

2 August, 2026 – 18th Sunday in Ord. Time

Is 55,1-3; Rom 8,35. 37-39; Mt 14,13-21

INTRODUCTION

A teacher once asked her students to bring something to class that represented happiness. One child brought a new toy, another a mobile phone, another a bundle of money from a game set. But one little girl brought a small loaf of bread. When the teacher asked why, she said, “Because when my mother shares bread with us at the table, I know we belong to each other.”

There is a hunger in every human heart that no success, possession, or entertainment can fully satisfy. We long not only for food and security, but also for love, meaning, forgiveness, and hope.

Today’s readings reveal a God who invites, nourishes, and remains faithful. Through the prophet Isaiah, God cries out to the thirsty: “Come!” In the Gospel, Jesus feeds the hungry crowd with compassion. And Saint Paul assures us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

As we gather around the table of the Eucharist, let us

acknowledge the times we searched for satisfaction in the wrong places, the times we doubted God’s love, and the times we failed to share our bread, our time, and our compassion with others.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You invite the hungry and thirsty to come to You for life: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You take our little and transform it into abundance through Your love: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful to us, and nothing can separate us from Your love: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who feeds the hungry with good things, strengthens the weak with His mercy, and never ceases to love His people, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

Because God continues to feed His people with mercy, hope, and unfailing love, let us now join the angels in praising Him as we sing:

COLLECT

O God, source of every good gift
and fulfilment of every human longing,
teach us to hunger above all
for the food that endures to eternal life.
Strengthen us through Your compassion,
so that, trusting completely in Your faithful love,
we may share generously with those in need
and never lose hope in Your providence.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE CREDO

Trusting in the God who feeds us with His Word,
strengthens us with His love, and remains faithful for ever,
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,
who calls every human heart
to the waters of life and the banquet of grace.
He is the God of compassion and fidelity,
who never abandons His people
and whose mercy endures for ever.
We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who became poor so that we might become rich in grace.
He welcomed the weary, healed the brokenhearted,
and fed the hungry with bread and hope.
When humanity stood empty and searching,
He revealed the overflowing abundance of God's love.
With five loaves and two fish
He taught us that what is little in human hands
becomes more than enough in His.
Through His Death and Resurrection
He became for us the Bread of eternal life,
and nothing—not suffering, failure, sin, nor death itself—

can separate us from His love.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us in our weakness,
comforts us in our loneliness,
and awakens within us a deeper hunger for God.

The Spirit teaches us to trust,
to persevere in hope,
and to become bread broken and shared for others.

We believe in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church,
called to continue Christ's mission in the world:

to welcome the stranger,
to feed the hungry,
to comfort the sorrowful,
and to proclaim the everlasting covenant of God's love.

We believe in the forgiveness of sins,
in the power of mercy stronger than our failures,
in the resurrection of the dead,
and in the eternal banquet of heaven,
where every hunger will be satisfied
and God will be all in all. Amen.

HOMILY

A traveler once arrived late at night in a small mountain village after walking for hours in the cold rain. Every inn was closed. Tired, wet, and hungry, he knocked at the door of a poor farmhouse. An elderly woman opened the door. She had very little: a loaf of bread, some soup left from supper, and one dry blanket. Yet she welcomed the stranger as though he were family.

Years later, the traveler wrote about that night. What he remembered most was not the food or the warmth, but the feeling that, for those few hours, he was deeply wanted, deeply received, deeply loved. "That poor woman," he wrote, "gave me more than a meal. She gave me back my courage to live."

That story touches the heart of today's readings. Again and again, God appears before us not as a distant ruler, but as one who invites, feeds, and remains faithful. Through Isaiah, through Saint Paul, and through the miracle of the loaves, we hear one great message: God wants us, God feeds us, and nothing can separate us from His love.

When I was a child, every village fair had a man called the “*cheap Jack*”—in German, the *billige Jakob*. He stood beside a tiny market stall wearing a tall hat decorated with bright ribbons, loudly calling out to the crowd:

“Come here, ladies and gentlemen! Don’t walk past! Stop and listen! You’ll never get this offer again!”

He shouted so loudly that people stopped almost against their will. Children gathered. Old people smiled. Curious crowds formed around him. He made his product sound so wonderful and so cheap that one almost thought it was free.

That childhood memory came back to me when I read today’s words from the prophet Isaiah:

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters!
You who have no money, come, buy and eat!”

God sounds almost like that market crier standing in the middle of the marketplace of humanity, calling out to distracted people rushing past Him.

But there is one enormous difference.
The market seller wanted customers.

God wants *us*.

The seller wanted to make a profit.

God wants to give life.

And notice something beautiful in Isaiah’s invitation. At first, it sounds as though God is speaking about bread and wine and milk. But gradually the invitation deepens:

“Listen to me, and you shall live.”

Not “Buy and you shall live.”

Not “Achieve and you shall live.”

Not “Earn and you shall live.”

But:

“Listen... and you shall live.”

A young businessman once confessed to a priest that he had everything he had dreamed of—money, status, travel, success—and yet every Sunday evening he felt strangely empty. “I keep climbing,” he said, “but I don’t know what mountain I’m climbing anymore.”

How many people live like that today?

People spend enormous amounts of money searching for

happiness. Some climb endlessly up the ladder of success, not because they need more money, but because they want significance. Others travel constantly, not to rest, but to say, "I have been there." Others spend fortunes trying to stay young, attractive, successful, emotionally balanced. And yet, beneath all this activity remains a quiet hunger of the heart.

Isaiah asks us today:

"Why spend your money on what does not satisfy?"

It is one of the most piercing questions in Scripture.

Because deep down, every human being thirsts not only for food, not only for comfort, but for meaning, permanence, and love that does not disappear.

That is why today's Gospel is so moving.

Jesus has just heard the terrible news of John the Baptist's execution. He tries to withdraw to a lonely place. He Himself is grieving. He wants silence. Rest. Solitude. But the crowds follow Him.

And instead of irritation, the Gospel says:

"He was moved with compassion."

That line tells us everything about the heart of Christ.

Most of us know what it feels like to be emotionally exhausted. We know what it means to feel we have nothing left to give. The disciples certainly felt that way.

Looking at the enormous crowd, they said:

"We have only five loaves and two fish."

In other words: "It is not enough."

And how often we say the same thing.

"I don't have enough strength."

"I don't have enough patience."

"I don't have enough faith."

"I don't have enough love left."

But Jesus says:

"Bring them to me."

That changes everything.

Placed in human hands, five loaves are insufficient.

Placed in Christ's hands, they become abundance.

Some years ago, while visiting Belgium, I entered a small church where the tomb of Saint Damien of Molokai is kept. Damien had volunteered to serve lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Eventually he contracted the disease himself and was forbidden ever to leave the island again. He could easily have become bitter. Instead, he poured himself out even more completely for the suffering people around him.

He built homes, dressed wounds, buried the dead, comforted the lonely. And in one of his letters he admitted something profoundly simple: without the Eucharist, he could never have endured such isolation and suffering.

The Eucharist became his strength.

Damien had very little left to give. Yet what little he placed into Christ's hands became food for an entire community.

Like the five loaves and two fish.

Like so many hidden saints in ordinary life.

I once knew an elderly widow who lived alone and suffered constant pain. She told me, "Father, I can no longer do

great things. But every morning I offer my loneliness to Jesus for someone who feels abandoned." That woman probably never realized how radiant her faith had become. Her suffering, placed into Christ's hands, became love.

Saint Paul takes today's message even deeper.

Perhaps no words in Scripture have comforted more people than these:

"Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ."

Nothing.

Not suffering.

Not failure.

Not sickness.

Not betrayal.

Not sin.

Not death itself.

Paul almost sings those words with amazement:

"Neither death nor life, neither present things nor future things... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In a world where promises are often broken, this is astonishing.

Every priest feels a shiver when asking a bride and groom:

“Will you remain faithful in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, until death do you part?”

Because fidelity is difficult. Human love is beautiful, but fragile.

And yet Paul says there is a love stronger even than death itself.

God does not love us only when we are successful, holy, or emotionally strong. He loves us because His love is rooted not in our worthiness but in His faithfulness.

God says through Isaiah:

“I will make an everlasting covenant with you.”

An everlasting covenant.

That means God does not wake up one morning and decide to stop loving us. His mercy is not a passing mood. His fidelity does not fluctuate.

Even King David—sinner, adulterer, murderer—was not

abandoned by God.

And neither will we be.

There is a beautiful film called *Babette's Feast*. It tells the story of a strict, joyless religious community in a remote Danish village. Into that cold world comes Babette, a refugee woman who one day unexpectedly wins a large sum of money.

Instead of keeping it for herself, she spends everything preparing an extravagant feast for the villagers.

At first they are suspicious. But as the meal unfolds, old resentments soften. Wounded relationships heal. Frozen hearts begin to thaw. Through the abundance of the feast, grace enters quietly into their lives.

That is what Christ does.

The miracle of the loaves is not only about bread. It is about the overflowing generosity of God. In Christ there is always more mercy than our sin, more love than our failures, more life than our deaths.

A little child once asked his grandmother, “Does God ever get tired of loving us?”

The grandmother smiled and took him outside at night. Pointing to the stars, she said, “As long as those lights shine in the sky, remember this: God’s love shines even longer.”

Dear brothers and sisters, we spend much of our lives afraid that we are not enough, afraid that we will be abandoned, afraid that our emptiness will remain empty forever.

But today the Lord stands in the marketplace of this world calling out:

“Come to me.”

Come with your hunger.

Come with your exhaustion.

Come with your failures.

Come with your little five loaves and two fish.

And hear again the promise of Christ:

“Nothing can separate you from my love.” Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts, humble as the five loaves and two fish, may become through God’s grace a source of life and salvation, and that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord our God, accept the gifts we bring before You and transform them by Your power and mercy.

As Christ multiplied the loaves

to satisfy the hunger of the crowd,

so may this sacrifice nourish us

with the food of eternal life

and teach us to trust in Your abundant 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, through Christ our Lord.

For in Your compassion
You never abandon Your people.
When humanity wandered in hunger and thirst,
You called us back to Yourself
through the words of the prophets
and fed us with the promise of Your covenant.

In Christ Your Son,
You revealed the fullness of Your love.
He welcomed the weary, comforted the sorrowful,
fed the hungry crowds, and showed that no human poverty
is greater than Your mercy.

Through His Death and Resurrection
You opened for us the banquet of eternal life,
where no one is forgotten
and nothing can separate us from Your 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...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Gathered around the table of the Lord, and trusting in the
Father whose love never abandons His children, let us
pray with confidence in the words Jesus Himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
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 fed the hungry, welcomed the weary,
and reconciled hearts through the abundance of Your love.

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 feeds us with the Bread of Life
and whose love nothing on earth can overcome.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,
today You have fed us once more
with the bread that truly satisfies.

When we feel empty, remind us that Your love is enough.
When we feel weak, teach us to place our little into Your
hands.

When we fear abandonment, let us remember Your
promise that nothing can separate us from Your love.

May this Eucharist strengthen us
to become bread broken for others, hope for the
discouraged, and compassion for those who hunger in
body or spirit. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed by these heavenly gifts,
we humbly beseech You, O Lord,
that, nourished by the Bread of Life
and strengthened by the assurance of Your faithful love,
we may persevere in hope,
serve our brothers and sisters with generous hearts,
and one day share fully
in the eternal banquet of Your Kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who fed the hungry crowd with compassion, fill your hearts with trust in His providence. Amen.

May He strengthen you to share generously whatever gifts you have received from Him. Amen.

And may you always remain certain that nothing can separate you from the love of Christ. 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, sharing the bread of kindness, hope, and compassion with all you meet.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“We may feel that what we have is too little.

But when our lives are placed into Christ’s hands, even small loaves become abundance, and nothing can separate us from His love.”

3 August, 2026 – Mon., 18th Week in Ord. Time

St. Dominic; Jer 28,1-17; Mt 14,22-36

INTRODUCTION

A mountain rescue team once told of a climber who became disoriented in thick fog high on a ridge. Visibility dropped to almost nothing, and every direction looked the same. What saved him was not sight, but sound—the steady pulse of a distant radio beacon guiding him step by step back to safety. He later said he had never been so aware of how fragile his sense of direction could be.

Life often feels a little like that ridge: familiar paths suddenly obscured, decisions no longer clear, and strength not quite enough for what lies ahead. In such moments, what we rely on becomes very revealing.

Today’s gospel quietly places us in the midst of storm and silence, fear and faith, distance and nearness to God. It invites us to notice where we turn when the winds rise and when the waters deepen.

And so, as we gather our scattered thoughts and fragile trust, we prepare to acknowledge those moments when we

have lost our bearing and failed to listen for God's guiding presence, as we enter into the penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you withdrew into prayer to remain one with the Father and attentive to the needs of your people:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you stretched out your hand to Peter when fear caused him to sink beneath the waves:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you come to us in every storm with the words, "Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid": Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who never abandons us in the storms of life, strengthen our weak faith, steady our fearful hearts, and lead us from isolation into deeper trust through communion with him, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who led Saint Dominic
to draw strength from prayer
and to proclaim your truth with courage and compassion,
grant that amid the storms and uncertainties of life
we may listen attentively to your voice,
trust in your saving presence,
and walk with steadfast faith toward your Kingdom.
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 coastal village once spoke of an old fisherman who would go out alone before dawn, even in uncertain weather. One morning, a sudden squall rolled in faster than expected. From the shore, those watching feared the worst, for his boat had disappeared into mist and wind. Yet he had taught the younger fishers something important: never set out into the sea without first listening to the wind in silence.

In today's gospel, we see Jesus doing something similar, though in a far deeper way. After sending the disciples ahead, he goes up the mountain alone to pray. This is not escape but communion. In solitude with the Father, Jesus draws strength, clarity, and love. And from that place of prayer, he becomes attentive—not absent—to the struggle of his disciples on the sea.

That is the first movement of the gospel: prayer does not remove Jesus from the world; it roots him more deeply within it. The storm does not hide the disciples from him. Rather, his communion with the Father opens his heart to their need. Here lies the first challenge for us: we often think prayer takes us away from responsibility, when in fact it deepens our capacity to respond.

There is a second movement in the gospel: the cry of Peter. As he begins to sink, he prays the shortest and perhaps most honest prayer in Scripture: "Lord, save me." It is not polished or theological. It is the prayer of someone who knows he cannot stand on his own. And immediately, Jesus stretches out his hand. Between sinking and saving,

there is only trust.

A young lifeguard once recalled a similar moment during training. A swimmer, panicking in rough water, stopped trying to fight the waves and simply shouted for help. The lifeguard said that everything changed in that instant—not because the sea calmed, but because the swimmer finally let himself be reached. Faith often begins there: not in control, but in surrender.

Then comes the third movement: the disciples' recognition, "Truly, you are the Son of God." What began in fear ends in praise. The One who walks upon the waves is not a stranger to their struggle but the very presence of God within it. The storm does not disappear immediately, but something deeper is revealed: they are not alone.

And this is where the gospel draws us in. Jesus still comes toward us in the storms we cannot master. He still speaks the same words: "Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid." The red thread running through it all is simple but demanding: *from solitude in prayer to strength in the storm*. Years later, that old fisherman from the coastal village was

once again caught in bad weather. A rescue boat eventually reached him, and those on board asked why he had not turned back sooner. He simply replied that in the middle of the waves, he had learned to listen—not only to the wind, but to the One who speaks through it.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that as we place these gifts upon the altar,
the Lord may receive the fears, struggles, and silent
prayers we carry within us,
and strengthen us to trust him amid every storm,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May these offerings, O Lord,
become for us a sign of your saving presence,
so that, strengthened by communion with you,
we may not lose heart in times of trial
but learn to trust the hand of Christ

who reaches out to lift us when we falter.

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 beloved Son
you have shown us the path from prayer to faithful service.
In the silence of the mountain
he sought communion with you,
and from that communion
he came to strengthen those overwhelmed by fear and
struggle.

When the disciples were tossed about by the waves,
he did not abandon them,
but walked toward them with words of courage and peace.
When Peter cried out in weakness,
your Son stretched forth his saving hand,
revealing that your mercy is always nearer
than the storms that threaten us.

Through him you teach us
that faith is born not from human strength
but from trust in your abiding presence.
And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory,
as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Trusting in the Father who hears the cry of his children in
every storm, and strengthened by the prayer of Christ
himself, we dare to say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and calm the fears that trouble our hearts.
In moments when faith grows weak
and the winds of life seem too strong,
keep us attentive to the voice of your Son
who calls us to courage and trust.

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,
who came to your disciples across the troubled waters
and spoke peace into their 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,
behold him who reaches out his hand to save us in every
storm.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In the quiet of this Eucharist,
the Lord who prayed upon the mountain
has drawn near to us once more.
He does not promise a life without storms,
but a presence that never abandons us within them.
Like Peter, we may falter.
Like the disciples, we may fear the waves around us.
Yet Christ continues to speak gently to the heart:
“Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid.”
May this communion teach us
to listen more deeply,
to trust more freely,
and to recognize the hand of the Lord
already reaching toward us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed by these sacred mysteries, O Lord,
may we learn, through the example of Saint Dominic,
to seek you faithfully in prayer
and to remain steadfast amid the storms of life.

Strengthened by the presence of Christ,
may we walk in trust and bring courage to those who are
afraid. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who strengthened his disciples in the midst
of the storm, keep your hearts firm in faith
and your minds at peace amid every trial. Amen.

May Christ, who withdrew in prayer to remain close to the
Father, teach you to listen for God’s voice
in silence, uncertainty, and daily life. Amen.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, trusting that the Lord walks toward you
even through the deepest waters.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Prayer does not remove us from the storms of life; it roots
us more deeply in the presence of the One who walks
through them with us.”

4 August, 2026 – Tuesday, 18th Week in Ord. Time

St. John Vianney

Jer 30,1-2. 12-15. 18-22; Mt 15,1-2. 10-14

“God forms a new heart where human appearances fail.”

INTRODUCTION

A man once spent weeks repainting the façade of his house. He wanted it to look perfect from the street—fresh colours, clean lines, polished appearance. Yet one evening, after a heavy rain, part of the outer wall collapsed. The foundation had been quietly eroding for years, unnoticed beneath the surface. What looked impressive outside was not strong where it mattered most.

It is a familiar human temptation: to focus on what can be seen, measured, and approved by others, while neglecting what is hidden but essential. Appearances can be carefully managed, yet the inner life left unattended. Over time, however, what is inside inevitably reveals itself.

The Scriptures today draw us beneath the surface. The Lord speaks not first about what we do with our hands or

how we are seen by others, but about what lives in the depth of the human heart. It is there that truth, love, and faith either grow or wither.

And so we come before the Lord aware that, more often than we admit, we have invested in appearances while neglecting interior conversion. We ask forgiveness for the times we have valued what is external over what is true, and we turn now to the mercy of God in the penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You look beyond appearances and search the depth of the human heart: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You heal the wounded soil of our lives and restore what sin has damaged: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You fill our hearts with the light of Your Spirit and lead us into truth: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, heal what is hardened within us, renew our hearts by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who desire truth in the depths of the human heart
and never cease to restore what is wounded by sin,
pour the light of your Holy Spirit upon us,
that, freed from empty appearances,
we may become a people renewed within
and bear the lasting fruit of holiness and love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A farmer once complained about a fig tree in his orchard.
“The leaves are beautiful,” he said, “but the fruit is always
poor.” One day, instead of simply pruning the visible
branches, he began to study the soil. He discovered that
beneath the surface, the roots were tangled around stones,
unable to draw nourishment. The problem was not what
could be seen, but what could not.
This image helps us enter the heart of today’s Gospel. The

Pharisees are preoccupied with what is visible: washing
hands, external rituals, correct observance. Jesus does not
dismiss the value of tradition, but He insists that the deeper
issue is the heart. “What comes out of the mouth proceeds
from the heart,” He says. It is the inner source that
determines the fruit of a life.

This is where the prophet Jeremiah brings surprising hope.
At first, the message is stark: wounds, sin, and apparent
ruin. Yet suddenly God speaks a word of restoration—“I
will restore, I will take pity, you shall be my people.” Even
when the inner soil of life seems damaged, God is not
finished. Where human effort reaches its limit, divine mercy
begins its work.

That is why the Christian life is not first a matter of external
compliance, but of interior transformation. Jesus Himself is
“gentle and humble of heart,” and He invites us to learn
from Him. The beatitude of the pure in heart is not a moral
burden but a promise: a heart re-shaped by God begins to
see reality differently, to love more freely, to speak more
truthfully.

This inner renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not self-engineering of character, but surrender to divine action. The Church's prayer captures it simply: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill my heart." Where the Spirit enters, what was fragmented begins to heal, and what was hardened begins to soften.

Even our prayer itself becomes part of this transformation. There is the quiet prayer of communion—simply remaining with God. There is the desperate cry, "Lord, save me," when we realise our need. And there is the praise that recognises Him for who He is. All three belong to a heart being formed by grace.

A traveller once entered an old cathedral where the windows seemed dull and grey. A guide explained that the glass only truly comes alive when sunlight passes through it. From the outside, it looks like broken pieces of coloured glass; from the inside, illuminated by light, it becomes a story of beauty. So it is with the human heart. Left to itself, it is fragmented; but when filled with God's light, it becomes radiant.

And so we return to where we began—not with what is visible, but with what is within. God does not abandon the damaged soil of our lives; He restores it, renews it, and brings fruit where we once saw only failure. When the heart is healed, life itself begins to speak differently.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that these gifts we bring before the Lord
may express not merely outward worship
but the sincere offering of hearts seeking renewal,
and that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord our God, accept the offerings we place upon your altar and cleanse the hidden depths of our hearts by your grace, so that what we celebrate outwardly in these sacred mysteries may truly transform us inwardly into the likeness 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 do not judge by appearances
nor abandon hearts wounded by sin,
but with patient mercy you restore what is broken
and renew within us the image of your Son.

In Christ you have shown us
that holiness begins not in outward display
but in the quiet transformation of the heart.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit,
you soften what is hardened, heal what is fragmented,
and bring forth fruit from lives once barren.

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 grace that
renews the human heart, we dare to say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the blindness that values appearances
above truth, 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 that what is within the heart
shapes the whole of life;
look not on our sins, but on the desire you have planted
within us for renewal and truth,
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 not only to forgive our sins
but to restore and renew the depths of our hearts.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, You have entered the hidden places of our hearts
with the quiet power of Your grace.
Heal what is wounded within us,
untangle what keeps us from bearing fruit,
and let Your light shine through our lives
so that others may see not our appearances,
but Your presence within us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the sacrament we have received, O Lord,
work within us the healing power of your grace,
so that, renewed in mind and heart,
we may live no longer for outward approval
but in the truth and freedom of your love.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen.
May He heal the hidden wounds of your hearts
and fill you with the light of His Holy Spirit. Amen.
May He make your lives fruitful in goodness, truth, and
love, so that Christ may be seen in all you do. 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 let the light of a renewed heart
shine through your words and actions.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

God is less concerned with the appearance we present to
the world than with the heart we place before Him. When
we allow His grace to heal what is hidden within, our lives
begin to bear the quiet and lasting fruit of holiness.

5 August, 2026 – Wed. 18th Week in Ord. Time

Jer 31,1-7; Mt 15,21-28

INTRODUCTION

In a busy hospital waiting room, a mother once sat through hours of silence. No updates, no reassurance, only the steady ticking of a clock and the anxious rhythm of her own heart. Every time a doctor passed by, she stood up, searching his face for even a small sign of hope. Nothing came quickly, yet she refused to leave.

The prophet Jeremiah today speaks of a God who gathers the scattered, heals what is broken, and restores joy where sorrow has lived too long. His promise reaches precisely into those waiting rooms of life where hope seems delayed but not destroyed.

In the Gospel, however, we encounter a painful silence. A foreign woman cries out to Jesus for her daughter, yet at first she receives no answer. Still, she refuses to walk away. Her persistence becomes a witness to a faith that trusts even when God seems distant.

We too know moments when prayer feels unanswered and our hearts grow weary. Let us come before the Lord with humility, asking mercy for the times we have doubted his presence and lost perseverance in faith.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you gather the scattered and strengthen those who wait in hope: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you hear the cry of those who refuse to give up trusting in you: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you open the doors of mercy to all who seek you with humble faith: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who restores the broken-hearted, strengthens the weary, and rewards persevering faith with the abundance of his mercy, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

Merciful and faithful God,
you never abandon those who call upon you in trust.
In moments when our prayers seem unanswered
and our hearts grow weary in waiting,
teach us the perseverance and humility
of the woman who would not cease seeking your mercy.
Strengthen our faith,
that we may hold firmly to your promises
and discover your saving presence even in silence.
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 long-distance runner once described a race where, halfway through, his body began to fail him. Each step felt heavier than the last, and he started to believe he would not finish. Then, unexpectedly, he noticed a child by the roadside clapping and shouting his name with absolute confidence. He did not know the child, but something in

that voice made him continue when he would otherwise have stopped.

The red thread running through today's word is this: *faith that refuses to let go of God, even when God seems silent or distant.*

In the gospel, a Canaanite woman steps into a world where she is not expected to belong. Jesus' initial silence, then his seemingly harsh response, reflects the boundaries of mission as it was first understood—"to the lost sheep of Israel." Yet this mother will not be defined by boundaries. Her daughter is suffering, and she dares to persist. She turns even the image of "crumbs under the table" into an argument for mercy. And in doing so, she reveals something greater than argument: a trust that will not release its hold on Jesus.

What is striking is not only her persistence, but her creativity in faith. She does not collapse under silence; she engages it. She does not retreat from difficulty; she enters into it. And in that space, something shifts. Jesus acknowledges what has been revealed all along: "Woman,

you have great faith.”

Jeremiah’s vision of restoration echoes here. God is indeed gathering the scattered, rebuilding lives, bringing joy out of sorrow. But the gospel suggests that this divine work is not experienced without the participation of persevering faith. The woman, in her insistence, becomes a sign that God’s mercy is never limited by human boundaries or divine “timing” as we perceive it.

A second story brings this home. A fisherman once spoke of nights when the sea seemed empty. Hours of casting nets yielded nothing, and the temptation was always to stop. Yet he learned that sometimes the tide turns in the very moment when discouragement is deepest. The catch does not come to those who give up early, but to those who remain in the water a little longer.

So it is with faith. There are moments when prayer feels like silence, when God seems unmoved, when hope appears unanswered. Yet today’s gospel insists that such moments are not absences of God, but spaces where trust is deepened and purified. The woman teaches us that

even silence can become a place of encounter if we refuse to walk away.

And in the end, the real miracle is not only the healing of a child, but the revelation of a faith that moves the heart of Christ himself. It is this faith—persistent, humble, unafraid—that opens unexpected doors of mercy.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father, who welcomes the persistent faith of those who seek his mercy and never abandons those who hope in him.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God,
receive these gifts offered by your people
who place their trust in your unfailing mercy.
As you accepted the persevering faith of the Canaanite woman,

so may these offerings become signs of our confidence in you and channels of healing for all who wait 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 you are the God who gathers the scattered,
comforts the sorrowful,
and restores hope to those who wait upon you.

In your Son, Jesus Christ,
you revealed a mercy that reaches beyond every boundary
and welcomes all who seek you with persevering faith.

When silence tested the heart of the Canaanite woman,
your grace sustained her trust,
and through her humble persistence
the power of your compassion was made known.

In every age you strengthen your people
to remain faithful in moments of darkness,

teaching us that your mercy is never absent
even when its fulfillment seems delayed.

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 pray with the trust of children who know that the
Father hears even the prayers spoken through tears and
silence:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the discouragement that tempts us to give
up when prayers seem unanswered.

Strengthen us with the perseverance of the Canaanite

woman,
that we may continue to trust in your mercy even in
moments of silence and delay.
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 strengthened the faith of the woman who would not
turn away from your mercy.
Look not on our fears or wavering hearts,
but on the trust your Spirit continues to awaken within us,
and graciously grant us the peace and unity of your
kingdom.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who welcomes all
who come to him in humble and persevering faith.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Faith often grows in the spaces where answers do not
come quickly. The Canaanite woman teaches us that
silence need not become despair. To remain before the
Lord, to continue trusting, to keep asking with humility—
this is already a deep encounter with grace. Christ never
ignores the heart that refuses to let go of him. Even
delayed mercy is still mercy moving toward us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these sacred mysteries, we thank you, Lord,
for strengthening us with the Bread of life.
In times when our hearts grow weary
and our prayers seem unanswered,
keep us faithful in hope and steadfast in trust,
that we may never turn away from your saving love.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord strengthen your hearts when faith is tested.
Amen.

May he teach you to persevere in prayer and trust in his
mercy even in silence. Amen.

May almighty God gather, heal, and restore you in hope,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, trusting that the Lord hears every cry that
rises from a faithful heart.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Faith is not proven when answers come quickly, but when
we continue to trust even through silence. Like the
Canaanite woman, let us remain before the Lord a little
longer, believing that his mercy always reaches those who
refuse to give up hope.

6 August, 2026 – Thursday, 18th Week in Ord. Time

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Dan 7,9-10. 13-14; Mt 17,1-9

INTRODUCTION

A photographer once recounted waking before dawn to
capture a landscape in the remote hills. Everything was
dark, indistinct, almost discouraging. Yet as he waited, the
first light broke over the horizon, and what had seemed
ordinary and muted was suddenly alive with colour and
depth. Later he said that nothing had changed in the land
itself—only his eyes had learned to receive the light.

Moments like that quietly remind us that reality is often
richer than what first meets the eye. What appears flat or
routine can, in a different light, reveal beauty, meaning,
even a kind of hidden glory. Much depends on where we
stand and how patiently we look.

Faith speaks in a similar way. It does not replace reality; it
deepens it. It teaches us to recognize that God's presence
is often already there, waiting to be noticed, especially in
places we might least expect.

And yet, so often, our vision remains narrow and hurried. We fail to notice, we fail to listen, we fail to be open to the quiet ways God draws near. For this blindness of heart and haste of spirit, we turn to the Lord with honesty and ask for mercy as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you revealed your glory to strengthen your disciples on the way of the Cross:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you remain with us in moments of light and in the valleys of darkness: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to listen to your voice and follow you in faithful love: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God open our eyes to the light of his Son, strengthen us on the journey through every trial and uncertainty, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in the glorious Transfiguration of your Only Begotten Son confirmed the mysteries of faith by the witness of the Fathers and wonderfully prefigured our full adoption to sonship, grant, we pray, that listening faithfully to the voice of your beloved Son, we may walk with him through both light and darkness and so become coheirs with him of his glory.

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

HOMILY

A mountain guide once told of leading climbers who reached a high summit after hours of difficult ascent. Exhausted, they stood in silence as clouds suddenly parted, revealing a vast horizon bathed in light. One of them, overwhelmed, whispered, “I didn’t know the world could look like this.” For a moment, they had stepped beyond ordinary sight into something that felt almost beyond earth.

In today's Gospel, Peter, James, and John experience something even more profound. Jesus is transfigured before them—his face shining like the sun, his clothes dazzling white. For a fleeting moment, the veil is lifted, and they see who he truly is: the beloved Son, radiant with divine glory. No wonder Peter blurts out, "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here."

The red thread running through this feast is simple yet demanding: from mountain of light to valley of the cross, the Lord is with us.

But the mountain cannot become a resting place. The voice from the cloud interrupts Peter's desire to remain: "This is my Son, the Beloved... listen to him." The disciples must descend. The same Jesus who shines in glory will soon walk toward Jerusalem, where his face will be bruised and broken. The Transfiguration and the Cross are not opposites; they are bound together. The glory revealed on the mountain is not removed from suffering—it shines even through it.

This is the struggle of discipleship. Like Peter, we want to

preserve moments of clarity, peace, and consolation. Yet faith invites us to recognize that God is equally present when life is luminous and when it is shadowed. In prayer, in community, in the Eucharist, in the ordinary fabric of daily life, the Father still speaks: "This is my Son... listen to him." And listening means following him not only into light, but also into love that endures through darkness.

There are times when we too have glimpses of that light—moments when prayer feels alive, when love is received or given freely, when creation itself seems to speak of God. And there are other times when we walk without clarity, when God feels hidden, and yet the journey continues. The same Lord is present in both.

A nurse once shared about sitting beside a patient in the middle of a long, painful night. Nothing dramatic happened—no sudden recovery, no clear answers. Yet the patient, barely able to speak, said quietly, "Stay with me." The nurse simply held his hand through the night. Later she reflected that it did not feel like a "bright" moment, but it felt deeply true. Something of God's nearness was

there—not on a mountain, but in a bedside silence where hope was almost invisible, yet real.

And perhaps that is where the Transfiguration finally leads us: not to escape the world's struggle, but to recognize that even there, the face of Christ is not absent. It is the same Lord who shines in glory and who walks with us in fragility. To listen to him is to trust that both places belong to the same journey.

An old story is told of a traveller crossing a dark valley at night. He could see almost nothing ahead, only the faint outline of the path beneath his feet. But every so often, a small lamp from a distant house flickered in the darkness, just enough to show him the way forward. He later said it was not the brightness of the light that kept him going, but the certainty that light was still there.

So it is with us. We do not always stand on the mountain of clarity, but we are never without the light of Christ. The glory may be hidden, but it is not gone. And step by step, the Lord continues to lead us—down from the mountain, yes, but never away from his presence.

Invitation to the Prayer over the Offerings

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts, offered with trust in the Lord who accompanies us from the mountain of glory into the valleys of daily life, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Sanctify, O Lord, we pray,
these offerings here made to celebrate
the glorious Transfiguration of your Only Begotten Son,
and by his radiant splendour
cleanse us from the stains of sin
and strengthen us to follow him faithfully
through every joy and trial of life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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

For on the holy mountain
he revealed to his chosen disciples
the hidden glory of his divine life,
strengthening their hearts before the scandal of the Cross
and teaching them that suffering and glory
are joined in the mystery of your saving love.
In him we learn to recognize your presence
both in moments of radiant joy
and in times when the path is shadowed and uncertain.
For your Son continues to walk with his people,
speaking words of hope,
guiding us by the light that never fades.
And so, with the Angels and Saints,
we proclaim your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

As children of the Father, called to follow the beloved Son
through both moments of light and times of darkness, let
us pray with trust and confidence in the words Jesus
himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and graciously grant peace in our days,
that, sustained by the light of Christ in moments both clear
and uncertain,
we may journey with confidence through the valleys of life,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you revealed your glory to your disciples
and strengthened them for the road ahead.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
as she journeys through the darkness of this world
guided by your unfailing light.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who reveals the glory of the Father
and remains with us in every step of our journey.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here.
Yet you do not ask us to remain only on the mountain of
consolation. You lead us back into daily life carrying the
quiet light of your presence. Strengthen us to trust that
even when glory seems hidden, you are still near, walking
beside us and guiding us onward.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the heavenly nourishment we have received, O Lord,
transform us into the likeness of your Son,
whose radiant glory shone forth on the mountain
and whose faithful love endured the way of the Cross.
Grant that, listening always to his voice, we may persevere
in hope until we share fully in the light of your kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord who revealed the glory of his beloved Son
strengthen your hearts with the light of faith. Amen.
May he guide you through every joy and every trial,
and keep you steadfast in listening to his voice. Amen.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace,
carrying the light of Christ into the ordinary paths of life,
trusting that the Lord who shines on the mountain
also walks beside you in every valley.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The glory may be hidden, but it is not gone. The same
Christ who shines on the mountain walks with us through
every valley.”

7 August, 2026 – Friday, 18th Week in Ord. Time

Nahum 2,1. 3. 3,1-3. 6-7; Mt 16,24-28

“God forms a new heart where human appearances fail.”

INTRODUCTION

There was once a young concert pianist who, after winning an international competition, found herself performing on the world’s grandest stages. Her diary later revealed something unexpected: in the midst of applause and standing ovations, she felt strangely empty. “I had everything I wanted,” she wrote, “but I did not know who I was anymore.” What she thought would give her life had, in some quiet way, taken it from her.

Many of us recognise that tension within ourselves. We work, achieve, acquire, and seek recognition, hoping these things will satisfy the deeper hunger of the heart. Yet the more tightly we cling to ourselves, the more restless we often become.

Today Jesus teaches us a different way: that life is truly found not in grasping, but in giving; not in self-protection, but in love. He invites us to lose the false self that seeks

control and comfort, so that a deeper and freer self may emerge in communion with God.

As we stand before the Lord, let us acknowledge the times we have held back from love, resisted the way of self-giving, and sought life apart from God. Let us ask for mercy and healing as we prepare for the penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you showed us that true life is found in self-giving love: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us to let go of the false self that clings to power, comfort, and recognition:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you opened the way to eternal life by giving yourself completely upon the Cross: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God free us from the emptiness of selfishness, teach us the joy of self-giving love, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
you teach us through your Son
that whoever loses life for his sake will truly find it;
free our hearts from all that keeps us turned in upon
ourselves,
and form within us a spirit of generous love,
so that, following Christ in the way of the Cross,
we may discover the fullness of life that never fades.
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

At a funeral earlier in the week, the family spoke of their mother in a simple but striking phrase: “She was a giver, not a taker.” There was no need for exaggeration or elaborate praise. In that single description, they had captured the shape of a life well lived. And it quietly echoed the very heart of the Gospel we hear today. Jesus speaks words that unsettle our instincts: “Anyone

who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.” At first hearing, this sounds like contradiction. Yet it is the paradox at the heart of discipleship. To follow Christ is not to accumulate life for oneself, but to receive life through self-gift.

The woman remembered at that funeral had, in her own way, understood this. She did not measure her days by what she kept, but by what she gave—time, care, patience, presence. And in doing so, she became more fully alive, and so did those around her. This is what Jesus reveals in himself: the supreme “Giver,” who did not cling to his life, but poured it out in love, and in that very act opened the way to eternal life for all.

This is why Jesus also warns: “What will it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose their life?” It is possible to succeed outwardly and yet slowly diminish inwardly. It is possible to be full of possessions and yet empty of love. The Gospel does not reject life’s goods, but it does question what we build our lives upon. If the self becomes the centre of everything, it slowly becomes a prison.

And so Jesus speaks of denying oneself and taking up the cross. This is not a call to self-hatred or gloom. It is the invitation to let go of the false self—the self that insists on control, recognition, and comfort as ultimate goods. That false self must be “lost,” not because life is against us, but because it is too small to contain the life God wants to give.

When that false self loosens its grip, something surprising happens: a deeper self begins to emerge. A self capable of love. A self open to God. A self that can give without fear of loss, because it has discovered that love itself is already life.

A rescue worker once described being part of a mountain search in difficult winter conditions. One climber had slipped and was trapped on a narrow ledge. Reaching him meant risking exposure to falling ice and unstable ground. One of the rescuers eventually volunteered to go ahead, moving carefully across the dangerous ridge. He later said simply, “I didn’t think about saving myself at that moment. I just knew someone needed help.” That decision saved the

climber’s life—but it also revealed something about the rescuer: in that costly act of courage, he was more fully himself than at any other time.

That is the mystery Jesus places before us today. To follow him is not to lose life, but to find it where it most deeply matters. The way of Christ is the way of the giver, not the taker. It is the way of love that does not calculate, and of self that is no longer closed in on itself.

And so we return to his question: what can a person give in exchange for their life? The answer is not possessions, achievement, or control. The answer is love—love received from God and given away to others. In that exchange, nothing essential is lost. Everything essential is found.

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 selfishness, fears, and desire for control, so that Christ may transform us into people who live not for themselves but in generous love, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord our God,
receive these offerings we bring before you,
and teach us through this holy sacrifice
that the life we surrender in love is never lost in your sight.
As your Son gave himself completely for the salvation of
the world,
may we also learn to offer ourselves freely in service of
one another. 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 wisdom you have shown us through your Son
that the fullness of life is found not in possession but in
love.

When humanity sought greatness through power and self-
interest, Christ revealed the deeper way of humble self-
giving.

By embracing the Cross,

he conquered the emptiness of sin and selfishness
and opened for us the path to eternal life.

Through him you teach us
that no act of love is ever wasted,
and that hearts formed in generosity
already begin to share in the joy of your Kingdom.

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

Because Christ has taught us that true life is found not in
grasping for ourselves but in trusting the Father and giving
ourselves in love, let us pray with the confidence of
children who know they are held in God's care:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the selfishness that closes our hearts to
others, 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.

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

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us that life is truly found in love that gives itself
away; look not on our selfishness and fears,
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 gave himself completely
so that we might discover the fullness of life.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, in this Eucharist you have shown us again
that love is stronger than fear
and self-giving stronger than selfishness.
Teach us to live not as takers, but as givers,
so that the life of Christ may grow within us each day.
May we leave this table with freer hearts,
ready to love without counting the cost.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these sacred mysteries, O Lord,
we pray that you may strengthen within us
the spirit of generous love revealed in your Son.
Free us from all that keeps us turned inward upon
ourselves, and help us to follow Christ with courageous
hearts, so that, losing our lives for his sake,

we may come to share fully in the life that never ends.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord teach you
that true greatness is found in humble love. Amen.

May he free your hearts from all selfishness and fear,
and make you generous in service to others. Amen.

And may you discover each day
that the life given in love is never lost in God. 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 lives of generous and
self-giving love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The life we cling to becomes smaller; the life we give in
love becomes eternal.”

8 August, 2026 – Saturday, 18th Week in Ord. Time

St. Mary of the Cross (Solemnity in Australia)

1 Kgs 17, 8-16; Col. 3,12-17; Mt 6,25-34

Seek first the Kingdom, and trust God with the rest.

INTRODUCTION

There is an old story of a woman who spent the night
before a long journey carefully packing and repacking her
suitcase. She worried about every possible need—extra
clothes, food she might not need, books she would never
read, even items she could easily have purchased on
arrival. By morning she was exhausted, and the suitcase
was so overstuffed she could barely lift it. At the station,
she discovered she had forgotten the ticket at home. In all
her anxiety about “everything,” she had missed the one
thing necessary.

Life often becomes like that. We carry many concerns in
our hearts—family, work, health, the future—and little by

little anxiety can crowd out trust. We try to hold everything together ourselves, until peace slips away.

Today, on the Solemnity of St Mary of the Cross, we are reminded of a woman who lived with deep confidence in God's providence. In times of uncertainty and hardship, she sought first the Kingdom of God and trusted the Lord with the rest.

As we gather for this Eucharist, we acknowledge the ways fear, worry, and self-reliance have weakened our trust in God. Let us now open our hearts to His mercy and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us to seek first the Kingdom of God when anxiety clouds our hearts: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You teach us to trust the Father who knows all our needs: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You fill the hearts of the faithful with the peace that overcomes fear: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, free us from the burdens of fear and anxious hearts, strengthen our trust in His loving providence, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

God of providence and peace,
you taught St Mary of the Cross
to seek first your Kingdom
and to trust in your loving care in every trial.
Free our hearts from anxious fear,
strengthen our faith in your presence,
and help us to live with compassion, humility, and
confidence in your will.

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

There was once a farmer who had worked his land for many years. One season, the rains failed, and the soil cracked under a relentless sun. Each morning he would walk to the edge of his field, look across the dry earth, and feel a rising fear in his chest: “What will we eat? What will become of my family?” His nights became restless, his prayers filled with anxiety rather than peace.

Into that very human experience Jesus speaks in today’s Gospel: “*Do not worry about your life... what you are to eat or wear.*” He is not dismissing the farmer’s struggle or ours, but naming how easily worry can take hold of the heart. When anxiety becomes absolute, it quietly displaces trust, and even God begins to feel distant.

That is why Jesus redirects us: “*Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.*” This is the same wisdom echoed in Habakkuk: “*The righteous person lives by faith.*” Not by control or certainty, but by trusting the God who

remains faithful even when the field is dry and the future unclear.

Yet the Gospel also brings us to the disciples, standing helpless before a suffering child. They had been given authority, yet they cannot heal. Their question is honest: “*Why could we not do it?*” Jesus names the deeper issue: *little faith*—not absence of faith, but trust weakened under pressure, a belief in God that struggles to hold firm when reality becomes difficult.

St Paul deepens this vision when he says: “*Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, patience... and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.*” These are not abstract virtues, but the outward signs of an inner trust. Anxiety shrinks the heart; the peace of Christ enlarges it and makes space for God to act.

The connection between these readings is clear: worry narrows our vision of God, while even fragile faith opens the possibility of His action. Jesus is not asking for heroic

certainty, but for a trusting openness that allows God to work through our limitations.

There is a story told of St Mary of the Cross travelling through rural Australia to visit struggling schools she had helped establish. On one occasion, resources were almost gone, and there was real uncertainty about how the work could continue. Yet she did not abandon the mission. Instead, she encouraged the sisters, reminding them that if the work was God's, it would not fail. It was not dramatic rescue she relied on, but steady trust in Providence lived day by day.

That is the invitation of today's Eucharist: not to eliminate every worry, but to place them before the Lord who already knows our needs. Not to control every outcome, but to seek first the Kingdom, and allow everything else to find its rightful place within God's care.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that trusting not in our own strength but in God's providence, we may place before the Lord the burdens of our hearts together with these gifts, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God,
receive these gifts offered in faith
as we place before you our worries, hopes, and daily needs.

Through this holy sacrifice,
teach us to seek first your Kingdom
and to trust that you will provide all that is necessary for our salvation.

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 the loving Father
who knows the needs of your children before we ask.
When fear and anxiety burden the human heart,
you call us to trust in your providence
and to seek first your Kingdom.
In St Mary of the Cross
you gave your Church a living witness of steadfast faith.
Amid uncertainty and hardship,
she relied not on human security
but on the quiet strength of your grace,
teaching others to walk in confidence and peace.
Through this Eucharist you renew our trust in your care
and fill us with the peace of Christ
that frees us to live with compassion, humility, and love.
And so, with Angels and Saints,
we praise you, as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with the trust of children who know that the
Father cares for all their needs:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the fear and anxiety that weaken our faith,
and graciously grant peace in our days,
that, trusting in your loving providence,
we may seek first your Kingdom and live with hearts open
to your will, as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you told us not to be anxious about
tomorrow but to trust in the Father who cares for all His
children. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your
Church, and graciously grant her the peace that frees
hearts from fear and the unity that comes from seeking first
your Kingdom. Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who frees us from fear
and invites us to trust in the Father's loving care.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, so often we carry burdens that were never meant to
be carried alone.

In this Eucharist you remind us that the Father already
knows our needs
and that your grace is enough for each day.

Like St Mary of the Cross,
teach us to walk forward in quiet trust,
to seek first your Kingdom,
and to leave the rest in your hands.
May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts
and free us from anxious fear.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed by these sacred mysteries,
we ask you, Lord our God,
that through the example and prayers of St Mary of the
Cross we may grow in steadfast faith and confident trust in
your providence. May the peace of Christ dwell in our
hearts and guide us to seek first your Kingdom in all things.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord free your hearts from anxiety
and strengthen you in faith and trust. Amen.

May He fill you with the peace of Christ
and help you to seek first His Kingdom each day. Amen.

May the example of St Mary of the Cross
encourage you to walk in confidence and hope
through every uncertainty of life. Amen.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, trusting in God's providence,
and seek first His Kingdom in all that you do.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Worry grows when we try to carry tomorrow by ourselves;
peace begins when we place today into God's hands and
seek first His Kingdom.