34th Sunday Christ the King

Ez 34:11–12, 15–17; 1 Cor 15:20–26, 28; Mt 25:31–46

INTRODUCTION

There is a story of a little boy who visited a great cathedral with his grandmother. As he looked at the stained-glass windows, he asked, “Who are those people?” His grandmother answered, “Those are the saints.” Later, in school, the teacher asked the children, “What is a saint?” The boy quickly replied, “A saint is someone through whom the light shines.”

Today, on the feast of Christ the King, the Church reminds us that the light of Christ our King shines not through domination or power, but through love, mercy, and compassion. He is the Shepherd-King who searches for the lost, heals the wounded, and identifies himself with the poor and forgotten.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that the final measure of life is not success, status, or appearances, but love expressed in ordinary acts of kindness. Whenever we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, comfort the suffering, or forgive the wounded, the light of Christ shines through us.

Yet we also recognize how often we fail to love as he asks us to love. There have been moments of indifference, selfishness, and neglect. We have sometimes passed by those in need or closed our hearts to the suffering around us.

Therefore, trusting in the mercy of Christ our Shepherd-King, who comes not only to judge but also to heal and restore, let us acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you are the Shepherd-King who seeks the lost and carries the weak upon your shoulders:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you hide yourself in the hungry, the suffering, and the forgotten of this world: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you come to heal what is broken and restore what has fallen: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who sent his Son as the Shepherd-King to seek the lost, heal the wounded, and restore what is broken, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE GLORIA

Today we rejoice in Christ our King, whose throne is the Cross and whose kingdom is built on truth, mercy, and love. With grateful hearts, let us lift our voices in praise as we sing:

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, whose beloved Son, the King of the universe, came among us as the Good Shepherd
to seek the lost, strengthen the weak,
and reveal your mercy through humble love,
grant that we who recognize him
in the poor, the suffering, and the forgotten
may faithfully serve him in our brothers and sisters
and so share in the joy of his eternal 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 well-known story is told of a king who decided to visit his people in disguise. He removed his royal robes, dressed like a poor traveller, and walked through the streets of his kingdom. Most people ignored him. Some pushed past him. A few mocked him. But one elderly woman sitting outside her small cottage welcomed him in. She gave him bread, shared her soup, and listened to him as if he mattered. Only later did she discover that the weary stranger she had welcomed was the king himself. Trembling, she apologized for the simplicity of her meal. But the king replied, “You gave me what many in palaces would not give — your heart.”

That little story opens for us the heart of today’s feast: Christ the King. Yet the kingship of Jesus is unlike every other kingship the world has ever known.

When people think of kings, they usually think of power, splendor, ceremonies, crowns, palaces, armies, and authority. Even today, where monarchies still exist, kings and queens are often symbols of prestige and grandeur. In ancient times the image was even stronger: the king was the warrior who led armies into battle or the ruler who exercised power over his subjects. History also knows another type of king — the tyrant who enriches himself while others suffer.

But when God speaks about a king in Scripture, especially through the prophet Ezekiel, he gives us an entirely different image: not the image of a conqueror, but of a shepherd.

“I myself will look after and tend my sheep.”

The shepherd is not someone who uses the flock for himself. He searches for the lost. He binds up the wounded. He strengthens the weak. He leads the sheep to good pasture. God had entrusted Israel’s kings and leaders with this shepherding mission, but many failed. Instead of caring for the flock, they cared only for themselves. Through Ezekiel, God complains: “You fed yourselves instead of feeding my sheep.”

And so God promises: “I myself will shepherd my people.”

That promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Today, on the feast of Christ the King, we do not celebrate a ruler seated on a golden throne surrounded by luxury. We celebrate the Shepherd-King who carries the wounded sheep on his shoulders. We celebrate the King who kneels to wash feet. The King crowned not first with gold, but with thorns. The King who did not let his subjects die for him, but who died for his subjects.

How many rulers throughout history sacrificed others to save themselves? We have a King who sacrificed himself to save others.

The Gospel today presents a majestic scene: the Son of Man coming in glory with all the angels, seated upon his

throne. It is the image painted by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel — Christ the Judge before whom all nations are gathered. At first glance, this seems to be the climax of the Gospel. But strangely, it is not.

Immediately after this passage in Matthew's Gospel begins the Passion narrative. The glorious Judge becomes the suffering Redeemer. The King on the throne becomes the King hanging upon the cross. The one who separates the sheep from the goats is himself rejected, stripped, wounded, thirsty, imprisoned, and abandoned.

That changes everything.

Because the Judge who judges us is also the Savior who understands us. He judges not from a distance, but as one who has walked our roads, carried our sorrows, known our temptations, experienced our weakness, and suffered our loneliness. He does not wear merely a royal crown; he wears a crown of thorns.

And what is the criterion of judgment?

Not success.
Not fame.
Not achievements.
Not even religious appearances alone.

But love.

As Saint John of the Cross famously said: "In the evening of life, we shall be judged on love."

Jesus identifies himself completely with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, the naked, and the imprisoned. "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did to me."

What an astonishing revelation! The King of the universe hides himself in the weakest members of humanity.

Mother Teresa understood this deeply. She once picked up a dying man from the streets of Calcutta. His body was covered with sores; he was near death. She could not save him medically. But she held his hand so that he would not

die alone. Later she said, “Each one of them is Jesus in disguise.”

Saint Martin of Tours understood it too. As a young soldier, before he was even baptized, he cut his cloak in half to share with a freezing beggar. That night he dreamed of Christ clothed in the torn half of the cloak. Christ said to the angels, “Martin has clothed me.”

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary understood it. A princess surrounded by privilege, she secretly carried bread to the poor. According to legend, when she was stopped and asked what she carried beneath her cloak, the bread had become roses. Whether history or legend, the message remains true: love transforms ordinary acts into something beautiful before God.

And perhaps that is one of the most comforting truths in today’s Gospel: the eternal value of ordinary kindness.

The righteous are surprised: “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty?” They never realized that their simple acts carried eternal significance. A visit to the sick. A meal shared. A listening ear. A word of encouragement. A cup of water. A small sacrifice made quietly. These become encounters with Christ himself.

The Gospel reminds us that heaven often enters the world unnoticed through ordinary compassion.

At the same time, Jesus speaks a hard word to those on the left side. Their sin is not cruelty on a grand scale. It is neglect. Indifference. Failure to love when love was possible.

That part of the Gospel can unsettle us. If we are honest, we all remember people we could have helped more. Moments when convenience mattered more than compassion. Times when we walked past suffering.

Yet fear is not the final word of today’s feast.

The final word is mercy.

Because the Judge is also the Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep.

There is a beautiful double meaning in the German word richten — “to judge,” but also “to set right again,” “to repair.” If a chair is broken, you bring it to a carpenter and say, “Can you put this right?”

That is what Christ the King does. He does not come merely to condemn what is broken. He comes to restore it. To heal it. To raise up what has fallen.

Everything broken in our lives — our failures, wounds, regrets, sins, fears — can be brought before him. And we can pray: “Lord, set me right again. Heal what is wounded. Restore what is lost.”

And he will.

Let me end with another story.

During World War II, a soldier returned to a bombed village and saw a statue of Christ lying shattered in the ruins of a church. The hands of the statue had been blown away. Later, when the church was rebuilt, the people placed the damaged statue back inside, but beneath it they wrote these words:

“Christ has no hands now on earth but ours.”

That is the mystery of today’s feast.

Christ the King continues to search for the lost through our hands.
He continues to feed the hungry through our generosity.
He continues to comfort the suffering through our presence.
He continues to welcome the stranger through our kindness.

And one day, perhaps to our great surprise, we shall discover that in loving the wounded people placed along our path, we were loving the King himself.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE CREDO

United in faith in Christ our King, who will come again in glory and whose kingdom shall have no end, let us now profess the faith of the Church.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (for personal meditation only)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth,
who lovingly watches over his people
as a shepherd cares for his flock.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
the King whose throne was the Cross,
who came not to be served but to serve,
to seek the lost, heal the wounded,
feed the hungry, and bring mercy to sinners.
He identified himself with the poor, the suffering, and the forgotten,
teaching us that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters,
we do for him.

I believe that through his death and resurrection
Christ conquered sin and death,
and opened for us the way to eternal life,
where love will have the final word.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens the Church
to continue Christ's work in the world,
so that through our hands
the hungry may be fed,
the lonely comforted,
and the stranger welcomed.

I believe in the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting in the Kingdom of God,
where Christ will be all in all. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that as Christ our Shepherd-King gathers and restores his people through love and mercy, this sacrifice of our service and devotion may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we offer you, O Lord,
the sacrifice by which the human race is reconciled to you,
we humbly pray
that your Son himself may bestow on all nations
the gifts of unity and peace,
and teach us to recognize his presence
in the least and most vulnerable among us.
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 anointed your Only Begotten Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
as eternal Priest and King of all creation,
that he might accomplish the mystery of human
redemption not through earthly power or domination,
but through the sacrifice of the Cross.

As Shepherd of souls, he searches for the lost,
binds up the wounded, strengthens the weak,
and reveals his royal glory through mercy, compassion,
and humble love.

In him, the hungry are fed, the lonely are welcomed,
the suffering are comforted, and the broken are restored.
For he has made himself present in the least of our

brothers and sisters, so that in serving them
we may learn to serve the King himself.

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

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray to the Father whose kingdom is built not on power, but on mercy, compassion, and love.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, sustained by the mercy of Christ our Shepherd-King, who heals what is wounded and restores what is broken, 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 came among us not as a ruler who dominates,
but as the Shepherd-King who gathers the scattered,
heals the wounded, and restores what is broken;
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her the peace and unity of your Kingdom, where love is stronger than fear
and mercy triumphs over judgment.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who comes as the Shepherd-King to feed the hungry, heal the wounded, and welcome the lost. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Christ our King reigns from the Cross, not by force but by love. In this Eucharist he has drawn near to us once again — as food for the hungry, strength for the weak, and mercy for sinners. May we leave this celebration with eyes able to recognize him in the suffering, hands ready to serve him in others, and hearts willing to love in simple and hidden ways. For in the evening of life, we shall indeed be judged on love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the food of immortality, we ask, O Lord, that, glorying in obedience
to the commands of Christ, the King of the universe,
we may live with him eternally in his heavenly Kingdom,
and faithfully recognize and serve him
in the poor and suffering members of his body.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Shepherd-King who seeks the lost and heals the wounded, strengthen you in every work of love.

May he teach you to recognize his presence
in the poor, the suffering, and the forgotten.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace, glorifying Christ your King by serving him in the least of your brothers and sisters.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Christ has no hands now on earth but ours.”
Every act of kindness, every word of compassion, every moment of mercy becomes an encounter with the King who hides himself in the least among us.

Monday of the 34th Week of the year

Rev 14:1–3, 4b–5; Lk 21:1–4

INTRODUCTION

There is a simple story told of a child who once brought a handful of wildflowers to a grand cathedral. The flowers were small, uneven, and already beginning to wilt. People around barely noticed them beside the large arrangements near the altar. Yet the child offered them with complete sincerity, as though nothing more could be given because everything had already been offered.

We often live in a world that measures value by size, success, and visibility. We are easily tempted to believe that only great achievements or impressive offerings truly matter. What is small or hidden can seem insignificant even to ourselves.

But the Gospel teaches us another way of seeing. Jesus notices the poor widow, the hidden sacrifice, the quiet faithfulness that others overlook. In God's eyes, what is given with love is never small.

And so, as we gather for this Eucharist, let us place before the Lord whatever we carry today—our strengths and weaknesses, our abundance and our limitations. Let us ask pardon for the times we have judged by appearances or withheld our hearts from God, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you see the hidden generosity that the world often overlooks: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you praised the widow who gave all she had with trust and love: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you offered your very life for us and held nothing back: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us the times we have measured life only by outward appearances, failed to recognise quiet acts of love, and withheld from him the trust of our hearts; and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who look not upon the greatness of our gifts
but upon the love with which they are offered,
teach us to place before you
the little that we have and the little that we are,
trusting that nothing given in love is ever lost in your sight.
Grant that, following the example of Christ,
we may learn to give ourselves generously and faithfully 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

There is a story of an elderly man who used to come to church every morning. In his younger years, he had been deeply involved—organising events, helping the poor, serving in many visible ways. But age had taken its toll. Now he moved slowly, spoke little, and all he seemed able to do was sit quietly in a back pew for a few minutes each day.

Some wondered what difference it made anymore. But one day, someone asked him why he still came so faithfully. He simply replied, “I can’t do much now… but I can still give God my presence.”

That quiet offering may have seemed small—but perhaps it was everything he had.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is sitting near the Temple treasury, watching people place their offerings into it. Many rich people come forward, putting in large sums. Their giving is visible, measurable, noticeable. But then a poor widow approaches, almost invisible among the crowd, and drops in two small coins—coins of almost no value.

Yet it is she whom Jesus notices. And more than that, it is she whom Jesus praises.

He sees what others do not see. While others measure the amount, Jesus measures the heart. While others see “very little,” Jesus sees “everything.” For this widow, those two coins were not spare change—they were her whole livelihood. In giving them, she was entrusting herself completely to God.

There is a quiet but powerful paradox here: *sometimes those who give the least are actually giving the most.* Not because of the quantity, but because of the cost. Not because of what remains, but because nothing is held back.

In many ways, this widow reflects Jesus himself. At this point in the Gospel, he is already on the path toward his Passion. Soon, he too will give everything—not out of abundance, but out of love. Like the widow, he will hold nothing back.

This Gospel speaks gently but directly into our own lives. There are times when we feel we have plenty to give—energy, strength, resources. But there are also times when we feel we have very little. Our health may decline, our energy may fade, our circumstances may limit us. We may even feel that what we offer no longer matters.

Yet this is precisely where the Gospel brings hope. Because in those moments, the little we give may, in fact, be our greatest gift. A kind word when we are tired. A prayer when we feel empty. A small act of patience when everything in us wants to withdraw. These are not insignificant in the eyes of God.

We can also be mistaken in how we see others. Like the crowd in the Temple, we may overlook the quiet generosity around us—the hidden sacrifices, the unnoticed faithfulness, the small daily acts of love that never make headlines. But the Lord sees them all. Nothing given in love is ever lost or ignored.

This challenges us to adopt a different way of seeing—not just ourselves, but one another. To look beyond appearances. To recognise that generosity is not always

loud or impressive; often, it is quiet, hidden, and deeply costly.

In the end, the widow teaches us something profoundly freeing: we do not need to have much to give meaningfully. We are simply called to give what we have, from where we are, with trust in God.

And perhaps that is enough—more than enough.

Let me end with another story. A nurse once spoke about a patient in palliative care who had almost no strength left. He could no longer speak clearly or move much at all. But every time someone entered the room, he would gently squeeze their hand.

It was such a small gesture—barely noticeable. Yet for those who received it, it meant everything. It was his way of saying, “I am still here. I still give what I can.”

In God’s eyes, that is never small.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that the humble gifts we bring before the Lord, offered with trusting hearts and sincere love, may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord our God,
receive these offerings placed upon your altar,
and teach us through this sacred mystery
that even the smallest gift offered with love
becomes precious in your sight.
May this sacrifice strengthen us
to give ourselves more fully in faith, hope, and charity.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For you do not judge as the world judges,
nor do you measure according to outward appearance.

You delight in humble and trusting hearts,
and you receive with love
the hidden sacrifices and quiet acts of generosity
that often pass unnoticed by others.
In the poor widow of the Gospel,
you reveal the beauty of complete trust,
and in your Son, Jesus Christ,
you show us the perfect offering of a life poured out in love.
Through him, you teach us
that nothing given with love is ever small in your sight.

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

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,
trusting that our Father receives even the smallest offering
made with love, we dare to say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and free us from the temptation
to measure life only by success, recognition, or strength.
Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, sustained by your mercy,
we may trust that even our smallest acts of love
have value in your sight, 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 saw the quiet faith of the widow
and praised the love hidden within her offering.
Look not on our weaknesses or limitations,
but on the faith and generosity 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 gave himself completely for our salvation.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The widow gave only two small coins, yet Jesus said she gave more than all the others. God does not ask whether we have much to offer, but whether we offer what we have with love. Perhaps today we feel limited, tired, unnoticed, or unable to do great things. Yet the Lord receives every quiet act of faith: a patient word, a hidden sacrifice, a simple prayer, a heart that still turns toward him.
Nothing offered in love is ever wasted in the eyes of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Bread of life, we pray, O Lord,
that this holy Communion may deepen within us
a spirit of humble generosity and trusting love.
Teach us to recognise your presence
in the hidden and faithful offerings of daily life,
and help us to give ourselves more fully to you and to one another. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and teach you
to recognise the value of every act of love. Amen.
May he strengthen you
to offer yourselves generously each day,
even in weakness or limitation. Amen.
And may he help you to see with the eyes of Christ,
who notices every hidden sacrifice and every faithful heart.
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 the quiet generosity of your lives.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

God does not measure the size of what we give, but the love with which we give it. Even the smallest offering, when given wholeheartedly, becomes great in his eyes.

Tuesday of the 34th Week of the year

Rev 14:14–19; Lk 21:5–11

"When everything passes, Christ remains."

INTRODUCTION

There is a story told of a tourist visiting an ancient European city. The guide proudly showed a great cathedral that had survived wars, fires, and revolutions. As everyone admired its beauty and strength, an elderly woman quietly said, "Yes… but even this will one day fall. Only God remains."

We are often drawn to what appears strong and lasting. We place confidence in buildings, institutions, routines, achievements, and even in our own plans. They give us a sense of stability and control.

But today Jesus reminds us that even the most magnificent temple will one day pass away. What seems permanent in human eyes is still temporary before God. Only the Lord remains forever faithful.

As we stand before the One who alone endures, let us acknowledge the times we have trusted more in passing things than in God, and let us ask him for mercy and peace.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you remain faithful when the foundations of our lives are shaken: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you call us to place our trust not in passing things but in your enduring word: Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you are the rock that never crumbles and the hope that never fades: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us for placing our trust too often in things that pass away rather than in his eternal love, strengthen us to remain faithful amid the changes and uncertainties of life, and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, amid the passing realities of this world
you alone remain unshaken and eternal.
Teach us to build our lives upon your Son,
whose word never fades
and whose presence never abandons us,
so that in every trial and change
we may remain steadfast in faith and hope.
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 built a magnificent sandcastle on the beach. He spent hours shaping towers, carving walls, even digging a moat. He stepped back, proud of what he had made. But as the tide slowly came in, the water reached the edges, then the walls, and finally washed the whole castle away. The boy stood there in silence, and then his

father said gently, “It was beautiful—but it was never meant to last.”

In today’s Gospel, the people are admiring the Temple in Jerusalem in much the same way. It was a masterpiece—massive stones, intricate design, a symbol of identity and faith. To them, it must have seemed unshakable, almost eternal. Yet Jesus speaks words that cut through that illusion: *“The time will come when not a single stone will be left on another.”*

This is not just a prediction about a building; it is a truth about life itself. So much of what we think is permanent is, in fact, passing. Structures fall, systems change, relationships shift, even our own bodies weaken with time. Like the sandcastle, many things we build and rely on are not meant to last forever.

It is no wonder that such words can make us uneasy. We might ask, as people surely did in Jesus’ time: *Where is the good news in this?* Why does the Gospel speak of destruction, conflict, and upheaval?

The good news is not in the passing away—it is in what does not pass away. Jesus later says, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”* In other words, when everything else shifts, Christ remains. When foundations tremble, his presence does not.

This is where the Book of Revelation in the first reading offers us a deeper vision. Amid images of harvest and judgment, there is also a quiet assurance: God’s purposes endure. History is not random; it is held in God’s hands. Even when there is loss, God is not absent. Even when things end, God’s kingdom is not ending.

So the question for us becomes very practical: *Where is my security?* Is it in things that can be taken away—success, reputation, possessions, even structures and routines? Or is it rooted in a relationship with the Lord, who alone remains faithful?

When our lives are anchored in Christ, change does not destroy us. Loss does not define us. Even death does not

have the final word. Because the one to whom we are bound is not passing away.

There is a quiet freedom in this. We can appreciate the good things of this world—the “temples” of our lives—without clinging to them as if they were ultimate. We can hold them with gratitude, but also with open hands.
An elderly man once returned to the ruins of a church where he had been baptised as a child. The building had long since been destroyed in a war. As he stood there, someone asked him, “Is it painful to see it like this?” He replied, “The building is gone—but what I received here is still alive in me. God has not left.”
And that is the heart of today’s message: stones may fall, structures may disappear, but the Lord remains—and his relationship with us endures.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that trusting not in passing things but in the enduring mercy of Christ, our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God, as we place these gifts upon your altar,
teach us to offer to you not only bread and wine,
but also our fears, attachments, and fragile securities.
May this sacrifice deepen our trust in Christ,
who remains faithful when all else passes away.
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 remind us that the things of this world are passing,
yet you never cease to guide your people with enduring love. When human strength fails and earthly foundations are shaken, your Son remains our unfailing hope
and your word stands firm forever.

In Christ you teach us not to cling fearfully to what fades away, but to seek the kingdom that endures eternally.

For even amid change, loss, and uncertainty,
you remain near to those who trust in you.
And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory,
as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy…

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Because Christ remains our secure foundation when all else passes away, and because we are children of the Father whose love endures forever, we dare to pray in the words our Savior himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and strengthen us when the things of this world seem uncertain and fragile.
Keep our hearts anchored in your Son,
whose love remains when all else passes away,
as we await in joyful hope
the coming of our Savior, 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 fears when earthly securities fail, but on the faith of your Church, which trusts in your enduring presence.
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 remains faithful through every change and trial of life.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

So much in life changes. What once seemed secure can disappear, and what we build with great effort can fade with time. Yet today Christ reminds us that his presence remains. The Lord we have received in this Eucharist is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
May our hearts rest not in passing things,
but in the One who never leaves us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these sacred mysteries,
we humbly ask you, O Lord,
to strengthen our hearts in lasting faith,
so that amid the passing realities of this world
we may remain firmly rooted in Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord,
who alone remains forever faithful,
strengthen you when life feels uncertain,
free you from fear of what passes away,
and anchor your hearts firmly in Christ.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by placing your trust not in what fades away, but in Christ who remains forever.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Everything we build in this world is temporary, but a life rooted in Christ will never be lost.”

Wednesday of the 34th Week of the year

Rev 15:1–4; Lk 21:12–19

"In every trial, the Lord turns our weakness into witness."

INTRODUCTION

A young teacher once told of her first day in a very difficult school. The students were restless, uncooperative, even hostile. By the end of the day she sat in her car and wondered if she had made a terrible mistake. Everything in her felt like failure. Yet years later, she would look back and say: "That was the day I really became a teacher." What seemed like a setback became a turning point.

We often discover that life does not grow us through ease, but through resistance. Moments that appear dark, confusing, or threatening can become places where patience, courage, and faith are quietly formed within us.

Today's readings speak of persecution, endurance, and victory. Jesus tells his disciples that trials will come, yet he also promises that such moments will become opportunities to bear witness. The Book of Revelation shows those who remained faithful now standing before God in praise.

As we gather around the Lord's altar, let us acknowledge the times we lost courage, hid our faith, or relied only on ourselves instead of trusting in God's strength. Let us ask for mercy and grace.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you remain faithful to your people in every trial: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you turn our weakness into opportunities for witness: Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you give us wisdom, courage, and endurance through your Spirit: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who strengthens the weak, sustains the weary, and never abandons those who trust in him, forgive us our sins, heal our fears, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, whose Son taught us
that faithful endurance bears lasting fruit,
grant that amid the trials and pressures of this life
we may rely not on our own strength
but on the grace that comes from you,
so that our lives may become a courageous witness to the Gospel.
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 man once shared how he lost his job unexpectedly. With a family to support, the fear was immediate and overwhelming. For weeks he felt humiliated and angry. But during that time, he began volunteering at a local shelter simply to keep himself occupied. There, in serving others who had even less than he did, something shifted. “Losing my job,” he said later, “became the place where I found my purpose.” What looked like a collapse became a calling.

Jesus, in today’s Gospel, prepares his disciples for what looks like collapse. He speaks plainly: they will be seized, persecuted, betrayed—even by those closest to them. This is not a comforting message. It is stark, unsettling, and very real. Yet right in the middle of that darkness, Jesus says something surprising: *“This will be your opportunity to bear witness.”*

What we instinctively avoid—difficulty, opposition, vulnerability—Jesus reframes as opportunity. Not because suffering is good in itself, but because God can work powerfully through it. The early Christians understood this. Saint Paul, writing from prison, could say that his imprisonment actually helped spread the Gospel. What looked like limitation became mission.

We see the same pattern in our own lives. Moments when we feel weakest—when words fail us, when we are misunderstood, when standing for what is right costs us something—these can become moments of authentic witness. Not polished, not impressive, but real. And often, it is that authenticity that speaks most powerfully.

Jesus also knows our fear. That is why he makes a promise: *“I myself will give you eloquence and wisdom.”* In other words, we are not left to manage these moments on our own. The strength we need, the words we cannot find, the courage we lack—these are given. Faith is not self-sufficiency; it is reliance on the One who is faithful.

This is where Mother Teresa’s words echo with truth: we are not called to be successful, but to be faithful. The Gospel does not guarantee visible results. It does not promise that our witness will always be welcomed or understood. What it asks for is endurance—the quiet, steady refusal to give up on Christ, even when it is difficult.

And that endurance is not something we manufacture. It is rooted in God’s own faithfulness to us. The First Reading shows a people who have come through trial, now standing and singing God’s praise. Their victory was not their own doing; it was God who carried them through. The same is true for us.

Even today, while we may not face the kind of persecution described in the Gospel, we know the quieter pressures: the temptation to keep faith private, to remain silent when it matters, to blend in rather than stand out. Yet authentic faith cannot remain hidden. If Christ is truly at the center of our lives, that will be seen—in our choices, our words, our priorities.

The call, then, is simple but demanding: to remain, to endure, to witness. Not dramatically, but faithfully. Not relying on our strength, but on his.

A nurse once recounted how, during a particularly exhausting night shift, a patient asked her, “How do you stay so calm?” She paused and simply said, “I’m not doing this alone.” That brief answer, spoken in weariness, became a moment of grace—for the patient, and for herself. In that quiet, fragile moment, her weakness became a witness.

And that is the heart of today’s message: in every trial, the Lord turns our weakness into witness.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts we offer in faith, and the lives we place before the Lord in all their weakness and struggle, may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God, receive these offerings
as signs of our trust in your faithfulness.
When trials make us weak and burdens seem too heavy to bear, teach us to rely on your grace,
so that our lives may become a witness
to the strength that comes from you.
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 sustain your people with unfailing love
and strengthen those who place their trust in you.
When your children face hardship, rejection, or fear,
you do not abandon them,
but reveal your power through their weakness.

In your Son, Jesus Christ, you showed us that faithful endurance leads to life. He himself faced betrayal, suffering, and the Cross, yet transformed suffering into salvation and weakness into victory.

Through the witness of the saints and through the quiet faithfulness of your people today, you continue to make your Gospel known in the world. You give courage to the fearful, wisdom to the uncertain,
and hope to all who persevere in 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…

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Trusting not in our own strength but in the faithful love of the Father, and confident that he sustains us in every trial, let us pray in the words our Savior gave us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and strengthen us when trials and fears weigh heavily upon us.
Give us the courage to remain faithful in moments of weakness, the wisdom to witness to Christ with humility, and the hope that comes from trusting in your unfailing care, as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you told your disciples not to be afraid when they faced persecution and hardship.
Look not on our fears and failures, 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 strengthens us in every trial
and calls us to faithful witness.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, you do not ask us to be strong by ourselves.
You ask only that we remain with you.
In our weakness, teach us to trust your strength.
In our fears, teach us to rely on your promises.
And in every trial,
make our lives a quiet witness to your faithful love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Bread of life, we pray, O Lord,
that through this sacrament you may strengthen us to endure faithfully the trials and pressures of daily life.
May our communion with Christ give us courage to witness to the Gospel with humility, perseverance, and hope.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord strengthen you in every trial,
give you courage in moments of weakness,
and make your lives a faithful witness to his love.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your faithful witness in daily life.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The trials we fear may become the very places where God's grace shines most clearly. In every weakness faithfully entrusted to him, the Lord creates a witness.

Thursday of the 34th Week of the year

Rev 18:1–2, 21–23; 19:1–3, 9a; Lk 21:20–28

"When everything seems to fall, Christ comes to lift."

INTRODUCTION

A teacher once brought a clay pot into the classroom and suddenly dropped it onto the floor. It shattered into pieces. The students tried to fit the fragments back together, but though repaired, the cracks remained visible. Some things, once broken, cannot return to exactly what they were before.

We know this not only with objects, but in life itself. Plans collapse, health weakens, relationships strain, and certainties disappear. At times we may feel that something important within us has fallen apart.

Today's readings speak honestly about such moments. They describe upheaval, collapse, and fear. Yet they also reveal something deeper: when everything seems to fall, Christ comes not to abandon us, but to lift us into a new

freedom and hope.

And so, bringing before the Lord all the places in our lives that feel broken, fearful, or uncertain, let us ask for his mercy and healing as we begin our penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, when our world feels shaken and our hearts are afraid, you call us to stand firm in trust:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, when hopes collapse and strength fails, you come near with the promise of liberation:
Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, through your Cross and Resurrection, you transform endings into new beginnings:
Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God look with compassion upon our weakness, strengthen us when life feels uncertain, lift us when burdens weigh heavily upon us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, whose Son taught us not to lose heart
when the powers of this world tremble and fade,
grant us the grace to stand firm in faith
and to lift our eyes toward Christ,
who comes with saving power and mercy.
Amid the uncertainties of this passing world,
may we trust in the freedom and hope
that flow from his Cross and Resurrection.
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 man who spent years building a small business from nothing. It was his pride and his security. But one unexpected crisis led to another, and within months everything collapsed. One evening, sitting alone in the empty shop, he said, “I feel like my whole world has ended.”

That sense of everything falling apart is exactly the landscape of today's readings. Jesus speaks of Jerusalem surrounded, overrun, destroyed. The Book of Revelation proclaims the fall of Babylon—an empire that seemed untouchable. Great powers crumble. What appeared permanent proves fragile.

History confirms this pattern. Jerusalem fell. Rome faded. Every human structure, no matter how strong, carries within it the seeds of its own ending. And that can be unsettling, because we tend to build our sense of security on things that feel solid—institutions, achievements, even relationships.

But the Gospel does not stop at collapse. Just when the scene grows darkest—when fear grips hearts and chaos fills the world—Jesus says something extraordinary: *"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory… your liberation is near."*

This is the turning point. The fall is not the end. It is, mysteriously, the moment of God's coming. *When everything seems to fall, Christ comes to lift.*

We see this pattern most clearly on Calvary. To all appearances, everything had fallen apart. Jesus was rejected, abandoned, crucified. Hope itself seemed shattered. And yet, that very moment became the doorway to resurrection. The deepest darkness became the place where God's light shone most powerfully.

The same is true in our own lives. There are moments when something "falls"—a dream, a plan, a sense of control. We can feel overwhelmed, even afraid. But the Gospel invites us to see differently: not every ending is a defeat; some endings are openings. The Lord comes precisely there, not to erase the past, but to bring a deeper freedom out of it.

That is why Jesus says, *"Stand erect, hold your heads high."* Not in denial, not in arrogance—but in trust. Trust that God is at work even when we cannot see it clearly.

Trust that his power is not destructive like worldly power, but life-giving and liberating.

The man who lost his business eventually found work helping others rebuild theirs. Years later, he said, “Losing everything was the only way I discovered what really mattered—and who I could become.” What he first experienced as collapse became, in time, a kind of liberation.

And so the invitation today is simple but demanding: when things fall, do not lose heart. Lift your eyes. The Lord is near. His coming is not just at the end of time—it is here, in the midst of our uncertainties, our fears, even our losses. For in the mystery of God’s grace, *when everything seems to fall, Christ comes to lift.*

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts, offered in faith amid the uncertainties of this passing world, may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May these offerings, O Lord,
become for us a sign of hope and steadfast trust,
so that, when the things of earth seem fragile and uncertain, we may cling more firmly to Christ,
who alone lifts us into the freedom of your 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 in your wisdom you remind us that the things of this world are passing, yet you never abandon your people in times of trial. When fear darkens the human heart
and earthly securities fail,
you reveal your Son as the true and lasting hope of all creation.
Through his Cross, what seemed defeat became victory; through his Resurrection, what appeared lost was raised to new life. And so, with confidence, we await the coming of

Christ in glory, trusting that he lifts those who place their hope in him.
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

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray with confidence to the Father who lifts his children with hope whenever fear and uncertainty weigh heavily upon them.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days, that, amid the uncertainties and upheavals of this passing world, we may remain steadfast in hope and confident in your mercy, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, 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,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
even amid the fears and uncertainties of this world,
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 to lift us from fear and lead us into freedom. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, there are moments when parts of our lives seem to crumble beyond repair. Yet today you remind us that collapse is not always the end. In the breaking of the Cross, you revealed resurrection. In our losses, you continue to draw near with quiet strength and hope.

Teach us not to cling fearfully to what passes away, but to trust in you who remain faithful forever. When we are tempted to despair, help us to stand erect and lift our heads high, knowing that you are near and that your grace is already at work within us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the pledge of eternal redemption,
we pray, almighty God, that through this sacrament
you may strengthen us in every trial
and teach us to trust confidently in Christ,
who comes to raise up all who place their hope in him.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord strengthen you when life feels uncertain. Amen.
May he lift your hearts whenever fear or discouragement weighs upon you. Amen.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace, trusting that when everything seems to fall, Christ comes to lift.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Not every ending is a defeat. In God’s hands, even what falls apart can become the place where grace begins and Christ lifts us into deeper freedom.

Friday of the 34th Week of the year

Rev 20:1–4, 11–21:2; Lk 21:29–33

"When everything passes, His word remains."

INTRODUCTION

There is a story of an elderly man who, after many years, returned to the small town where he grew up. He walked slowly through the streets, noticing how everything had changed—shops replaced, houses renovated beyond recognition, even the old playground gone. Feeling a little lost, he stopped in front of the church where he had been baptised. It looked different too, restored and expanded. But when he stepped inside and heard the familiar words of Scripture proclaimed, he whispered to himself, "At least this has not changed." We know that feeling. So much in life shifts beneath our feet—places, relationships, even parts of ourselves. What once felt permanent can quietly disappear. It can leave us wondering: Is there anything that truly lasts? The readings today speak right into that question. They do not deny change—indeed, they speak of a world where even "heaven and earth will pass away." That is not meant to frighten us, but to awaken us to a deeper truth: not everything is as solid as it seems.

And so, as we come before the Lord, we prepare our hearts to recognise where we have clung to passing things more than to what endures. We ask pardon for the times we have ignored His word, the one thing that never fades, and we open ourselves to the mercy that restores and steadies us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful when all else changes: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Christ Jesus, You speak words of life that never pass away: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You are our hope in every season of life: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us for placing our trust in passing things more than in His enduring word, strengthen us when life feels uncertain, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, whose eternal Word remains firm
when all earthly things pass away,
grant us the grace to anchor our hearts in Christ,
so that amid the changing seasons of life
we may remain steadfast in faith,
confident in Your promise of renewal and life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A woman once shared how, during a particularly difficult year, she lost several things she held dear—her job, her sense of direction, and even a close friendship. One evening, feeling overwhelmed, she picked up an old Bible that had belonged to her grandmother. Inside, she found a passage underlined: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” She said that in that moment, something shifted—not her circumstances, but her sense of being anchored.

Today’s Gospel speaks in simple images: the fig tree budding, the changing of seasons. Jesus invites us to notice the signs around us. Just as we can read the seasons of nature, we are also called to read the seasons of our lives. There are times of growth and light, and there are times that feel like winter—bare, cold, and uncertain. We don’t always choose our seasons. Sometimes, life brings us unexpectedly into a kind of personal winter—loss, confusion, or silence. And in those moments, it can feel as though everything is slipping away, just as Jesus describes: even “heaven and earth” passing.

But Jesus does something remarkable. Right after speaking of everything passing away, He points to what does not pass away: *His word*. Not just words on a page, but His living presence, His promise, His truth. When everything else shifts, He remains.

The Book of Revelation echoes this vision. It speaks of endings—the passing away of the old—but also of a new beginning: a new heaven and a new earth. God is not simply watching things fall apart; He is leading all things

toward renewal. What seems like an ending is, in His hands, a transformation.

This is where faith becomes real. It is easy to trust when life feels like spring or summer. But the deeper invitation is to trust in winter—to believe that even when we cannot see growth, something is quietly unfolding. His word becomes like a hidden root, holding us steady beneath the surface.

We live in a world of constant change—technology, society, even the Church in many ways. It can feel disorienting. Yet Jesus reminds us that stability is not found in circumstances but in relationship. His word is not just information; it is communion. It is the voice of One who does not abandon us.

And perhaps that is the quiet consolation of today's Gospel: when much is taken from us, not everything is lost. His word remains. His presence remains. His faithfulness remains—"the one who was, who is, and who is to come."

There is another story of a man who, after losing almost everything in a natural disaster, stood in the ruins of his home holding a small, soaked Bible that had survived. When asked how he felt, he said, "I have lost many things—but not the One who speaks to me through this."

And somehow, that was enough to begin again.

In the end, we are all moving through changing seasons. But beneath it all runs a deeper truth, steady and unshaken: *when everything passes, His word remains.*

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that as we place these gifts upon the altar,
we may learn to entrust to God all that fades and changes,
and hold fast to Christ whose word endures for ever,
that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, receive the offerings we bring before You amid the changing realities of our lives, and through this sacrifice strengthen our trust in the enduring promise of Your Son, whose words never pass away.

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 Christ Your Son
You have spoken the word that never fades.
When human strength fails
and the securities of this world pass away,
You remain faithful through every season of life.
You lead Your people through times of loss and
uncertainty toward the new heaven and the new earth You
have prepared.

In Him, we discover a hope that outlasts suffering,
a truth that survives every passing shadow,
and a presence that never abandons us.
Through His death and resurrection,
You renew what is broken
and gather all creation into Your eternal 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…

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by the divine
teaching that remains true in every age, we dare to say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and when the passing things of this world leave us anxious
or uncertain,
keep us rooted in the enduring word of Your Son.
By the help of Your mercy,
may we remain faithful through every season of life,
steadfast in hope as we await the blessed fulfilment of
Your promises
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You told Your disciples not to fear
when heaven and earth pass away,
for Your word and Your presence remain forever:
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 whose word remains when all else fades away.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Life moves through many seasons. Some are filled with
clarity and joy; others feel uncertain and stripped bare.
Yet Christ remains present in them all.
Today we have received not only bread from heaven,
but the living Word who sustains us from within.
Even when much changes around us,
His faithfulness does not change.
Let us rest for a moment in that quiet assurance:
when everything passes, His word remains.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these sacred mysteries,
we humbly ask You, Lord,
to strengthen us with the lasting power of Your word,
so that amid the passing realities of this world
we may persevere in faith
and walk with hope toward the new creation You promise.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord steady your hearts
when life feels uncertain and changing. Amen.
May He help you trust in the word of Christ
that never passes away. Amen.
And may Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, trusting not in what fades away,
but in the enduring presence and promise of the Lord.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

When much around us changes or disappears,
Christ invites us not to cling fearfully to what passes,
but to hold firmly to what endures:
His word, His presence, and His faithful love.

SATURDAY OF THE 34TH WEEK OF THE YEAR

Rev 22:1–7; Lk 21:34–36

"Stay awake in the presence of the One who is already here and still coming."

INTRODUCTION

There is a story told of a night watchman in a small village who walked the streets each evening with a lantern. Someone once asked him, "Why do you carry the light? The streets are quiet and nothing ever happens here." The watchman replied, "That may be so—but if something does happen, I must be ready to see it." His task was not to create events, but to be awake to them.

We can drift through life in a kind of spiritual sleep, assuming that nothing much is happening between God and us. Days pass, routines settle in, and our awareness dulls. Yet the gospel today suggests that something is always happening: the Lord is always near, always coming, always present.

Today, on the final day of the Church's liturgical year, we stand like that watchman at the edge of a threshold.

Behind us is the year that has been; before us, the season of Advent begins—a time of waiting, watching, and renewed attentiveness. The question is not whether God will come, but whether we will be awake to recognise him. And so, as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, we acknowledge the ways we have allowed ourselves to grow drowsy in spirit—distracted, preoccupied, inattentive to the Lord who is near. Let us ask for the grace to become watchful again, as we turn to the Lord in the penitential act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you are already present among your people, yet we often fail to notice you: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you call us to remain awake in prayer and attentive in faith: Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you come quietly in the ordinary moments of life and invite us to receive you with open hearts: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God awaken our hearts to his loving presence, free us from all that dulls our faith and distracts us from his coming, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Grant us, O Lord, the grace to remain watchful in faith and steadfast in prayer, that amid the cares and distractions of this passing world we may recognise with joyful hearts the presence of your Son, who is already among us and who continually comes to save us.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A man once shared how he nearly missed an important phone call that changed his life. He had been expecting it all day, but when it finally came, he had dozed off on the couch. The phone rang beside him, but in his half-sleep he

ignored it. Only later did he realise what he had missed. “I was waiting for it,” he said, “but I wasn’t awake enough to receive it.” That experience captures something of what Jesus is warning about in today’s gospel.

“Stay awake, praying at all times.” Jesus is not speaking about losing sleep or living in anxiety. He is pointing to a deeper kind of wakefulness—a spiritual attentiveness, a heart that is alert to God’s presence. It is possible to be physically awake and yet spiritually asleep, moving through the day without any awareness of God.

We might wonder, as the disciples surely did, how it is possible to “pray at all times.” Life is busy. There are responsibilities, tasks, conversations, and commitments. Even Saint Paul, who urges us to “pray without ceasing,” also insists on the importance of daily work. So this constant prayer cannot mean being on our knees all day long.

What Jesus calls for is an attitude—a way of being. It is the quiet awareness that God is with us in everything: in our work, in our conversations, in moments of rest, and even in our struggles. It is living with a kind of inner openness, where the heart remains turned toward God even while the hands are busy.

This is what we might call a contemplative stance toward life. Not something reserved for monasteries or retreats, but something woven into ordinary living. It is the difference between rushing through the day absorbed only in tasks, and moving through the same day with a gentle awareness: “The Lord is here.”

Yet Jesus is realistic. He warns that “the cares and pleasures of life” can weigh down our hearts. We know how easily that happens. Worries consume us, or distractions scatter us. We become so full of noise—both external and internal—that there is no space left to notice God’s quiet presence.

That is why moments of intentional prayer are essential. If we never step aside, if we never pause, we lose the capacity to recognise God in the flow of daily life. Those

quiet times of prayer are like tuning the heart, so that throughout the day we can remain awake, attentive, receptive.

And today, standing at the threshold of Advent, the Church invites us to reclaim that watchfulness. Advent is not just about waiting for Christmas; it is about learning again how to notice the Lord who is already among us. It is about becoming people who are awake enough to recognise his coming—in Scripture, in the Eucharist, in others, and in the ordinary moments of our lives.

There is a story of a nurse who worked the night shift in a hospital. She spoke of how, in the stillness of the night, she became more attentive—not less—to her patients. “During the day,” she said, “there is so much noise and activity. But at night, even the smallest change—a movement, a breath, a whisper—becomes noticeable.” In the quiet, she learned to watch more carefully, to listen more deeply.

That is the kind of attentiveness Jesus invites us into. Not a fearful vigilance, but a loving awareness. To stay awake in faith is to live each day with that quiet readiness—to notice, to receive, to respond. For the Lord we are waiting for is not far away. He is already here, gently present, always coming.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that as we place these gifts upon the altar, our hearts too may be made watchful and attentive, ready to welcome the Lord who comes to us in these sacred mysteries, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the offerings we bring before you at the close of this liturgical year, and through this holy sacrifice awaken within us a spirit of constant prayer and faithful vigilance, so that we may recognise your presence in the ordinary moments of our lives and await with confidence the coming of your 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,
through Christ our Lord.
For in your loving wisdom you never cease to draw near to your people. In your Son, you walk beside us through the ordinary paths of life, speaking in your word,
revealing yourself in the poor and the forgotten,
and remaining with us always in the breaking of the bread.
Yet as we await the fullness of his coming in glory,
you teach us to live with watchful hearts,
awake in prayer and attentive in faith,
so that amid the distractions of this world
we may recognise the quiet signs of your 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 Lord God of hosts…

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say, trusting that the Father is always near to those who watch and pray in faith:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every distraction and anxiety that weighs down our hearts, and graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may remain spiritually awake and attentive to the coming of your Son, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her that peace and unity which come from hearts attentive to your presence and open to 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 and remains with us always. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The Lord whom we await is already here.
He comes quietly—through his word, through this Eucharist, through the people and moments that fill our days. The question is not whether Christ is present, but whether our hearts are awake enough to notice him.
May this communion deepen within us a quiet attentiveness, so that we may walk into Advent with eyes open, hearts watchful, and spirits ready to receive the One who is always coming.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received these sacred mysteries, O Lord, may we remain vigilant in faith and constant in prayer, so that, attentive to your presence in this passing world, we may one day stand with confidence before your Son when he comes in glory.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord keep you watchful in faith,
attentive to his presence, and steadfast in prayer. Amen.

May he free your hearts from every distraction
and fill you with the quiet joy of those who recognise him near. Amen.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, staying awake to the presence of Christ who is already among you and who continues to come into your lives each day.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The Lord is already here.
The spiritual life begins when we learn to notice him.”