

26 July, 2026 - 17th Sunday in Ord. Time

1 kgs 3,5. 7-12; Mt 13,44-52

INTRODUCTION

A young boy once spent an entire afternoon building a sandcastle on the beach. He shaped towers, dug moats, and guarded it proudly from the waves. As evening came, the tide slowly rose and washed everything away. The boy began to cry, but his grandfather gently took his hand and said, "What disappears was never your treasure. The real treasure is what remains when everything else passes."

As we grow older, we slowly discover how true those words are. Many things attract us, occupy us, and promise happiness, yet so much fades quickly. Success changes, possessions age, and even our plans can disappear overnight. But beneath all the passing things of life, God continues to place before us something lasting and eternal.

Today Jesus speaks of treasure hidden in a field and a pearl of great price. Some discover God unexpectedly; others search for years before recognising what their hearts were truly longing for. But once the treasure is found, everything else takes its proper place. Christ himself

becomes the centre, the joy, and the meaning of life.

Yet we also know how often we overlook that treasure hidden in ordinary moments—in prayer, forgiveness, compassion, sacrifice, and the Eucharist. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you are the treasure hidden in the ordinary fields of our lives: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us beyond passing things to seek the riches that endure forever: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you fill with joy all who discover your Kingdom and follow you wholeheartedly: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who alone is the lasting treasure of the human heart, forgive us for the times we have sought fulfillment in lesser things, heal our blindness to his presence among us, and lead us with renewed joy to everlasting life. Amen.

INVITATION TO GLORIA

Having recognised our need for God's mercy, let us now give glory to the Father who reveals to us the true treasure of life, to the Son who calls us into the joy of the Kingdom, and to the Holy Spirit who opens our hearts to wisdom and faith.

COLLECT

O God, source of all wisdom and lasting joy,
you reveal the treasure of your Kingdom
to those who seek you with sincere hearts.
Grant that, amid the passing things of this world,
we may recognise Christ as the pearl of great price
and follow him with undivided love and joyful trust.
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 Treasure Hidden in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price

A few years ago, a man in England was digging in his garden when his shovel struck something hard. At first he thought it was just another stone. But when he uncovered it, he found an old ring buried in the soil. Experts later identified it as a medieval ring worth tens of thousands of dollars. Imagine going out to do an ordinary task and returning home with a treasure you never expected to find. That story captures something of the surprise and joy at the heart of today's Gospel. Jesus tells us:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which someone found... In his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Notice the difference between the two people in the parables. One man is not searching for treasure at all. He stumbles upon it unexpectedly. The other spends his life

searching and finally finds what he has been seeking.

That is often how God works in our lives. Sometimes we discover Him unexpectedly, and sometimes after a long search. Sometimes we find Him; sometimes we realize that He has found us.

Nathaniel Hawthorne once wrote, *"Happiness is a butterfly, which, when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you sit down quietly, may alight upon you."*

The treasure of God's kingdom often comes like that butterfly. It lands upon us when we least expect it.

The Gospel reminds us that God's kingdom is not only a future reality in heaven. It is already among us wherever God's will is done, wherever Christ is loved, wherever people allow His grace to shape their lives.

The great question is not whether the treasure exists. The great question is whether we recognize it when we encounter it.

Many years ago, an experienced art dealer was visiting a small country auction in the United States. Among piles of worn-out furniture and old household goods, he noticed a

dirty, cracked painting leaning against a wall. Most people dismissed it as worthless. The auctioneer expected it to sell for almost nothing.

The dealer studied it for a few moments. Beneath the layers of grime and damaged varnish he recognized certain brushstrokes and details that suggested it might be an original masterpiece by a famous artist.

The bidding began. He quickly realized he did not have enough money with him to buy it. Convinced of what he had discovered, he borrowed money from two friends who were with him, emptied his wallet, and purchased the painting.

The people at the auction shook their heads. They thought he had paid far too much for a dirty old canvas.

Months later, after careful restoration and expert examination, the painting was authenticated as an original work by a great master, worth millions of dollars.

He had not been reckless.

He simply saw what everyone else had failed to see.

That is exactly the point of today's Gospel.

The man who found the treasure in the field and the merchant who discovered the pearl were not acting irrationally. To those watching, selling everything they owned must have seemed foolish. But they knew the true value of what they had found.

The Christian life is not fundamentally about loss. It is about discovery.

Jesus is not asking us to surrender lesser things simply for the sake of surrender. He invites us to let go of lesser things because we have found something greater.

I have seen this happen many times.

As a young priest I knew a gifted optician. He had just passed his master's examination with distinction. His father owned a successful optical business, and he was the only son. A comfortable future awaited him. He had a girlfriend whom he intended to marry.

Then one day he announced:

"I am entering a monastery."

His family thought he had lost his mind.

Why walk away from financial security, a promising career, and marriage?

A week before entering the Trappist monastery, someone asked him what had led him to such a decision.

He explained that he often attended Eucharistic adoration. One evening he opened the New Testament and his eyes fell upon today's Gospel.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field..."

Then he said something unforgettable:

"At that moment I suddenly understood that Jesus Himself is the treasure."

Everything changed.

Others saw what he was giving up.

He saw what he had found.

Many years later I met another person who had found the treasure in a very different way.

I was preaching a retreat for teenagers in a small

Benedictine convent. Frankly, the retreat was not going well. The young people seemed uninterested.

An elderly nun served our meals each day. During one meal the young people discovered that she had not left the monastery grounds in over forty years.

They were astonished.

At first their questions reflected every stereotype imaginable.

"Weren't you bored?"

"Didn't you feel trapped?"

"Didn't you miss out on life?"

But over the next few days something remarkable happened.

The teenagers discovered a woman full of wisdom, joy, compassion, and freedom. She listened deeply. She cared about their struggles. She radiated peace.

The more they spoke with her, the more they realized that she possessed something many people outside the monastery never find.

On the final evening we read this very Gospel.

After a long silence one of the teenagers said:

"I think Sister has found her treasure."

Indeed she had.

The kingdom of God is not measured by how much we possess but by whom we possess.

And sometimes we discover that treasure in the most unexpected people.

The same truth appeared in the life of another woman I knew.

She longed to have children but was unable to do so. The pain was immense. Over time disappointment threatened to become bitterness.

Then one day she was struck by another saying of Jesus:

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Those words changed her life.

She began volunteering in a nursing home. She cared for elderly residents, feeding them, washing them, comforting

them, and accompanying them through loneliness and suffering.

Many friends could not understand her commitment.

One day a friend watched her work and later said:

"You couldn't pay me a million dollars to do what you do."

The woman smiled and replied:

"Neither could you pay me a million dollars to stop."

She had discovered Christ hidden among the elderly and forgotten.

She had found her treasure.

Today's Gospel also speaks to those who are still searching.

The merchant in the second parable reminds us that there is something of the seeker in all of us. Human beings are restless. We search for happiness, meaning, truth, love, purpose, and belonging.

St. Augustine famously wrote, *"Our hearts are restless until they rest in You."*

Many people spend years searching. Some search through

careers. Others through relationships, travel, achievements, possessions, or experiences.

There is nothing wrong with searching.

The problem comes when we stop too soon and settle for something less than what our hearts truly desire.

When Jesus first met two disciples in John's Gospel, His first words were a question:

"What are you looking for?"

That remains His question to each of us today.

What are we really seeking?

Success? Security? Recognition? Comfort?

Or are we seeking the pearl of great price—the life that comes from friendship with Christ?

In today's first reading, Solomon is offered anything he desires. He does not ask for wealth or power. He asks for wisdom. He asks for the ability to recognize what truly matters.

That may be the most important prayer we can make:

"Lord, give me the wisdom to recognize Your treasure

when I encounter it."

Because God's kingdom often appears hidden.

It is hidden in prayer.

Hidden in the Eucharist.

Hidden in ordinary acts of love.

Hidden in forgiveness.

Hidden in service.

Hidden in communities where God's will is being done.

Hidden in people who quietly radiate Christ.

And hidden, sometimes, in the crosses we carry.

Let me finish with one final story.

An elderly man was once asked what had been the happiest moment of his life. People expected him to mention his wedding day, the birth of his children, a career achievement, or a great adventure.

Instead he answered:

"The happiest day of my life was the day I realized that God loved me exactly as I was and would never stop seeking me."

That man had discovered what the labourer found in the field and what the merchant found in the pearl.

He had discovered the treasure that does not fade, the treasure that cannot be stolen, the treasure that remains when every earthly treasure passes away.

Brothers and sisters, some of us may be like the labourer who unexpectedly stumbles upon the treasure. Others may be like the merchant who has been searching for years.

Whichever path is ours, today's Gospel assures us that the treasure is real.

That treasure is ultimately not a thing.

It is Jesus Christ Himself.

And once we discover Him, we discover that nothing we surrender for His sake compares with what we receive.

For the kingdom of heaven is indeed like a treasure hidden in a field, and like a pearl of great price.

Amen.

INVITATION TO CREDO

United with countless believers who have discovered in Christ the true treasure of life, let us now profess the faith of the Church with confidence and joy.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As the men in today's Gospel gave everything for the treasure they had found, so we now place before God these gifts of bread and wine, together with our work, our hopes, our struggles, and our desire to seek first the Kingdom of God.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord,
accept these gifts we bring before you
as signs of hearts searching for what truly endures.
May this sacrifice deepen within us
the wisdom of Solomon,
the joy of the Gospel treasure,
and the grace to place Christ above all else.
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 love you never cease to seek the human heart,
and in every age you reveal the hidden treasure of your
Kingdom.

Through the wisdom given to Solomon,
you teach us that no earthly success can satisfy the soul
apart from you.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ,
you show us the pearl beyond all price,
the one in whom every longing finds fulfillment.

In him the poor discover riches that do not fade,
the searching find truth,
the weary find peace,
and all who follow him receive the joy that the world cannot
give.

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

Because God has given us the greatest treasure in his Son, and because we are called to seek first his Kingdom above all else, we pray now with confidence in the words Jesus himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and free our hearts from the false treasures that cannot satisfy.

Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may always seek what is eternal
and rejoice in the riches of your Kingdom,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you told your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.

Look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
which continues to seek the treasure of your presence in this world,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Blessed are those who recognise in Christ the hidden treasure and the bread of eternal life.

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

A traveller searching for water in the desert once discovered a hidden spring beneath dry ground. What seemed barren suddenly became life-giving. So too, in Holy Communion, Christ quietly nourishes us beneath simple signs of bread and wine.

The Kingdom of God often comes hidden within ordinary things. Yet those who receive Christ with faith discover a joy deeper than success, wealth, or achievement. We leave this altar today reminded that the true treasure of life is not something we possess, but someone who possesses our hearts.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, through this holy Eucharist
you have nourished us with the treasure of heaven.

Strengthen within us the desire to seek your Kingdom
above all else, so that, transformed by the presence of
Christ, we may witness with joy to the riches of your love in
the midst of the world.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you with hearts wise enough to
recognise the treasure of his Kingdom. Amen.

May he free you from all that keeps you from seeking what
truly matters. Amen.

And may he fill you with the joy of those who have
discovered Christ as the pearl of great price. 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 seeking his Kingdom in
the ordinary moments of daily life.

Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The greatest tragedy is not losing everything; it is standing
over the treasure of God’s presence and never recognising
it.”

27 July, 2026 – Mon., 17th Week in Ord. Time

Jer 13,1-11; Mt 13,31-35

INTRODUCTION

A schoolteacher once asked her pupils to write down the most important person in their lives and explain why. One child wrote only a few words about his grandmother: “She never did big things. But she always noticed me.” Years later, that same teacher met the young man, now an adult doctor, who told her, “I became who I am because someone believed small things mattered.”

We often underestimate the quiet influence of what seems insignificant. In a world that prizes the loud, the large, and the instantly visible, it is easy to overlook the slow and hidden ways good grows.

Yet many of the most enduring realities in life—trust, love, faith, hope—do not arrive with spectacle. They begin quietly, almost imperceptibly, and only later do we realize their depth and reach.

Today’s Gospel reminds us that the Kingdom of God often grows in hidden ways, through small acts of fidelity and

love. As we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge the moments when we have lost patience with God’s timing, doubted the value of small acts of goodness, or failed to trust His quiet work within us and around us. Let us now call to mind our sins...

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the mustard seed planted in the world, growing into shelter and hope for all: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, You are the yeast of God’s Kingdom, quietly transforming hearts with Your grace: Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, You call us to trust in the hidden power of faithfulness and love: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who patiently brings forth His Kingdom through the hidden work of grace, forgive us our sins, strengthen our faith in His quiet power, and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

COLLECT

Heavenly Father,
You reveal the greatness of Your Kingdom through the
smallest beginnings
and accomplish wonders through humble and hidden
ways.

Teach us to trust in the quiet work of Your grace,
to remain faithful in small acts of love,
and to persevere with hope when we do not yet see the
fruits of our labour.

May our lives become like good seed planted in the world,
bearing fruit for Your Kingdom and shelter for others.

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

HOMILY

A young boy once received a tiny packet of seeds from his grandfather. Disappointed, he had hoped for a toy rather than something so small and ordinary. “What can these little seeds do?” he asked. His grandfather simply smiled and told him to plant them. Months later, those tiny seeds had become towering sunflowers that attracted birds, bees, and neighbours from all around. The boy learned an important lesson: great things often begin in ways that seem insignificant. That is the lesson at the heart of today’s Gospel. Jesus points to a tiny mustard seed and a small piece of yeast. Both appear insignificant, yet both produce results far beyond what anyone would expect. Through these images, Jesus reveals how the Kingdom of God works. His own ministry seemed small and unremarkable—one teacher in a remote corner of the Roman Empire gathering a handful of disciples. Yet those humble beginnings would transform the world.

These parables were also meant to encourage the disciples. Many had expected God’s Kingdom to arrive with

dramatic power, but instead they saw growing opposition to Jesus and only modest signs of success. Jesus assures them that God's work is already underway. The seed has been sown and its growth is certain. The leaven has been mixed into the dough and its transforming power cannot be stopped. The same encouragement is needed today. We can become discouraged by the challenges facing the Church, our society, our families, or even our own spiritual lives. We may wonder whether our efforts matter. Yet the Gospel reminds us that God often works quietly and invisibly before His work becomes evident. As Saint Paul says, God's power at work within us can accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine.

We can easily underestimate the value of the little good we do. Sometimes we ask ourselves, "What difference have I really made?" Yet many of the greatest influences in our lives came through simple and ordinary acts: a word of encouragement from a teacher, the daily sacrifices of a parent, the kindness of a friend, a prayer offered in faith, or a small act of charity performed without recognition. Saint

John Henry Newman wrote, "God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another." Jesus deliberately draws His examples from the experiences of both a farmer and a woman baking bread, reminding us that every person has a role in God's plan. The smallest gesture of love, forgiveness, generosity, or faith can become a channel through which God blesses many others. We plant the seed; God gives the growth. We mix in the leaven; God brings about the transformation.

There is a story of an elderly woman who, for many years, placed fresh flowers beside a neglected roadside cross. Hardly anyone noticed her, and she never sought attention. After her death, villagers discovered that countless travellers had stopped there to pray because those flowers reminded them of God's presence and love. Some found comfort in grief; others returned to the practice of their faith. The woman never knew how much good had come from her quiet act of devotion. Her life was like the mustard seed and the yeast of today's Gospel—small in

appearance but powerful in effect. The Lord asks us only to be faithful in the small opportunities He places before us each day. If we offer Him our humble service and acts of love, He can accomplish through them far more than we could ever imagine, making our small beginnings a blessing for many. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these humble gifts, like the mustard seed and the yeast in today's Gospel, may become signs of God's transforming grace and be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord our God, receive these offerings which we place upon Your altar.

As small seeds become abundant harvests through Your blessing, so may these simple gifts become for us the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation.

Transform our hearts through this sacrifice, that we may become instruments of Your quiet and life-giving Kingdom. 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 reveal Your greatness through what is small and hidden.

In Your Son, Jesus Christ, You planted in the world the seed of Your Kingdom, a Kingdom that grows quietly through mercy, faith, and love.

You continue to work within human hearts, transforming lives not by force or spectacle, but through the gentle power of grace.

Even when we do not see the fullness of Your work, You remain faithful, guiding Your people toward the harvest of eternal 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 that our heavenly Father is at work even in the hidden and unfinished places of our lives, let us pray with confidence in the words Jesus Himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and free us from the discouragement that blinds us to Your quiet work among us. Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of Your mercy,
we may remain faithful in small acts of love and steadfast in hope, 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. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You taught us that the Kingdom of God grows quietly in hearts open to Your grace.

Look not on our impatience, fear, or lack of trust,
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 comes quietly yet powerfully into our lives,
nourishing the hidden growth of grace within us.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The Kingdom of God rarely arrives with noise or spectacle.
It grows silently, like a seed beneath the soil or yeast within the dough.
In this Eucharist, Christ has entered once more into the hidden places of our hearts.
What may seem small today—a prayer, an act of kindness, a quiet fidelity—can become the beginning of transformation beyond what we can imagine.
God is still at work, even where we do not yet see the results.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God,
through this holy sacrament
You have nourished us with the life of Your Son.
Strengthen within us the seed of Your Kingdom,
that we may persevere in faith, grow in charity,
and become signs of hope in a world longing for Your
presence.
May the grace we have received continue its quiet work
within us
until all things are brought to fulfilment in Christ.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and strengthen you
to trust in His hidden work within your life.
May He help you never to underestimate
the power of small acts of faith, hope, and love.
And may Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace,
and by your quiet faithfulness
be signs of God's growing Kingdom in the world.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

"The Kingdom of God often begins in ways too small for us
to notice—but nothing offered to God in faith and love is
ever insignificant."

28 July, 2026 – Tue. 17th Week in Ord. Time

Jer 14,17-22; Mt 13,36-43

INTRODUCTION

There are moments when we become impatient with people, with the world, and even with ourselves. We want quick solutions, quick changes, and quick judgments. Yet life often unfolds slowly, like a field growing quietly toward harvest.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that good and evil grow side by side in the field of the world. God does not abandon the field because weeds appear. Instead, he continues to sow goodness, mercy, and hope with patience and compassion.

The Lord sees beyond appearances. Where we see failure, he sees the possibility of growth. Where we see weakness, he sees hearts still capable of conversion. God is "slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness."

As we begin this Eucharist, let us ask pardon for the times we have judged harshly, lost hope in others, or failed to allow the Lord's good seed to grow within us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you sow the good seed of your word in every human heart: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are patient with our weakness and rich in compassion: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to trust in your final victory over evil: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God of tenderness and compassion forgive us our impatience, heal the hardness of our hearts, and strengthen within us the good seed of faith, hope, and love; and may almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Merciful and patient Father,
you never cease to sow the seed of your kingdom
within the field of our lives.

Teach us to trust in your wisdom, to refrain from harsh judgment, and to persevere in goodness and hope

until the day when your harvest is complete.

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 his grandson never to rush through the field after the first rains. The boy wanted to pull out every weed immediately, but the old man stopped him: “Wait. If you pull too quickly, you may tear out the wheat as well.” At first the boy thought it was simple to tell the difference between the two. But as the season passed, he learned that patience and wisdom were needed before the harvest could come.

Jesus uses that same image in today’s Gospel. The Son of Man sows good seed in the field of the world, yet weeds also appear. Jesus speaks honestly about life: good and evil exist side by side—in society, in the Church, and even within our own hearts. We know this from experience. Alongside kindness there can be cruelty, alongside truth deception, alongside faith doubt. The field of human life is

never perfectly clean.

The temptation is to judge quickly. We easily divide people into the good and the bad. Yet Jesus warns against this spirit: “Let them grow together until the harvest.” Human judgment is often incomplete and harsh. What looks hopeless today may still be transformed by grace tomorrow. That is why the first reading gives us that beautiful description of God: “The Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.” God’s patience gives people room to change.

Jesus himself lived this patience. He did not reject sinners but called them to new life. He saw beyond Peter’s weakness, beyond Zacchaeus’ greed, beyond the Samaritan woman’s past. Wherever Jesus went, he sowed seeds of mercy, healing, and hope. He asks us to do the same—not to spread bitterness and condemnation, but to sow goodness in a wounded world.

The Gospel also reminds us that evil will not have the final word. There will be a harvest, and God’s justice will come.

The weeds will not choke the wheat forever. Even when the world seems overwhelmed by darkness, Jesus assures us that “the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Our task is not to lose hope, but to remain faithful and allow the Lord’s good seed to grow within us.

Years later, that grandson stood in the same field at harvest time and finally understood his grandfather’s wisdom. The patience that once frustrated him had protected the wheat until it was ready. Looking across the golden field, he realized that God treats us in much the same way—with patience, mercy, and hope. Where we often see only weeds, God still sees the possibility of wheat.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts, signs of the harvest of the earth and the work of human hands, may become acceptable to God, the Father who patiently nurtures the good seed of his kingdom within us.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God,
receive these offerings we place upon your altar,
and through this sacred mystery
continue to strengthen within us
the seeds of faith, mercy, and perseverance.
May we bear good fruit for your kingdom
as we await the fullness of your harvest.
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 with patience and compassion
you guide the field of this world toward its true harvest.
You do not abandon your people in their weakness,
but constantly sow within us
the seed of your grace and truth.
In your Son, Jesus Christ,

you revealed mercy stronger than sin,
hope greater than despair,
and love that continues to call sinners to new life.
Through him you assure us
that goodness will finally triumph
and that the faithful will shine in your kingdom forever.
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

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father who patiently cares for his children
and leads them toward the harvest of eternal life:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
from the impatience that judges harshly,
from the discouragement that loses hope,
and from the bitterness that prevents the good seed of
your kingdom from growing 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 Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us patience, mercy, and trust in the Father's
wisdom.
Look not on our sins and harsh judgments,
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 good seed of mercy and hope
within us.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The Lord is patient with us.

He does not abandon the field of our lives because of
weakness or failure.

Nourished by this Eucharist, may we become good soil
where Christ's word bears lasting fruit, and may we learn
to see others with the same mercy God shows to us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God,
through this holy sacrament
you have nourished us with the bread of life.
Help us to grow in patience, compassion, and faithfulness,
so that the seed of your kingdom within us
may bear fruit for the life of the world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who patiently tends the field of his kingdom,
strengthen the good seed he has planted within you.

Amen.

May he teach you to be rich in mercy,
slow to judge, and steadfast in hope.

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 sowing seeds of
kindness, mercy, and hope in the world.

Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Where we often see only weeds, God still sees the
possibility of wheat.

29 July, 2026 – Wed. 17th Week in Ord. Time

Sts Martha, Mary and Lazarus

1 Jn 4,7-16; Jn 11,19-27 (or Lk 10,38-42)

INTRODUCTION

A teacher once noticed an elderly woman entering the chapel every evening after visiting hours at a nursing home. She never stayed long. She would sit quietly for a few minutes, light a candle, and leave. One evening the teacher asked her gently, “Do you always come to pray for someone?”

The woman smiled and replied, “Yes... for my husband. Some days he remembers me, some days he doesn't. But I come because love must still show up, even when words fail.”

There are moments in life when we discover that love is not measured by solutions or explanations, but by presence. To remain near someone in weakness, sorrow, confusion, or silence is already a powerful act of faith. Love stays, even when understanding cannot.

Today we celebrate Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus—a

family whose home became a place of friendship with Jesus. In their joys, grief, service, waiting, and faith, we recognize our own lives. Martha speaks her wounded trust, Mary listens at the Lord's feet, and Lazarus becomes a sign that Christ's love is stronger even than death.

As we gather around this altar, we acknowledge the times we have allowed anxiety to overcome trust, the times we have doubted the Lord's presence in suffering, and the times we have been too restless to listen to his voice. Let us ask God for mercy and open our hearts to his healing love.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you entered the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus with compassion and friendship:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us to trust even when we stand before sorrow and unanswered questions:

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the resurrection and the life, leading us from fear into hope: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who remains close to us in every grief and uncertainty strengthen our faith, calm our restless hearts, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

God of life and faithful love,
in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus
your Son revealed a friendship stronger than fear,
a presence deeper than sorrow,
and a promise stronger than death itself.
Teach us to serve you with generous hearts,
to listen to your word with quiet trust,
and to believe in your love
even when life remains unresolved.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

HOMILY

A sailor once found himself caught in a sudden storm off a rocky coast. The night was so dark that sea and sky seemed to blur into one. For hours he drifted without direction, trusting little more than the fragile hope that somewhere beyond the darkness there might still be land. Then, far off, a lighthouse flickered. It was not strong at first—just a faint, intermittent glow—but it was enough. He fixed his eyes on it and turned the boat toward that light. Later he would say: “I never saw the shore at first. I only saw that it was not lost to me.”

The red thread running through today’s word is simple yet demanding: God’s love in Christ is stronger than absence, stronger than death itself.

Saint John says it plainly: God is love. Not merely that God loves, but that God is love, revealed in Jesus Christ who enters friendship with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus—a household he knows, loves, and visits.

Yet love does not cancel grief. Martha’s words carry both faith and pain: “If you had been here, my brother would not

have died.” It is the cry of every believer who has stood before loss and felt the silence of God as absence. Her trust is wounded, but not destroyed.

Jesus does not rebuke her. He draws her further: “I am the resurrection and the life.” The answer to death is not an explanation, but a presence. Then comes the piercing question: “Do you believe this?”

And Martha, standing at the edge of her sorrow, gives the Church its enduring confession: “Yes, Lord, I believe...” Even before Lazarus is called out of the tomb, something deeper has already begun—communion with Christ that death cannot undo. This is what quietly sustains every Christian funeral, every candle lit in mourning, every prayer whispered through tears.

In another scene, Mary sits at the Lord’s feet, listening, while Martha is “worried about many things.” Jesus does not dismiss Martha’s service, but he gently reveals her inner unrest. Love needs both action and stillness, but without rooted listening, service becomes anxiety.

Many of us recognize both sisters within ourselves—the

one who serves and the one who sits, the one who believes and the one who still asks why. Faith does not erase that tension; it holds it before the Lord.

Even simple devotions, like lighting candles and praying for family intentions, carry this same truth: a love that refuses to let go of God even when understanding runs out. It is the human heart saying, in its own way, that presence still matters more than answers.

And so the question returns quietly: Do you believe this—not as idea, but as trust in the midst of what remains unresolved?

We stand with Martha before the mystery of death, and are invited to speak her faith: Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God.

A priest once arrived late to a small country cemetery. The burial had already begun. The family stood gathered in silence, faces heavy with grief. As he approached, he noticed a small boy standing slightly apart, holding a candle that kept flickering in the wind. The child was not crying. He was carefully shielding the flame with his hands

each time the breeze threatened to put it out.

After the service, the priest asked him why he held it so carefully. The boy replied, “My mum said Grandad’s not gone if we still remember him. I’m just making sure the light doesn’t go out.”

In that fragile flame there was something of Martha’s faith, something of Mary’s quiet listening, and something of Christ’s promise: “I am the resurrection and the life.”

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that as we place these gifts upon the altar, we may also place before the Lord our anxieties, our griefs, our hopes, and our trust, confident that Christ remains present among those who seek him with faith.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God,
accept these gifts offered in memory of Saints Martha,
Mary, and Lazarus.
As your Son was welcomed into their home with friendship
and faith,
may he also find a dwelling place within our hearts.
Through this sacrifice strengthen us to trust your presence
in times of sorrow,
to listen attentively to your word,
and to serve one another in 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 in the household of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus
your Son revealed the tenderness of divine friendship.
He welcomed the faith of Martha,

received the listening heart of Mary,
and wept at the tomb of Lazarus,
showing that no human sorrow is foreign to your
compassion.

In Christ you teach us
that your love does not abandon us in suffering,
nor does death have the final word.

For your Son is the resurrection and the life,
the light that no darkness can overcome.

And so, with Angels and Saints,
with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus,
and with all who place their hope in you,
we proclaim your glory as we sing:
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to pray as children who trust that the Father's love
remains with us even in sorrow, uncertainty, and death:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and graciously grant peace in our days,
that amid the anxieties and uncertainties of life
we may remain steadfast in faith,
trusting that your Son is the resurrection and the life.
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 Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus
you brought peace to hearts burdened by grief and fear.
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 One who stands beside us in sorrow,
who calls us from darkness into life,
and who assures us that love is stronger than death.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

“Do you believe this?”

The question Jesus asked Martha remains quietly before each of us. Faith is not the absence of grief or uncertainty. It is the courage to keep turning toward Christ even when the road ahead is unclear.

Today we have received the Lord who stayed with Martha and Mary, who wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and who revealed himself as the resurrection and the life. May his presence become the steady light we protect within our hearts, especially when the winds of fear or sorrow rise around us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, through this holy sacrament
you have nourished us with the presence of your Son,
who is the resurrection and the life.
May the example of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus
teach us to welcome Christ with faith,
to listen to him with attentive hearts,
and to remain steadfast in love through every trial.
Grant that strengthened by this Eucharist,
we may become signs of hope and consolation to others.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus Christ,
who called Lazarus from the tomb,
strengthen your faith in the power of his life-giving love.
May he grant you the peace of Mary’s listening heart
and the faithful courage of Martha’s confession.
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 of faithful presence, trusting hearts, and love that does not let the light go out.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Faith is not always seeing the shore clearly; sometimes it is simply refusing to let the light go out while trusting that Christ, the resurrection and the life, is still near.

30 July, 2026 – Thursday, 17th Week in Ord. Time

Jer 18,1-6; Mt 13,47-53

INTRODUCTION

A retired watchmaker once told of a customer who brought him an old pocket watch that no longer worked. Impatient and frustrated, the owner declared it useless and asked if it should simply be thrown away. The watchmaker opened it carefully, examined the tiny gears, and smiled. “It is not ruined,” he said. “It only needs time, patience, and the right hands.”

How often we forget that truth about people. We see weakness, failure, inconsistency, or sin, and we quickly conclude that nothing good can come from them anymore. We sometimes judge others by one moment, one mistake, or one visible imperfection.

Yet today the Word of God speaks differently. Jeremiah shows us the potter patiently reshaping the clay, while Jesus speaks of the great net gathering every kind of fish

before the final sorting is done. God does not abandon hastily, nor does He judge prematurely. His mercy continues to shape, restore, and gather us.

As we come before this patient and merciful God, let us acknowledge the times we have judged others harshly, resisted being reshaped ourselves, or forgotten that every person remains in God's hands. Let us ask for mercy and conversion of heart.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You gather all people into the wide net of Your mercy and never cease calling us back to You.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You are the divine Potter who patiently reshapes what is broken and restores what is wounded.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You alone judge with truth, compassion, and perfect justice when all things are fulfilled.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May the God who patiently forms us in His hands, forgives our harsh judgments, and restores what sin has damaged, open our hearts to His mercy and lead us into lives renewed by grace; and may almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who patiently shape Your people as the potter forms the clay, teach us to trust Your merciful wisdom, to refrain from judging others hastily, and to remain open to the transforming work of Your grace. Grant that, gathered into the wide embrace of Your kingdom, we may persevere faithfully until the day when You reveal all things in truth and love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

Along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, it would have been a common sight: fishermen hauling in a heavy dragnet, the mesh filled with movement—small fish, large fish, valuable and worthless by human standards, all caught together in one sweeping movement of the sea. It is into this ordinary scene that Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom, he says, is like that net.

Nothing is excluded at the moment of drawing in. The net does not discriminate; it gathers. In this image we see the heart of Jesus' ministry—wide, unselective, reaching into places others avoided, embracing those labelled clean and unclean, worthy and unworthy. God's grace, revealed in Christ, is not a narrow stream but a wide current drawing all into its reach.

Yet Jesus does not end with the gathering. There is also the quiet moment on the shore, when the fishermen sit and sort what has been collected. This final discernment is not theirs by right of opinion, but a task that belongs ultimately to God. Here we are reminded that judgment is not ours to

seize prematurely. We often confuse our limited vision with God's clarity, forgetting that what is unfinished in others may still be under divine shaping.

Jeremiah's image of the potter deepens this truth. The clay that spoils in the potter's hands is not thrown away in haste; it is reshaped. What looks like failure can become new possibility. In the same way, lives that appear broken or incomplete are still in the hands of the One who continues to form, reform, and restore. No one is beyond the reach of that patient crafting.

Jesus also speaks of the disciple who brings out from the storeroom things both new and old. Faith is not a rejection of what has been, but a discovery of how God continually brings forth new meaning from what is already given. Like Moses before the Tent of Meeting, we recognize moments of divine presence that both humble and invite us forward. Yet unlike Moses, we are called not to withdraw in fear, but to come closer in trust.

We are therefore placed between gathering and sorting, between mercy and truth, between what is already and

what is still becoming. And we are warned gently: do not rush to sit as judges in a story that is still unfolding.

A man once served for many years as a courtroom clerk. He often watched people arrive convinced of their certainty about guilt or innocence, justice or injustice. But over time, he noticed something sobering: the final verdict often revealed a truth far more complex than the first impressions of the crowd. What seemed obvious at the beginning was frequently transformed by evidence that only emerged at the end.

So it will be with us. The net has already been cast wide in Christ; we are already held within its reach. But the final truth of our lives rests not in our quick judgments, but in the hands of the One who gathers, forms, and finally discerns with perfect justice and unfailing mercy.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts, placed into the hands of the Lord who patiently shapes and renews His people, may become an acceptable sacrifice for our salvation and for the salvation of the whole world.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God, receive these offerings from the people You continue to gather and form by Your grace.

As clay is shaped in the potter's hands,
so may our lives be transformed through this sacrifice,
that we may grow in mercy, humility, and trust in Your wisdom. 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 patient and rich in mercy,
never abandoning the work of Your hands.
Like the potter who reshapes the clay,
You continue to form Your people through grace,
healing what is wounded
and restoring what has been broken by sin.

In Your Son, Jesus Christ,
You cast wide the net of divine compassion,
gathering people of every nation and condition
into the hope of Your kingdom.
You alone know the depths of every heart,
and You alone judge with perfect justice and unfailing love.

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

Gathered into the wide net of God's mercy and trusting in
the Father who continues to shape our lives with patience
and love, we dare to pray:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the pride that judges others harshly
and resists the work of Your grace 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.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You gather the scattered, restore the broken,
and patiently lead Your people toward the fullness of truth.
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 gathers us into the net of His mercy
and reshapes us through His love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, You have touched us again with Your patient mercy.
You do not discard us when we fail,
nor abandon us when we are unfinished.
Remain with us as the divine Potter of our lives.
Teach us to trust Your timing,
to leave judgment in Your hands,
and to become instruments of mercy in a world quick to condemn.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Sacrament of salvation,
we humbly pray, O Lord, that You who continually gather
and renew Your people may shape our hearts according to
the likeness of Your Son. Teach us to live with patience,
humility, and compassion, so that, trusting in Your mercy,
we may one day rejoice in the fullness of Your kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who gathers you into the net of His mercy,
keep you faithful in hope and steadfast in love. Amen.
May He who shapes your lives like clay in the potter's
hands heal what is broken and strengthen what is good
within you. Amen.
May He teach you to trust His judgment, to refrain from
condemning others, and to walk always in humility and
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 forth in peace, trusting the patient mercy of God, and be instruments of His compassion in the world.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“God is still shaping what we are tempted to judge too quickly.”

31 July, 2026 – Friday, 17th Week in Ord. Time

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Jer 26,1-9; Mt 13,54-58

INTRODUCTION

A small coastal town once prided itself on knowing everyone's business. When a famous concert pianist returned home after years of touring the world, some locals shrugged and said, “Isn't that just the boy who used to practice scales with his window open?” They could not reconcile the ordinary child they remembered with the extraordinary artist the world now applauded. Familiarity, in their case, dulled their capacity for wonder.

Something similar can happen in our spiritual lives. We hear the Gospel so often, say the prayers so regularly, and come to this altar so faithfully that we can begin to assume we already know everything about God. Yet the Lord continues to surprise, challenge, and invite us into deeper faith.

St Ignatius of Loyola teaches us that questions themselves are not the enemy of faith. What matters is whether our

questions are held with humility and openness before God, or whether they become walls that keep God at a distance. The people of Nazareth questioned Jesus, but their hearts remained closed.

As we gather for this Eucharist, let us ask the Lord to free us from every blindness caused by routine, pride, or familiarity, and let us open our hearts to the living Christ present among us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you come to us in humble and ordinary ways, yet we often fail to recognise your presence:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you invite us to seek you with trusting and discerning hearts, yet we allow doubt and self-assurance to close us to your grace: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you continue to speak through your word and your sacraments, yet we sometimes listen without wonder or expectation: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

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

COLLECT

God our Father,
you revealed your Son to the world in humility and simplicity, and you taught Saint Ignatius to seek and find you in all things.

Grant that we may never allow familiarity to weaken our faith, but with discerning hearts may recognise Christ living and working among us each day.

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 secondary school teacher once returned to his hometown after many years away. At school, he had become known as an inspiring educator, someone whose words opened minds and changed lives. But in his hometown, he was still “the son of the local mechanic.”

When he was invited to speak at a community gathering, some came out of curiosity, but others stayed away, saying, “We already know him.” They thought they did—but they didn’t.

Something similar happens in today’s Gospel. Jesus returns to Nazareth, the place where everyone knew him as the carpenter’s son. At first, the people are astonished: “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” It is a good question, an honest one. It could have opened the door to faith. But it doesn’t. Instead, it becomes a barrier: “They did not accept him.”

Their problem is not ignorance but familiarity without openness. They cannot see beyond what they already think they know. And so the question that could have led them to God becomes a stumbling stone instead of a stepping stone. Jesus, like the prophets before him—Jeremiah included in today’s first reading—is met not with trust but with resistance in his own homeland.

The same dynamic is still alive in human hearts. We can ask good spiritual questions, but subtly use them to keep

God at a distance. We can reduce Christ to what is already comfortable and manageable, rather than allowing him to be who he truly is: the living presence of God who cannot be contained by our categories. The red thread running through today’s word is this: *questions either open us to God or close us off from him, depending on whether they are asked in faith or in self-assurance.*

St Ignatius would say that discernment is needed here. Not every question leads in the same direction. Some questions, when held in prayer, deepen trust and expand vision. Others, when held only in suspicion, shrink the heart. Faith is not the absence of questioning, but the willingness to let Christ purify how we question.

So the Gospel invites us today to allow Christ to be more than “familiar.” He is not simply the figure we think we already understand. He continues to come in ways that unsettle expectations—often through the ordinary, the overlooked, even the uncomfortable.

A final story brings this home. An elderly woman once said that she had attended Mass for decades but only began to

truly believe when she stopped assuming she already knew everything about it. One day, while listening to the familiar words of consecration, she suddenly became aware—not of something new happening—but of something she had always missed: that Christ was truly there, quietly present in what had become routine. That moment did not change what was happening at the altar; it changed what she was able to see.

The Lord is always nearer than we think. The question is whether we will let our familiarity blind us—or open us—to the mystery standing in our midst.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that our hearts may remain open to the Lord who comes to us in ordinary bread and wine, and that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God,
accept these gifts we place upon your altar,
and through this sacred offering free us from every
blindness of heart.
Teach us, like Saint Ignatius, to recognise your presence
hidden within the ordinary moments of life,
so that our faith may deepen and our trust grow stronger.
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 cease to draw your people to yourself,
often through humble and unexpected ways.
In your Son Jesus Christ,
the carpenter of Nazareth,
you revealed the fullness of your wisdom and love.
Yet many failed to recognise him
because they looked only with human eyes.

In Saint Ignatius of Loyola

you gave the Church a faithful servant

whose searching heart learned to discern your voice in all things.

He taught your people to seek you with openness and trust, so that questioning might lead not to fear but to deeper faith.

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,
let us pray with trusting hearts to the Father who is always
nearer to us than we imagine:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and free our hearts from the blindness that comes through
pride and routine.

Grant us the grace to recognise your presence in the
ordinary moments of life,
and keep us open to the surprising ways your Spirit
continues to work among us.

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 were rejected in your hometown
yet continued to offer mercy, patience, and peace.

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 comes among us in humility and
hiddenness,
calling us to recognise his living presence with open and
trusting hearts.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

How often the Lord has stood quietly beside us while we
assumed we already knew him.
In this Eucharist, Christ once again comes hidden in what
seems ordinary.
Faith begins anew whenever familiarity gives way to
wonder,
and when the heart says, with humility:
“Lord, help me to see you more clearly.”

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these sacred mysteries,
we ask you, Lord,
to deepen within us the gift of discerning faith.
May this Eucharist open our eyes to recognise Christ
present in our daily lives,
and strengthen us to follow him with generous and trusting
hearts,
after the example of Saint Ignatius.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord open your hearts to recognise his presence
in the ordinary moments of life. Amen.
May he deepen within you the grace of discernment,
so that your questions may always lead you closer to him.
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 recognising his presence in all things.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Familiarity can make us overlook what is most sacred. Faith begins again when we stop assuming we already know Christ and allow ourselves to encounter him anew.

1 August, 2026 – Saturday, 17th Week in Ord. Time

St. Alphonsus Liguori ; Jer 26,11-16. 24; Mt 14,1-12

INTRODUCTION

A retired school principal once told of a student who had been wrongly blamed for vandalism. The easier path would have been to let the quiet boy accept the punishment and move on. But one teacher spoke up and defended him, even though it meant opposing influential parents and facing criticism from colleagues. “It cost her popularity,” the principal said, “but it gave the boy back his dignity.” Years later, that student returned as a successful lawyer and said, “One person’s courage taught me never to betray the truth.”

Truth often asks something costly of us. It is easy to speak honestly when there is no risk. But when truth threatens comfort, reputation, or acceptance, fear can slowly silence the conscience.

Today Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and St Alphonsus Liguori remind us that fidelity to God is not measured by

convenience but by courage. Their lives reveal that the Spirit of God gives freedom to those who stand firm in truth, even under pressure.

As we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge the moments when we have compromised too easily, remained silent when truth needed defending, or chosen comfort over conscience. Let us ask the Lord for mercy and freedom of heart.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you are the faithful witness who spoke truth without fear and remained steadfast in the Father's will:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you free us from the chains of fear, compromise, and human approval by the power of your Spirit: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you strengthen the weak and give courage to all who seek to follow truth with integrity and love:
Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

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

COLLECT

O God, who gave Saint Alphonsus Liguori wisdom and pastoral charity
to guide your people in truth and mercy,
grant us the grace
to follow the voice of conscience formed by your Spirit,
so that, standing firm in faith and integrity,
we may remain faithful to your will
amid the pressures and compromises of this 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 site engineer once refused to approve a newly constructed public building after discovering that substandard materials had been used. His supervisor reminded him that “signing off was just a formality,” and that delays would cost contracts and reputations. When he persisted in refusing, he was sidelined and replaced. The building eventually opened, but years later it required extensive repairs after serious safety issues came to light. His quiet refusal had been costly—but it had been right.

That tension between truth and pressure runs through today’s readings. Jeremiah is threatened with death for speaking God’s word, yet he refuses to soften or withdraw it. John the Baptist, in the gospel, stands in a similar place. He speaks truth to Herod—not to provoke, but because fidelity to God’s law leaves him no other option. And for that fidelity, he is imprisoned and eventually executed.

Herod himself embodies the tragedy of divided conscience. He is not without insight; he knows John is a righteous

man. Yet he is trapped by pride, public image, and a rash oath made in a moment of weakness. What he cannot govern within himself—his fear of losing face—ends up governing his actions. In contrast, John possesses no political power, yet he has moral authority. One is bound by appearances; the other is free in truth.

The gospel quietly reveals a pattern that will be fulfilled in Jesus himself: the prophet who speaks God’s word becomes the one rejected by systems that prefer comfort over conversion. Innocent suffering appears again and again in salvation history—not because God wills it, but because human freedom can resist the light.

Yet neither Jeremiah nor John is defined by victimhood. They are defined by fidelity. Their lives become places where truth is spoken without compromise, even when the cost is high. And in that fidelity, they already point beyond themselves to Christ, whose love transforms even unjust suffering into forgiveness and life.

There is also a quieter question that reaches us here: where do we stand when truth becomes costly? Not only in dramatic moments, but in ordinary ones—when honesty is inconvenient, when silence is easier, when small compromises accumulate. The gospel does not first accuse; it reveals. And what it reveals is our need for freedom in the Spirit.

This is where St Alphonsus Liguori, whom we also remember today, speaks with gentle clarity: conscience must be formed, not manipulated; truth must be followed, not negotiated away. His teaching echoes the same red thread running through Jeremiah and John—the quiet but unyielding dignity of a conscience anchored in God.

And yet the deepest truth of this day is not simply human courage, but divine faithfulness. The One whom John foreshadows does not abandon those who suffer for truth. He enters that suffering himself, and from within it reveals that love is stronger than fear, and forgiveness stronger than violence.

A story from wartime Europe tells of a prisoner in Auschwitz who volunteered to take the place of another man condemned to death. He was not powerful, nor influential, but he refused to let hatred have the final word. As he was led away, he prayed quietly for those around him. In that act, witnessed in silence, many later said they saw something they could not explain—something of freedom that no prison could contain.

That is the mystery today's Word opens before us: truth may be resisted, but it cannot be extinguished. And wherever it is lived—even at great cost—it becomes a sign that God's Spirit is still at work in the world.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice, offered with sincere and truthful hearts, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May these offerings we bring before you, O Lord,
become for us a sign of hearts made faithful and free by
your Spirit,
so that, following the example of Saint Alphonsus
and all your holy witnesses,
we may remain steadfast in truth and charity
amid the trials of this passing world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For in every age you raise up faithful servants
who speak your truth with courage and love.
In Jeremiah you revealed that your word cannot be
silenced by fear; in John the Baptist
you showed the freedom of a conscience
anchored in righteousness;

and in Saint Alphonsus
you taught your Church
that truth and mercy belong together in your saving plan.

Through their witness
you strengthen your pilgrim people
to resist the pressures of compromise
and to walk in the freedom of your Spirit.
For your Son, Jesus Christ,
entered human suffering and rejection
and transformed them by his obedience and love,
so that no act of fidelity offered in faith
is ever lost before 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

At the Saviour's command and formed by the freedom of God's Spirit, we dare to pray for the courage to live as children of truth:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the fear that weakens conscience
and the compromises that distance us from your truth.
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.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you remained faithful to the truth
even when faced with rejection and suffering.
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 remained faithful unto death
and whose truth sets us free.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Truth is often quiet.
It does not always triumph loudly or quickly.
Jeremiah stood nearly alone.

John the Baptist died in silence behind prison walls.
Yet neither life was wasted, because both belonged to God.

In this Eucharist, Christ gives us not only strength to endure, but freedom to live with integrity.

The Spirit we receive today is stronger than fear,
stronger than pressure,
stronger even than suffering.

For wherever truth is lived in love,
God's kingdom is already present.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who have nourished us with the Bread of life,
grant that, strengthened by these sacred mysteries,
we may remain faithful to your truth
with courage, humility, and charity,
and so become living witnesses
to the freedom that comes from your Spirit.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord strengthen your hearts
to stand firm in truth when it is difficult,
to follow conscience with courage,
and to walk always in the freedom of his Spirit.

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 of integrity,
courage, and truth.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Truth may cost something, but compromise costs far more.
A conscience anchored in God remains free, even under pressure.