prevents her from recognising him. But when the Lord calls her by name, her searching becomes encounter, and her grief begins to open into hope.

We too come carrying losses, questions, disappointments, and longings. At times we search for the Lord in confusion, unaware that he is already near, already seeking us with love.

Therefore, trusting in the mercy of the One who knows each of us by name, let us acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you call each of us by name and never abandon us in our searching: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you turn grief into hope through the joy of your Resurrection: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you send us forth to proclaim the Good News of new life: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who calls us out of darkness into the light of his risen Son, forgive the times we have searched without trust, clung to fear instead of hope, and failed to recognise his presence beside us. May he strengthen us to hear his voice, follow his call, and bear witness to the joy of

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

COLLECT

O God, whose Only Begotten Son entrusted Mary Magdalene before all others with announcing the great joy of the Resurrection, grant, we pray, that through her intercession we may hear our own names spoken by the Good Shepherd, recognise the living presence of Christ in our midst, and faithfully proclaim the hope of the Gospel to the world.

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 stood outside a sealed room, convinced that everything she loved had ended. She was searching in grief, not expecting anything but absence. Then a voice spoke her name. Nothing around her changed immediately, yet everything within her did. She was not

abandoned in her searching—she was found within it.

This is Mary Magdalene in the garden of the tomb. She comes early, still carrying love wounded by loss. She looks for the body of Jesus, but finds only emptiness. Even when the risen Lord stands before her, she does not recognise him. Her sorrow has narrowed her vision: “They have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him.”

Then comes the turning point: “Mary.” In that single word, everything shifts. The one she seeks has already been seeking her. Recognition is not achieved by effort, but received as gift. The Good Shepherd calls his own by name, and grief begins to open into new life.

The red thread runs quietly here: the Lord who calls us by name turns seeking into encounter and grief into mission.

Yet Mary’s journey does not end there. She tries to hold on to Jesus as she once knew him. But the risen Christ gently leads her beyond familiarity. Resurrection is not a return to the past, but entry into a new relationship lived in the Spirit. Faith matures when we stop clinging to what was, and

learn to trust how the Lord now comes.

From this encounter, Mary becomes the first messenger of Easter. The one who came to mourn is sent to proclaim. Her mission is born not from having all answers, but from having been addressed by name and transformed by that encounter.

There is always a similar movement in our own lives. We sometimes search for the Lord in places that feel empty, thinking nothing is being given. Yet the Gospel suggests that what we call absence may already be the hidden space of encounter, where the Lord is quietly at work, waiting to be recognised.

A priest once shared how, after a funeral, he saw a mother standing alone by her son’s grave. She said nothing for a long time. Then someone nearby gently spoke her son’s name. At that, her silence changed—not because her grief ended, but because love had been acknowledged within it. “Thank you,” she said, “for saying his name. I was afraid he was being forgotten.”

Mary Magdalene teaches us that when the Lord speaks

our name, even in the midst of loss, we are never only searching—we are already being found. And having been found, we are sent to carry that life-giving encounter into the world.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As Mary Magdalene brought her love, grief, and searching heart before the risen Lord, so we now place upon this altar our own lives, struggles, hopes, and desires, trusting that Christ will transform them by his grace. Let us pray that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the offerings we present in memory of Saint Mary Magdalene, whose love for your Son remained faithful even in sorrow, and grant that, through these sacred mysteries, we too may come to recognise the living Christ who calls us by name and sends us forth in hope. 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 loving wisdom you did not allow sorrow to have the final word, but through the Resurrection of your Son you opened the way from grief to joy and from searching to encounter. You chose Saint Mary Magdalene to be the first witness of the empty tomb and the first herald of Easter, teaching us that the risen Christ reveals himself to hearts that seek him with love.

When your Son called her by name, her tears were changed into hope and her mourning into mission. Through her witness you remind your Church that no one who seeks the Lord is ever abandoned, for Christ continues to call his people into the new life of the Resurrection.

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:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

The risen Lord called Mary by name and gathered her once more into the family of faith. Trusting that we too are beloved children of God, let us pray with confidence in the words our Saviour gave us.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that amid the sorrows and uncertainties of this life we may never fail to recognise the presence of your risen Son, who calls us by name and leads us into hope, 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. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared to Mary Magdalene in the midst of her sorrow and transformed her grief into peace and joy, 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, the risen Lord who knows each of us by name and comes to meet us in our searching. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb seeking a memory, but she encountered the living Christ. In this Eucharist, the Lord has again drawn near to us—not as a distant figure of the past, but as the One who still calls us personally and lovingly. Wherever grief, confusion, or emptiness may linger within us, Christ enters quietly and speaks our name. Having encountered him here, we are now sent, like Mary Magdalene, to carry the light of Resurrection into the lives of others.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the holy reception of your mysteries, Lord, instil in us that persevering love with which Saint Mary Magdalene clung steadfastly to Christ and was sent to proclaim the joy of his Resurrection. May we too recognise his living presence in our lives and faithfully bear witness to the hope he gives. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the God of all consolation strengthen you in every sorrow and help you recognise the voice of Christ who calls you by name. Amen.

May the risen Lord turn your searching into encounter, your fears into hope, and your grief into new life. Amen.

And may you go forth, like Saint Mary Magdalene, as joyful witnesses to the Resurrection and messengers of God's love. Amen.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life, and like Saint Mary Magdalene proclaim that the risen Christ still calls his people by name.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“We are never only searching for God; even in our darkness and grief, the risen Lord is already seeking us, calling us by name, and sending us forth with hope.”

23 July, 2026 – Thursday, 16th Week in Ord. Time

Jer 2,1-3. 7-8. 12-13; Mt 13,10-17

INTRODUCTION

A visitor once stood in a large art gallery staring at a famous painting. Others moved quickly from frame to frame, but he remained fixed in front of the same work for nearly an hour. When a guard asked if he understood what he was looking at, he replied quietly, “At first I only saw colours and shapes. Now I begin to see a story.” What had changed was not the painting, but his attention.

So much of life passes before our eyes in the same way. We hear words without listening deeply, we notice events without recognising their meaning, and we move through our days without pausing long enough to receive what God may be showing us.

Today Jeremiah speaks of people abandoning the fountain of living water for broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Jesus too speaks of hearts that have grown dull—ears that hear without understanding and eyes that see without perceiving. The problem is not that God has stopped

speaking, but that hearts have become distracted and shallow.

As we gather around the Lord who alone gives living water, let us acknowledge the moments when we have closed ourselves to His voice and failed to recognise His presence. With humble hearts, let us ask for mercy and forgiveness.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the fountain of living water, yet we often seek fulfilment in things that leave us empty.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You speak words of truth and life, yet we are often distracted and slow to understand Your ways.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You open the eyes of the faithful to recognise You in Scripture, in prayer, and in the ordinary moments of life.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who never ceases to call us back to the fountain of living water cleanse our distracted hearts, open our ears to His Word, and deepen within us the grace to recognise His presence in our lives.

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

COLLECT

O God,

You reveal the mysteries of Your Kingdom to hearts that listen with faith and humility.

Free us from the distractions that make us deaf to Your voice,

and lead us again to the fountain of living water,

that seeing with clearer eyes

and hearing with receptive hearts,

we may walk faithfully in the way of Your Son.

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 young apprentice once worked under a master carpenter who rarely explained his work. One day, the apprentice complained, “I watch everything you do, but I still don’t understand your craft.” The master simply replied, “You are watching with your eyes, but not yet with your hands or your patience.” Only over time did the apprentice realise that understanding comes not only from observation, but from entering into the work itself.

This is close to what Jesus is saying in the Gospel. Many see Him, but do not truly see; many hear Him, but do not truly hear. His words and actions are not puzzles to be solved from a distance, but mysteries to be entered through faith. Like the apprentice, the disciples begin to understand not because everything is made obvious, but because they have drawn close enough to share His way of life.

Jeremiah gives the background to this struggle of perception. God’s people have turned away from Him, the “fountain of living water,” and dug for themselves cracked

cisterns that cannot hold life. A heart that seeks security elsewhere slowly loses its capacity to recognise God when He speaks. This is what Jesus identifies when He speaks of hearts grown coarse—hearts no longer finely tuned to God's voice.

Yet Jesus also speaks a blessing over His disciples: "Happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear." This is not a natural ability, but a grace that grows through relationship. The more one walks with Christ, the more one begins to recognise Him—not only in Scripture or in prayer, but in the ordinary moments of life, in the vulnerable, and in the quiet demands of love. We might recognise ourselves somewhere between the two groups: sometimes attentive, sometimes distracted; sometimes open, sometimes resistant. The journey of faith is precisely this gradual healing of perception, where what we look at becomes what we begin to truly see, and what we hear becomes what we begin to understand.

There is a quiet invitation in all of this: to return again to the source, to drink again from the living water, to let the Lord

restore depth where life has become shallow.

A traveller once lost his way in a vast desert. Exhausted and disoriented, he came upon an old well with a simple sign: "Drink and live." At first, he hesitated, suspicious of what looked too simple to save him. But when he finally drew the water and drank, he realised it was not the well that had changed—it was his willingness to receive what had been there all along.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts we place before the Lord may express our desire to return to Him with attentive hearts, and that this sacrifice may deepen within us the grace to hear His voice and recognise His presence more clearly.

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

Lord our God,
receive the offerings we bring before You,
and as You draw us again to the source of living water,
heal the blindness of our hearts
and make us attentive to the saving Word of 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 never abandon Your people,
even when they wander far from You
and seek life in what cannot satisfy.
Again and again You call them back
to the fountain of living water,
speaking through the prophets
and revealing Your mercy through Your Son.

In Christ, Your eternal Word,
You open the eyes of those who seek You with faith
and awaken hearts that have grown dull or distracted.
Through Him, we learn to recognise Your presence
not only in signs and wonders,
but also in the quiet faithfulness of daily life.
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 Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:
Our Father is the prayer of children who trust the Father
enough to return to Him again and again, drinking from the
living water He alone can give and learning to listen with
receptive hearts.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and free us from the distractions and fears
that prevent us from hearing Your voice clearly.
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.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now
and for ever.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You invite us to remain close to You
so that our hearts may learn to see and understand.
Do not look on our sins and distractions,
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 leads us back to the fountain of living
water and opens our eyes to recognise His presence
among us.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The traveller in the desert finally drank from the well that
could save him. The water had always been there; what
changed was his willingness to receive it.
So too in our lives, the Lord continues to offer Himself
quietly and faithfully. In this Eucharist, Christ has once
again drawn near to us. May we not rush past this
moment, but remain long enough in His presence for our
seeing to deepen into understanding, and our hearing into
faithful response.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these sacred mysteries,
we pray, O Lord,
that through this Eucharist
You may continue to heal our hearts,
open our ears to Your Word,
and lead us always back to the living water
that alone gives eternal life.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you with hearts attentive to His voice,
eyes open to recognise His presence,
and a deeper thirst for the living water that alone satisfies.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by listening deeply to His
Word and recognising His presence in the ordinary
moments of life.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The difference between merely hearing and truly
understanding often lies not in what God says, but in how
willing we are to receive Him. Drink again from the living
water, and your eyes will begin to see differently.

24 July, 2026 – Friday, 16th Week in Ord. Time

Jer 3,14-17; Mt 13,18-23

INTRODUCTION

A young musician once prepared carefully for a major performance. He practised for weeks, knew the score well, and even marked his sheet music with reminders. But on the night of the concert, he became distracted by the noise of the audience, the pressure of the moment, and his own anxiety. Halfway through, he lost his place and could not recover the flow of the piece he had once known so well.

It is a reminder of how easily what is important can be pushed aside when competing voices grow louder within us. What is clear in preparation can become confused in execution when focus is lost and attention is scattered.

The prophet Jeremiah speaks today of God's longing to gather his scattered people, to shepherd them with care, and to bring them back to a place of peace and fidelity. God does not abandon his people even when they lose their way; rather, he calls them back to a deeper belonging

and trust.

As we gather for this Eucharist, we acknowledge the many ways we too become distracted, shallow in our listening, or resistant to God's word. Let us now turn to the Lord who calls us back with mercy and begin by asking forgiveness for the times we have not allowed his word to take root in our lives.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you sow the seed of your word generously into our hearts, yet we often fail to listen with understanding:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us to persevere in faith, yet we allow difficulties and fears to weaken our commitment:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you invite us to bear lasting fruit, yet the worries of life and the lure of comfort often choke your grace within us:

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who patiently tills the soil of our hearts forgive our hardness, deepen within us the roots of faith, and strengthen us to bear the fruits of love and fidelity; and may almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
you never cease to sow the seed of your word
in the hearts of your people.

Break open whatever is hardened within us,
deepen our faith when it is shallow,
and free us from all that chokes the growth of your grace,
so that our lives may bear fruit in love, perseverance, and
fidelity.

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 farmer once went out at dawn to sow his seed. He did not choose where each grain would fall; he simply scattered it generously across the field, trusting that at least some of it would find good soil. As he worked, he knew the outcome would depend not only on the seed, but on the condition of the ground receiving it.

Jesus uses this very image to speak of the word of God. The seed is always good, always life-giving. The question is not its power, but our receptivity. And here lies the tension of discipleship: the same word can either transform a life or be lost without trace.

The first obstacle Jesus names is lack of understanding. Without some openness to who Jesus is, the word remains on the surface. The second is shallowness—when the word is heard but not allowed to sink deep, it cannot endure when trials come. The third is the most subtle: the worries of life and the lure of wealth, which slowly choke what once seemed promising.

This is why the spiritual life is never automatic. It involves

attention, patience, and a willingness to let God's word go deeper than comfort or convenience. The commandments we hear in the tradition—love of God and love of neighbour—are not distant rules but the shape of a life where the seed has truly taken root. Jeremiah's vision of God gathering and shepherding his people reminds us that God is constantly working to bring us back to this depth of life.

The red thread running through today's word is simple but demanding: let the word take root, grow deep, and bear fruit. That is the movement from hearing, to receiving, to living.

We can resist that movement, but we are never abandoned in it. God remains at work in the field of our lives, even when the soil is uneven or tired, patiently continuing to sow.

A story is told of a farmer who planted bamboo seeds and saw nothing grow for years. He watered and cared for the ground faithfully, yet there was no visible sign of life. Then, suddenly, in a matter of weeks, the bamboo shot up

dramatically. Beneath the surface, it had been growing roots all along, preparing for what would eventually become strong and visible life.

What looks slow or hidden in us is often where God is doing his deepest work.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that as God patiently continues his work within the field of our lives, these gifts we offer may become signs of hearts open to his word and fruitful in his service, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the offerings of your gathered people, and as you nourish the hidden growth of grace within us, make us steadfast in faith and rich in the fruits of charity.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PREFACE

always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you never cease to call your people back to yourself.
When hearts grow distracted and faith becomes shallow,
you continue to sow the seed of your word with patience
and mercy.

Through the prophets you gathered the scattered,
through your Son you revealed the path of faithful
discipleship, and through the Holy Spirit you continue to
cultivate within us
the fruits of perseverance, justice, and love.

Even when growth is hidden from our eyes,
you are at work in the depths of every human heart,
bringing forth new life in those who trust in you.

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 Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

God patiently gathers us, forms us, and nourishes the
hidden growth of grace within us. With hearts open to his
word and trusting in his fatherly care, let us pray in the
words Jesus himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the distractions, fears, and anxieties
that prevent your word from taking deep root within us.
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.

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

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you gather your scattered people
and patiently lead them into the peace of your kingdom.
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 continues to sow the seed of divine life within us and
calls us to bear lasting fruit.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

God's work within us is often quiet and hidden. Like roots
growing deep beneath the surface, grace is shaping us
even when we cannot yet see the results. The Lord asks
not for instant perfection, but for openness, perseverance,
and trust. The seed has been sown again today. May we
allow it to remain, deepen, and bear fruit in the ordinary
soil of our daily lives.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received these sacred mysteries, O Lord,
we ask that the word planted within us through this
Eucharist may grow strong through perseverance and
faithful living, so that we may bear lasting fruit for your
kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord continue to cultivate the soil of your hearts,
strengthen you in times of trial, free you from all that
chokes the life of grace, and make your lives fruitful in
faith, hope, and charity. And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives rooted deeply in
his word.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

"The fruitfulness of the Christian life depends not on how
often we hear God's word, but on how deeply we allow it to
take root within us."

25 July, 2026 – Saturday, 16th Week in Ord. Time

St. James, Apostle

2 Cor 4, 7-15; Mt 20,20-28

Red thread: *True greatness is found in self-emptying service.*

INTRODUCTION

A young volunteer once joined a community kitchen that served meals to the homeless every evening. On the first day, he arrived eager to impress. He worked hard whenever others were watching, spoke often about his abilities, and hoped the organizers would notice him. But there was an elderly woman in the kitchen who quietly washed dishes, cleaned tables, and stayed behind after everyone had left. Few people even knew her name.

After several weeks, a crisis struck when many volunteers failed to appear. Confusion spread through the kitchen. It was then that everyone realized that the calm presence holding the place together had always been that quiet woman. She knew every person by name, every task that needed attention, and every struggling guest who needed

encouragement. Without seeking recognition, she had become the heart of the community.

In today's Gospel, James and John seek places of honour beside Jesus. Yet Christ reveals that greatness in his Kingdom is not found in status or recognition, but in humble service and self-giving love. Saint Paul echoes this truth when he reminds us that we carry God's treasure in fragile clay jars.

As we gather around the altar of the Lord, we acknowledge the times we have desired recognition more than service, privilege more than sacrifice, and power more than humility. Let us now ask the Lord for mercy and healing as we begin our penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you came not to be served but to serve and to give your life for many: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you teach us that true greatness is found in humble service of one another: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you strengthen fragile clay jars with the treasure of your grace and love: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who calls us to follow Christ in humility and service forgive our selfish ambitions, heal our pride, and make us generous servants of one another.

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

COLLECT

O God,
who called Saint James
to leave behind worldly ambition
and to follow your Son
along the path of sacrificial love,
grant that we,
carrying the treasure of your grace in fragile lives,
may learn to seek greatness
through humble service of our brothers and sisters.
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 story begins with a striking request. Two brothers, James and John, approach Jesus through their mother with a bold petition: “Grant that one may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” It is a moment filled with ambition, expectation, and misunderstanding. They have walked with Jesus, witnessed his miracles, even stood with him on the mountain of transfiguration, yet they still imagine the kingdom in terms of rank and honour. Jesus responds not with rejection, but with revelation: “Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?” In other words, are you willing to enter into the depth of my self-giving love, which will pass through suffering and the cross? They answer quickly, “We can,” without fully grasping what they are saying. Jesus gently tells them that the path of glory is not about sitting above others, but about giving oneself for others.

When the other disciples become indignant, Jesus gathers them and overturns their understanding of greatness. Among the world’s rulers, authority is exercised through

control, but in his kingdom it is not so. “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.” In this single sentence, Jesus redefines leadership as service and honour as self-gift.

Saint Paul, in the first reading, gives this teaching a lived expression. “We carry this treasure in clay jars,” he says. The life of Christ is revealed precisely in human fragility. Even suffering and weakness become places where the power of God is made visible. When the self is poured out, Christ is revealed.

Saint James himself came to learn this path. Though he first sought privilege, he would eventually drink the cup of martyrdom. According to tradition, his witness did not end in Jerusalem but reached distant shores, where pilgrims still travel to Santiago de Compostela, following in the footsteps of a man who discovered that true greatness is not in being served, but in serving.

And so, the question of Jesus remains quietly before us:
Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?

The story is told of a modern pilgrim who walked the long

route to Santiago de Compostela. At the beginning, he spoke often of goals, achievements, and reaching the destination. But as the days passed—through fatigue, rain, and quiet encounters with strangers—his language changed. By the time he reached the shrine of Saint James, he said something unexpected: “I thought I was walking to arrive somewhere. Now I see I was learning how to walk with others.”

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that as we place these gifts upon the altar, we may also offer to God our pride, ambitions, and selfish desires, so that Christ may teach us the joy of humble and loving service.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Cleanse us, O Lord,
by the saving power of this sacrifice,
and, through the intercession of Saint James,
make us servants after the heart of Christ,
willing to pour out our lives for others in love and
faithfulness. 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 shown us in your Son
that true greatness is not found in earthly power
but in humble service and self-emptying love.

When the disciples sought places of honour,
Christ revealed the deeper glory of the Kingdom:
to serve rather than to be served,
and to give one's life in love for others.

In Saint James you gave the Church
a witness who learned to drink the cup of Christ
and to follow faithfully the path of sacrifice.
Through human weakness, your divine power was
revealed, for you place heavenly treasure within fragile
clay jars. 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:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus taught his disciples that greatness is found not in
domination but in serving others with the heart of a child of
God. Trusting in the Father who forms us into one family of
humble service, we dare to pray:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the pride that seeks honour above service.
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 taught your disciples
that greatness is found in humble service
and love poured out for others.
Free us from rivalry, selfish ambition, and division,
and make us instruments of your peace and compassion.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who gave himself completely for the life of the world.
Happy are those who learn from him
the way of humble service and self-giving love.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,
you have fed us with the Bread of Life,
yet you continue to ask us:
“Can you drink the cup that I drink?”
Teach us not to seek recognition or privilege,
but to walk patiently with others,
to carry one another’s burdens,
and to discover that true greatness
is hidden in quiet acts of love.
Like Saint James,
may we learn slowly but faithfully
that the path to glory passes through service,
humility, and self-giving.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received this heavenly Sacrament, O Lord,
we humbly pray that, through the example and intercession
of Saint James, we may remain faithful servants of Christ
and generous witnesses to the Gospel in daily life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus, who came not to be served but to
serve, teach you the joy of humble and generous love.
Amen.
May Saint James strengthen you to follow Christ faithfully,
even when the path leads through sacrifice and self-giving.
Amen.
And may Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives of humble service and compassionate love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

True greatness is not measured by the place we hold, but by the love with which we serve others.