FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – CYCLE B

"STAY AWAKE – COME, LORD JESUS!"

Is 63:16b–17, 19b; 64:2–7; 1 Cor 1:3–9; Mk 13:33–37

INTRODUCTION

A lighthouse keeper once asked his young assistant why he spent so much time cleaning the lighthouse lamp when the sea was calm and no ships were in sight. The young man replied, "Because I do not know when a ship will need its light. My duty is to keep it burning!"

Today we begin a new liturgical year with the First Sunday of Advent. The Church invites us not merely to count the days until Christmas, but to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. Like the lighthouse keeper, we must keep the light of faith burning, even when life seems calm and everything appears normal.

The readings today give us three important messages:

- The first reading, from Isaiah, expresses humanity's deep longing for God and reminds us that we are clay in the hands of the divine Potter, who can reshape our lives.
- The second reading, from St Paul, assures us that God is faithful and will strengthen us as we wait for the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- In the Gospel, Jesus commands us to stay awake and be watchful, because we do not know when the master of the house will return.

These readings invite us to begin Advent with renewed hope, deeper faith and genuine conversion. God is not finished with us; his grace can revive what has grown cold, heal what has been wounded and transform what has gone wrong.

As we enter this holy season, let us ask ourselves: Is the light of Christ still burning brightly in our hearts? Are we attentive to God's presence and to the needs of those around us? Or have we allowed distractions, resentment and indifference to make us spiritually asleep? Let us acknowledge our failures, seek God's mercy and prepare our hearts to welcome the Lord who comes to save us.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters, as we begin the season of Advent, let us acknowledge that we have not always remained watchful. We have sometimes allowed the light of faith to grow dim through our sins and indifference. With humble and repentant hearts, let us ask the Lord to renew us.

Lord Jesus, you come to awaken us from spiritual sleep and call us to watchfulness. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the faithful One who strengthens us with your grace and never abandons us. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the divine Potter who patiently reshapes our lives and leads us to new beginnings. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God awaken our hearts, forgive our sins, rekindle the light of faith within us and strengthen us to remain watchful for the coming of his Son, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
you are the Potter who lovingly shapes our lives and the faithful Father who never abandons your children. As we begin this season of Advent, awaken our hearts from spiritual sleep, rekindle the flame of faith within us and strengthen us with your grace. May we recognise your Son in our daily lives, remain faithful in our responsibilities and joyfully prepare to welcome him when he comes.

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

INTRODUCTION – WAITING IS NOT ENOUGH

A man once arrived early at a railway station to catch an important train. Confident that he had plenty of time, he sat down, opened his newspaper and began reading. He heard announcements over the loudspeaker but paid little attention. When he finally looked up, his train had already departed!

He complained to the railway official: “Why didn't somebody wake me up? I was waiting for my train!” The official replied: “Sir, you were waiting for your train, but you were not watching for it!”

My dear brothers and sisters, there is a great difference between waiting and watching. We can expect something important and still miss it because we are distracted. That is why Jesus tells us today: “Be watchful! Be alert!” Advent is not simply about waiting for Christmas; it is about being awake enough to recognise Christ when he comes.

1. ADVENT – PREPARING A PLACE FOR JESUS

Today we begin a new liturgical year. The world begins its new year with noise and fireworks; the Church begins quietly, with the light of an Advent candle. The world is already celebrating Christmas, but the Church invites us to slow down, be still and listen.

We may decorate our homes, prepare delicious meals and buy presents, yet forget to prepare the most important place: our hearts.

A teacher once asked her pupils what they should prepare for Christmas. The children answered, “A tree!”, “Presents!”, “Christmas cake!” One little boy said, “We must prepare a place for Jesus.” When the teacher asked where, he replied, “In our hearts. Otherwise, Jesus will have nowhere to stay!”

What a simple but profound answer! Advent invites us to make room for Christ by clearing away resentment, bitterness, selfishness and whatever keeps us too busy for God.

2. OUR DEEP LONGING FOR GOD

Think of parents waiting at an airport for children returning home after many years, or a family waiting outside an operating theatre for news about a loved one. Waiting reveals how deeply we need the person for whom we wait.

Advent reminds us that beneath all our activities and achievements, our hearts still long for God. St Augustine expressed it beautifully: “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O God.”

Isaiah gives voice to this longing: “Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down!” The early Christians prayed: “Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!” Let that become our prayer this Advent—when we are worried, when our families struggle, when we feel lonely, and whenever we need God's presence.

3. GOD CAN BRING SPRING TO OUR WINTER

Isaiah speaks honestly about our spiritual condition: “We have all withered like leaves.” Sometimes our prayer becomes mechanical, resentment takes root, or we become so busy that we have little time for God. There can be a winter in the spirit.

An old tree once looked completely dead during winter. Someone suggested cutting it down, but the gardener said, “Wait. The tree is not dead; it is waiting for spring.” When spring came, tiny green buds appeared.

That is a lesson for us. We should not judge ourselves or others too quickly. God sees not only what we are today, but what his grace can make of us tomorrow. Winter is not the end of the story. Spring is still possible!

Isaiah continues with another beautiful image: “We are the clay, and you are our potter.” A young man once asked a master potter how long it had taken him to make a beautiful vase. “Forty years,” the potter replied. The young man was surprised. The potter explained, “It took forty years to become the kind of person who could make this vase.”

God patiently shapes us through our joys, failures and struggles. We may resist his hands, but Advent invites us

to let him work in us. We are not finished yet; God is not finished with us!

4. GOD IS FAITHFUL – KEEP THE FIRE BURNING

St Paul reassures the Christians at Corinth, despite their divisions and weaknesses: “God is faithful.” Their failures did not cancel God's grace, and neither do ours.

Think of a piece of charcoal removed from a glowing fire. It soon becomes cold. But when it is placed back among the embers, it begins to glow again. Our faith can grow cold when we distance ourselves from prayer, the Eucharist and the Word of God. Returning to the Lord rekindles the fire.

This Advent, let Christ revive the gifts that may have grown weak in us: prayer, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and faith. God's faithfulness is greater than our failures.

5. STAY AWAKE – RECOGNISE CHRIST IN OTHERS

Our world is full of warning systems: cars warn us of danger, smoke alarms warn us of fire, and phones alert us to messages. But Jesus asks us to examine our inner warning system. Do I notice when I am drifting away from God, hurting someone with my words, or becoming indifferent to another person's suffering?

A man regularly saw an elderly woman on his morning bus. One day she looked unusually sad. Instead of looking at his phone, he asked, “Madam, are you all right?” She began to cry. Her husband had recently died, and she had not spoken to anyone that morning. She thanked him: “Nobody has spoken to me today.” The man later said, “I thought I was helping her, but she taught me what it means to be awake.”

Christ may come to us in a lonely neighbour, a family member who needs forgiveness, or someone silently suffering. He comes to us in the Eucharist and in his Word, but he also comes in those who need our love. Christian watchfulness means recognising him in ordinary people.

6. ACTIVE WAITING – TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Advent waiting is not passive. In the Gospel, the master leaves his servants in charge and expects each one to do

the work entrusted to them. We too must remain faithful while we wait for the Lord.

A mother waiting for her son who is returning after a long absence does not simply sit doing nothing. She cleans the house, prepares his favourite food and makes his room ready. Her waiting is expressed through love and action.

So our waiting for Christ must be active: we pray, forgive, serve, encourage and comfort those who suffer. Perhaps our next step this Advent is to return to prayer, go to Confession, reconcile with someone, visit a sick person or telephone someone who is lonely. We do not have to solve everything today. We only have to take the next step with Christ.

CONCLUSION – THE FATHER KNOWS THE WAY

A little girl was travelling with her father through the countryside. It was getting dark, and she asked, “Daddy, can you see the road?” He answered, “Yes, sweetheart.” Then she asked, “Can you see all the way to our house?” He smiled: “No, darling. But I can see enough of the road to take us safely there.”

The little girl moved closer to him and said, “That's all right, Daddy. I don't need to see the whole road. I just need to know that you are driving.”

My dear brothers and sisters, that is faith. We do not know what tomorrow or the coming year will bring. Sometimes the road will be dark, and we may not understand what God is doing. But we know who is guiding us. Our Father knows the way!

Let us begin Advent not with fear, but with hope; not with anxiety, but with trust. Let us prepare not only our homes for Christmas, but our hearts for Christ.

May our prayer be: “Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus! Come into our homes, our families, our wounded relationships and our hearts. When you come, may you find us awake, watchful, faithful and ready to welcome you.” Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH *(for personal meditation only)*

Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that you are the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and the fulfilment of our deepest longing. You are the One who comes into my life, awakens my heart and leads me towards the fullness of life.

I believe that God, my Father, is the divine Potter who lovingly shapes my life. Even when I fail, fall or lose my way, his mercy never abandons me. I am still a work in his hands, and I trust that he is not finished with me.

I believe that God is faithful. His promises never fail, his grace never runs dry, and his love is greater than all my weaknesses. When my faith grows cold, he can rekindle its flame and restore my hope.

I believe that you come to me in the Holy Eucharist, in your living Word and in every person who needs my love, forgiveness and compassion. Open my eyes to recognise you in the ordinary encounters of daily life.

I believe that waiting for you means more than simply counting the days. It means living each day with faith, serving with love, forgiving generously, praying faithfully and remaining attentive to your presence.

I believe that I do not need to know everything about tomorrow, because you walk beside me and my heavenly Father knows the way. Even when the road becomes dark, I will not surrender to fear, for I am held in your loving hands.

Therefore, Lord, I choose to remain awake. I choose to keep the flame of faith burning. I choose to allow you to mould my heart and transform my life.

Come, Lord Jesus! Come into my heart, my family, my relationships, my struggles and my future. When you come, may you find me faithful, watchful, hopeful and ready to welcome you. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

My dear brothers and sisters, as we begin the season of Advent, let us turn to our faithful Father, who patiently shapes our lives and strengthens us by his grace. With watchful and trusting hearts, let us present our prayers to him.

Response: Lord, awaken our hearts and hear our prayer.

1. For Pope Leo XIV, our bishops, priests and religious: that they may faithfully proclaim the hope of Advent, awaken the hearts of the faithful and lead God's people towards a deeper relationship with Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the Church throughout the world: that, like the servants in today's Gospel, we may remain watchful, faithful to our responsibilities and ready to recognise Christ in every person we encounter. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For families and communities: that this Advent may become a time of reconciliation, forgiveness and renewed love, and that those who have grown distant from God may rediscover the warmth of his presence. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For those who are discouraged, lonely, anxious or burdened by life's difficulties: that they may experience the healing touch of the divine Potter, discover new hope and trust in God's faithfulness. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick, the dying and all our beloved deceased: that the sick may receive healing, comfort and strength, and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal joy of God's kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, you are faithful in your promises and patient in shaping our lives. Hear the prayers we place before you. Keep our faith alive, awaken our hearts and prepare us to welcome your Son with joy and love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

My dear brothers and sisters, let us now offer him the bread and wine, together with our lives, our hopes and our commitment to remain watchful for the coming of Christ, and pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept the gifts we bring before you and transform them into the sacrament of your Son's saving presence. As we await his coming, mould our hearts through your grace, rekindle our faith and make our lives a living offering of love, service and watchfulness.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE – AWAKE AND READY FOR THE LORD

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 you never abandon your people but faithfully guide them through every season of life. Through the prophets, you awakened in our hearts the longing for your presence; through your Son, you revealed the fullness of your love; and through the Holy Spirit, you continually strengthen us as we await his coming in glory.

You are the divine Potter who patiently shapes our lives, the faithful Father who restores our hope and the light that never allows our hearts to remain in darkness.

In this holy season of Advent, you call us to remain watchful, to rekindle the flame of faith and to recognise your Son in the Word, in the Eucharist and in our brothers and sisters.

And so, with the Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

My dear brothers and sisters, we are children of a faithful Father who never abandons us and whose hands lovingly shape our lives. With confidence and trust, let us pray in the words our Saviour taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and awaken our hearts from all spiritual indifference.
Grant us peace in our days, that, sustained by your mercy, we may remain faithful in prayer, generous in love and watchful in expectation of your Son's coming.
Keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the light that awakens our hearts and the faithful Shepherd who guides us through every darkness.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.
Remove from our hearts resentment, bitterness and indifference, and help us to become instruments of reconciliation, forgiveness and hope in our families and communities.
Keep us watchful in love and united in your grace.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

My dear brothers and sisters, the Lord who calls us to remain watchful comes to meet us now in the Eucharist.
He is the Bread of Life who rekindles our faith, strengthens our hearts and prepares us for his coming in glory.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

You have come into our hearts in this Holy Communion.
Do not allow us to return to our old ways of spiritual sleep and indifference.
As the divine Potter, continue to mould our lives.
As the faithful Father, strengthen us when we grow weak.
As the light of the world, awaken us whenever darkness surrounds us.
May we recognise you in the people we meet, serve you in those who suffer and keep the flame of faith burning through prayer, forgiveness and love.
May our entire life become a joyful preparation for your coming.
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, you have nourished us with the Bread of Life and strengthened us with the presence of your Son. May this Holy Communion awaken our hearts, rekindle our faith and transform us into faithful servants who remain watchful in prayer and generous in love. As we await the coming of Christ, may we recognise him in our daily lives and joyfully prepare to meet him when he comes in glory.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the God who lovingly shapes your lives strengthen you with his grace, awaken your hearts to his presence and keep the flame of faith burning within you.
May he grant you the patience to wait, the wisdom to recognise Christ in others and the courage to remain faithful in every circumstance.
And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, keep the flame of faith burning and remain awake for the coming of the Lord!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Do not merely wait for Christ; live each day ready to welcome him!”

MONDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Is 2:1–5; Mt 8:5–11

“Lord, only say the word: A journey of humility, trust and healing.”

INTRODUCTION

A little girl once planted a tiny seed in a pot. Every morning she watered it, even though nothing seemed to happen. Her brother laughed and said, “Why do you keep watering something that is not growing?” She replied, “Because I believe something is happening beneath the soil, even when I cannot see it!”

Faith is trusting God's work even when we cannot yet see its results.

Dear brothers and sisters, today we begin our Advent journey with this spirit of hope and trust.

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah presents a beautiful vision of all nations streaming towards the mountain of the Lord, where God will establish peace and teach humanity to walk in His ways. Those who walk in God's light become instruments of His peace.

In the Gospel, a Roman centurion approaches Jesus with extraordinary humility and confidence, believing that a single word from the Lord is enough to heal his servant. Jesus is amazed by his faith and declares, “Nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this.”

These readings introduce us to the heart of Advent: a journey towards Christ, who comes to meet us with His healing presence. Like the centurion, we are invited to approach Him with humility and trust, believing that His Word can transform even the most difficult situations.

As we prepare to welcome the Lord, let us ask ourselves: Do we truly walk in His light? Do we trust His Word? Are our hearts humble enough to welcome Him? Let us acknowledge those moments when our faith has been weak, our trust incomplete and our lives distant from His ways, and confidently seek His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Priest: As we begin our Advent journey, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to strengthen our faith, deepen our humility and lead us into His light.

- Lord Jesus, You are the Light who guides us on the path of peace. Forgive us when we walk in darkness and turn away from Your ways. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You welcome all who approach You with humble and trusting hearts. Forgive us for our pride, doubts and lack of confidence in Your Word. Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, Your Word brings healing and salvation. Forgive us when we fail to trust in Your power and share Your compassion with others. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, strengthen our faith, lead us in His light and make us worthy to welcome His Son with humble and trusting hearts, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, as we begin our Advent journey, awaken in us a humble and steadfast faith. Teach us to walk in Your light, to trust in the power of Your Word and to welcome Your Son with hearts open to His healing presence. May our faith bring hope to the suffering and peace to our troubled world. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A lighthouse keeper once noticed a ship struggling in a violent storm. The captain sent a message asking for directions. The keeper replied, “Follow the light. It will bring you safely to the harbour.”

The captain could not control the storm, but he could trust the light.

That is the message of Advent: We may not control the storms of life, but we can always follow the light of Christ.

In the first reading, Isaiah gives us a wonderful vision: all nations will stream towards the mountain of the Lord. People will learn God's ways, swords will become ploughshares, and nations will no longer learn war.

What a beautiful Advent dream! God does not want a world ruled by hatred, violence and division. He invites us to walk in His light and become instruments of reconciliation and peace.

But how do we begin this journey? The Gospel gives us the answer through a Roman centurion.

His servant is seriously ill. He approaches Jesus, not demanding anything, but pleading for help. When Jesus offers to come to his house, the centurion responds: “Lord, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.”

Jesus is amazed by his faith. The centurion teaches us two essential lessons.

First, humility. He recognizes that he is not entitled to demand anything from Jesus. He comes with an open and trusting heart.

Second, confidence in God's Word. As a military officer, he understands authority. He knows that a command does not depend on the physical presence of the person giving it. He believes that Jesus has an authority far greater than his own.

A farmer once said, “I cannot command the rain, but I can prepare the soil.” That is precisely our task in Advent: we cannot control everything that happens in our lives, but we can prepare our hearts to receive God's grace.

And every time we approach Holy Communion, we repeat the centurion's words: “Lord, I am not worthy...” They remind us that humility opens the door to grace and faith prepares us to receive the Lord.

An elderly man once said, “When I cannot see the road ahead, I hold more firmly to the hand that leads me.”

Dear friends, we may not know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds our tomorrow. Let us walk in His light, approach Him with humility and trust His Word. May Jesus find in us the faith that once amazed Him in the centurion.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, encouraged by the humble and trusting faith of the centurion, let us bring our prayers before the Lord, whose Word gives light, healing and hope to the world.

Response: Lord, increase our faith and hear our prayer.

1. For the Church: that, guided by the light of Christ, she may lead all peoples towards God's kingdom and become a witness of reconciliation, justice and peace in the world. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: that they may work sincerely to overcome violence, hatred and division, transforming instruments of war into instruments of peace, as envisioned by the prophet Isaiah. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those whose faith is weak or who feel abandoned in their suffering: that the example of the centurion may inspire them to approach Jesus with humility and confidence in the healing power of His Word. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: that during this Advent season we may prepare our hearts to welcome Christ through prayer, forgiveness, generosity and genuine concern for one another. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: that the sick may experience the healing presence of Christ and the comfort of His love, and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal banquet of God's kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You never abandon those who place their trust in You. Hear the prayers we have offered with humble hearts, strengthen our faith and guide us along the path of Your light. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, like the centurion who approached Jesus with humility and trust, let us now offer our gifts and our lives to the Lord, asking Him to transform them through His grace, and pray, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, these gifts we offer with humble hearts. As we place our trust in the power of Your Word, may this holy sacrifice deepen our faith, heal our wounded hearts and prepare us to welcome Your Son, who comes to bring light and peace to the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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

For in the humility of His first coming, He revealed the greatness of Your love and became the healing Word of salvation for all peoples. He calls us to walk in His light and prepares us for His glorious return.

Through faith, we await His coming with hearts filled with hope, trusting that His Word alone can renew our lives and bring peace to the world.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the invitation of Christ, who calls us to walk in the light of the Father and to trust in His providential care, let us pray with humble and confident hearts:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and grant us peace in our days. Strengthen our faith when we face the storms of life, deepen our humility and help us trust in the healing power of Your Word. Keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Light who leads all peoples towards the Father's kingdom. You praised the humble faith of the centurion and brought healing through the power of Your Word. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Heal the divisions in our families, communities and nations, and teach us to become instruments of reconciliation and hope, as we journey towards Your coming.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus, the healing Word of the Father, who comes to dwell among us and strengthen our faith. Let us approach Him with the humility of the centurion, trusting that His presence can heal our souls and renew our lives. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have entered our hearts, not because we are worthy, but because Your love is greater than our unworthiness.
Like the centurion, we place our hopes, worries and burdens before You.
Speak Your healing Word into our wounded hearts, our troubled families and our uncertain futures.
Teach us to walk in Your light and to trust You even when we cannot see the way ahead.
Lord, only say the word, and our souls shall be healed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed by the Bread of Life, we humbly beseech You, O Lord, that this holy Communion may strengthen our faith, deepen our trust in Your Word and guide us along the path of Your light. May we carry the healing presence of Christ to all whom we encounter, as we joyfully await His coming. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who calls you to walk in His light, strengthen your faith and guide your steps throughout this Advent journey.

May He grant you the humility of the centurion, the confidence to trust in His Word and the grace to become instruments of His healing and peace.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in the light of Christ, trusting in the power of His Word!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“We may not know how God will act, but we know that His Word is enough.”

TUESDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Is 11:1–10; Lk 10:21–24

“Open our eyes, Lord: The grace of seeing and recognizing Your presence.”

INTRODUCTION

A tourist once visited a beautiful cathedral and admired its magnificent stained-glass windows. During the day, he remarked that the windows looked rather dull and ordinary. But when the sunlight streamed through them, the whole church was filled with brilliant colours. An elderly caretaker smiled and said, “The windows have not changed, sir. The difference is the light shining through them!”

Faith is the light that enables us to see the beauty of God where others see nothing extraordinary.

Dear brothers and sisters, as we continue our Advent journey, today's liturgy invites us to open our eyes and hearts to recognize the presence of God in our midst.

In the first reading, Isaiah announces that a shoot will spring from the stump of Jesse. Filled with the Spirit of the Lord, the promised Messiah will establish a kingdom of justice, harmony and peace. Where the world sees a dead stump, God sees the beginning of new life.

In the Gospel, Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit and praises the Father for revealing the mysteries of His kingdom to the humble and childlike. He tells His disciples: “Happy the eyes that see what you see.”

These readings remind us that Advent is not merely about waiting for Christ; it is about learning to recognize Him when He comes. We need the eyes of faith to discover His presence, the ears of disciples to listen to His Word and the hearts of children to receive His love.

Let us therefore ask the Lord to remove the blindness of pride, indifference and spiritual familiarity, so that we may recognize His presence with renewed wonder. Acknowledging our failures to see, hear and respond to Him, let us humbly seek His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters, the Lord invites us to approach Him with humble and childlike hearts. Let us acknowledge those moments when our eyes have been closed to His presence and our hearts have been unwilling to receive His Word.

- Lord Jesus, You are the promised Messiah, the shoot from the stump of Jesse, bringing new life and hope. Forgive us when we fail to recognize Your presence in our lives. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You reveal the mysteries of God's kingdom to the humble and childlike. Forgive our pride, arrogance and unwillingness to learn from You. Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You bless those who see and hear the wonders of God's kingdom. Forgive us when we hear Your Word without listening and receive Your gifts without gratitude. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, enlighten the eyes of our hearts, renew in us the humility of children and prepare us to recognize and welcome His Son, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and ever-living God, You reveal the mysteries of Your kingdom to humble and receptive hearts. Open our eyes to recognize Your presence, our ears to listen to Your Word and our hearts to receive Your Son with childlike faith. May the Spirit who rested upon the promised Messiah fill us with wisdom, justice and peace, as we joyfully await His coming.
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 famous artist once visited a village and painted a beautiful picture of the sunrise. People admired it, but one elderly woman stood before it for a long time. Finally, she said, “I have seen thousands of sunrises, but this painting has made me see the sunrise differently.”

Sometimes, the greatest gift is not seeing something new, but learning to see familiar things with new eyes.

That is the message of today's Gospel.

Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit and praises the Father:

“I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children.”

Jesus is not condemning education or intelligence. He is reminding us that the deepest mysteries of God cannot be discovered through intelligence alone. They must also be received with humility, openness and faith.

A person may know everything about prayer but never truly pray. Someone may know the Bible from beginning to end but fail to allow God's Word to change their life.

Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God.

The first reading gives us a beautiful image: a shoot springing from the stump of Jesse. What appears dead and hopeless becomes the beginning of something wonderful. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon this promised Messiah, bringing wisdom, justice and peace.

That promise is fulfilled in Jesus.

And Jesus tells His disciples: “Happy the eyes that see what you see.”

Prophets and kings longed to witness what the disciples were witnessing. And we, too, have received this extraordinary privilege: we have the Gospel, the Eucharist and the gift of knowing Christ.

Yet how easily we become familiar with holy things!

A mother once complained that her teenage son never listened to her. He replied, “Mum, I have heard all that before!” She gently answered, “But have you ever really listened?”

Perhaps that is what Jesus is asking us today: Have we really listened to His Word? Do we recognize Him in the Eucharist? Can we still wonder at the fact that God loves us?

Advent invites us to look again, listen again and believe again.

An elderly priest once said, “The older I grow, the less I claim to know about God, but the more I discover how much I need Him.”

Dear friends, let us ask for the eyes of a child, the ears of a disciple and a heart always open to God's surprises.

Then we shall truly understand the words of Jesus:

“Happy the eyes that see what you see.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, Jesus invites us to become humble and childlike in faith, with eyes open to God's presence and hearts receptive to His Word. Let us bring our prayers before our heavenly Father with confidence and trust.

Response: Lord, open our eyes to see Your presence.

1. For the Church: that, guided by the Holy Spirit, she may proclaim Christ with wisdom and humility, helping all people recognize the presence of God's kingdom in their midst. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: that they may be filled with the wisdom and understanding of the Spirit, and work sincerely for justice, harmony and peace, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those who have lost hope, especially those experiencing discouragement, loneliness or spiritual darkness: that the promise of new life represented by the

shoot from the stump of Jesse may renew their hope and strengthen their faith. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: that we may recover the humility and wonder of children, listen attentively to God's Word and recognize Christ in the Eucharist and in the people we encounter each day. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: that the sick may experience the healing presence of Christ and find strength in His love, and that our departed brothers and sisters may behold the glory of God and enjoy eternal happiness in His kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You reveal the wonders of Your kingdom to those who approach You with humble hearts. Hear our prayers, enlighten our minds and strengthen our faith, that we may recognize Your Son and rejoice in His coming. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, with humble and grateful hearts, let us present our gifts to the Lord, asking Him to enlighten our lives with the wisdom of His Spirit and prepare us to recognize His Son in the mysteries we celebrate, and pray, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the gifts we offer in faith. May this sacred offering purify our hearts, enlighten our minds and deepen our wonder at the mystery of Your love, that we may recognize Your Son with the eyes of faith and welcome Him with hearts renewed by the Holy Spirit.
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 infinite wisdom, You promised through the prophets a Saviour who would bring justice, peace and reconciliation to all peoples. In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son, upon whom the Spirit of wisdom and understanding rested. He revealed the mysteries of Your kingdom to the humble and opened the eyes of those who longed to see Your salvation.

Through Him, You invite us to rediscover the wonder of faith and to recognize Your presence in our midst. As we await His coming, fill our hearts with the joy of the Holy Spirit, that we may join the choirs of angels and saints in proclaiming Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus invites us to share in His own loving relationship with the Father. With the trusting hearts of children, let us pray to the Father who reveals His love to us through His Son:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and grant us peace in our days. Strengthen our faith when we face the storms of life, deepen our humility and help us trust in the healing power of Your Word. Keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the promised Messiah,
upon whom the Spirit of wisdom and understanding rests.
You reveal the Father's love to the humble and bring peace to all who welcome Your kingdom.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Open our eyes to recognize one another as brothers and sisters, remove the blindness of prejudice and division, and make us instruments of the harmony and reconciliation that Your kingdom promises.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus, the promised Messiah, who comes to reveal the Father's love and enlighten our hearts. Let us approach Him with the humility of children, asking for the eyes of faith to recognize Him and the grace to receive Him with wonder and gratitude.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have come into our hearts.
Open our eyes to recognize Your presence, even in the ordinary moments of life.
Open our ears to hear Your voice in the silence of prayer and in the words of Your Gospel.
Open our hearts to receive Your love with the humility and wonder of a child.

May we never become so familiar with holy things that we lose the joy of discovering You anew.
Lord, give us the eyes of faith, the ears of disciples and the hearts of children.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the sacred mysteries we have received, O Lord, enlighten our minds and renew our hearts, that we may recognize Your presence with the eyes of faith and welcome Your Son with the humility and joy of children.
May the Holy Spirit guide us along the path of wisdom, justice and peace, as we await the coming of our Saviour.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who promised a Saviour through the prophet Isaiah, enlighten your minds with His wisdom and fill your hearts with His peace.

May He grant you the eyes of faith to recognize His presence, the ears of disciples to listen to His Word and the humility of children to welcome His love.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth with the eyes of faith and the hearts of children, recognizing Christ in every moment!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Faith does not merely help us see more; it teaches us to see God in everything.”

WEDNESDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Is 25:6–10a; Mt 15:29–37

“Place what you have in His hands: The God of abundance who feeds, heals and satisfies.”

INTRODUCTION

A poor farmer once brought a small basket of vegetables to a neighbour whose family was going through a difficult time. The neighbour looked at the basket and said, “You have so little yourself. Why are you giving this away?” The farmer smiled and replied, “If I wait until I have enough to share, I may never share anything. But if I share what I have today, someone will have enough for today.” Generosity does not begin when we have plenty; it begins when we are willing to share what we have.

Today's liturgy invites us to contemplate the compassionate heart of God, who never abandons His people and provides abundantly for their needs.

In the first reading, Isaiah announces God's promise of a great banquet for all nations, where He will wipe away

every tear, destroy death and bring lasting joy to His people. God's final word to humanity is not suffering, but abundance, healing and life.

In the Gospel, Jesus is moved with compassion for the crowds. He heals their sick and feeds the hungry multitude with seven loaves and a few fish, until everyone has eaten enough and seven baskets remain. In the hands of Jesus, what seems insufficient becomes more than enough.

These readings remind us that Advent is a time to trust in God's generous love and to become channels of that generosity. The Lord who feeds us at His table also invites us to share our gifts, however small, with those who hunger for food, compassion, encouragement and hope.

As we gather around the Lord's table, let us examine whether our hearts are open to His generosity and whether we are willing to share what we have with others. Acknowledging our selfishness, indifference and lack of compassion, let us humbly seek His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Jesus looks upon our needs with compassion and never turns away those who seek Him. Let us acknowledge the times when we have failed to reflect His generosity and compassion in our lives.

- Lord Jesus, You heal the sick and bring hope to the suffering. Forgive us when we remain indifferent to the pain and needs of others. Lord, have mercy.
- Christ Jesus, You fed the hungry multitude with the little that was offered to You. Forgive our selfishness and reluctance to share our gifts with those in need. Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, You nourish us at the table of Your Word and Eucharist. Forgive us when we receive Your blessings without becoming a blessing to others. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, free our hearts from selfishness and indifference, fill us with His compassion and generosity, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, source of all goodness, You promise Your people a banquet of eternal joy and reveal Your compassion through Your Son, who feeds the hungry and heals the suffering. Increase our trust in Your providence, teach us to place our gifts generously in Your hands and make us instruments of Your love to those in need.

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 little boy once watched his grandmother preparing a meal for some unexpected visitors. She opened the cupboard and found that there was hardly enough food. But she began cooking anyway. The boy asked, “Grandma, how can you feed everyone with so little?” She smiled and said, “When love is added, we always have something to share.”

Today's Gospel reveals precisely this kind of generosity, but on a much greater scale.

Jesus sees a great crowd gathered around Him. They bring their sick, their blind, their lame and their suffering. Jesus heals them. But He notices something else: they are hungry.

He says to His disciples: “I feel sorry for all these people.”

What a beautiful expression of the heart of Jesus! He does not merely see a crowd; He sees individual human needs. He cares about our physical suffering as much as our spiritual hunger.

The disciples see a problem: thousands of hungry people and only seven loaves and a few fish.

But Jesus sees an opportunity for a miracle. He asks: “How many loaves have you?”

He takes what they have, gives thanks, breaks the bread and distributes it. Everyone eats until satisfied, and seven baskets remain.

The miracle begins when what little we have is placed in the hands of Jesus.

A nurse once said that sometimes the greatest medicine she could offer a patient was simply to sit beside the bed and hold a hand. She could not cure every illness, but she could make someone feel less alone.

Perhaps that is what Jesus asks of us today. We may not have great wealth, extraordinary talents or unlimited resources. But we can offer a little time, a listening ear, a kind word, a forgiving heart or a helping hand.

There is also a Eucharistic message here. Jesus takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it and gives it to the people. At every Mass, He nourishes us with the Bread of Life. But we must remember: we are fed by Christ so that we can feed others.

Isaiah promises a great banquet where God will wipe away every tear. Every act of compassion becomes a foretaste of that heavenly banquet.

Mother Teresa once reminded us that we need not look at the whole world to begin loving; we can begin with the person standing before us.

Dear friends, Jesus does not ask how much we possess. He asks what we are willing to place in His hands.

Give Him what you have, and let Him make it a blessing for others.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, our God is generous and compassionate. He feeds the hungry, heals the suffering and promises a banquet of eternal life. Trusting in His goodness, let us present our prayers before Him.

Response: Lord, fill us with Your compassion and generosity.

1. For the Church: that, nourished by the Word of God and the Eucharist, she may become a generous mother to the poor, the hungry, the sick and all those who are searching for hope. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: that they may work sincerely to overcome hunger, poverty and injustice, ensuring that the resources of the earth are shared fairly and that no one is deprived of the necessities of life. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those who are hungry, homeless, unemployed or deprived of basic necessities: that they may experience the compassion of Christ through the generosity of individuals, families and communities who share their blessings with them. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: that we may never underestimate the value of small acts of kindness, but willingly offer our time, talents and resources to bring comfort, encouragement and hope to those in need. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: that the sick may experience the healing touch of Jesus and find strength in their suffering, and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal banquet of God's kingdom, where every tear will be wiped away. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You know the needs of Your children and provide abundantly for all who trust in You. Hear our prayers, increase our generosity and make us instruments of Your compassion and love.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, Jesus took the little that was offered to Him, gave thanks and transformed it into an abundant blessing. Let us now place our gifts and our lives upon the altar, asking Him to make them fruitful for the good of others. Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, these gifts we bring before You. As Your Son took the bread, gave thanks and shared it with the hungry multitude, may this offering become for us the source of spiritual nourishment and generous love. Teach us to share the blessings we receive and to become bread for those who hunger for Your compassion.
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 You have promised to prepare a banquet for all peoples, where suffering will cease, tears will be wiped away and death will be destroyed forever. In Your Son, Jesus Christ, You have revealed the abundance of Your compassion, healing the sick, feeding the hungry and offering Himself as the Bread of Life.

Through Him, You nourish us at the table of the Eucharist and teach us to share generously what we have received. As we await the fulfilment of Your heavenly promise, we rejoice in the hope of the eternal banquet, where all Your children will be gathered in 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:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus teaches us to trust in the Father's providence, who knows our needs and gives us our daily bread. With grateful and trusting hearts, let us pray as He Himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and graciously grant peace in our days. Free our hearts from selfishness and indifference, and help us to trust in Your abundant providence. May we never keep Your gifts for ourselves, but generously share with others the blessings we have received, becoming instruments of Your compassion and love, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You looked upon the hungry multitude with compassion and satisfied their needs with 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. Remove from our hearts every form of selfishness, indifference and division, and teach us to share generously with those who hunger for food, dignity, love and hope.

May our lives become instruments of Your compassion, bringing comfort to the suffering and peace to a world longing for Your healing presence.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus, the Bread of Life, who fed the hungry multitude and promised a banquet of eternal joy.
He now offers Himself to nourish our souls and fill our hearts with His love. Let us approach Him with gratitude and faith. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have fed us with the Bread of Life.
You know our hunger, our wounds, our struggles and our deepest needs.
Thank You for nourishing us with Your love and compassion. Take whatever little we have: our time, our talents, our kindness and our generosity.
Multiply these gifts through Your grace, so that others may

experience Your goodness through us.
May we never leave Your table without becoming bread for someone who is hungry for love, encouragement and hope. Lord, take what I have and make it a blessing for others.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the sacred mysteries we have received, O Lord, nourish us with Your grace and strengthen us in Your love. As You have fed us at Your table, make us generous in sharing our blessings with those who hunger and suffer, that through our lives many may experience the abundance of Your compassion.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who feeds His people with abundant goodness, fill your hearts with His compassion and strengthen your trust in His providence.

May He bless the little you offer, multiply your acts of kindness and make you a source of nourishment, comfort and hope to those in need.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth, nourished by Christ, and become bread for the hungry world!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“What is little in our hands can become abundant in the hands of Jesus.”

THURSDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Is 26:1–6; Mt 7:21, 24–27

“Build your life on the Rock: Listening to God's Word and putting it into practice.”

INTRODUCTION

A ship's captain once noticed that his compass was pointing in the wrong direction. Although the sea was calm and the weather pleasant, he immediately corrected its position. Someone asked him, “Why worry about the direction when everything is going well?” The captain replied, “Because the time to correct your course is before the storm arrives, not during it.”

A secure journey depends not on the calmness of the sea, but on the reliability of the direction we follow.

Dear brothers and sisters, as we continue our Advent journey, today's liturgy invites us to examine the foundation upon which we are building our lives.

In the first reading, Isaiah proclaims that God is an everlasting Rock, a sure refuge for those who trust in Him. The strong city of salvation belongs to those whose hearts remain steadfast in God. Those who trust in the Lord find security that the world cannot provide.

In the Gospel, Jesus presents the image of two builders: one builds his house on rock and the other on sand. Both hear His words, but only the one who puts them into practice builds a foundation capable of withstanding the storms. Listening to God's Word is not enough; we must allow it to shape the way we live.

These readings remind us that Advent is a time to strengthen the foundation of our faith. As we prepare to welcome Christ, we must ask whether His Word truly guides our choices, relationships and actions.

Let us therefore examine our lives. Have we built them on the lasting foundation of God's Word, or have we allowed convenience, pride and worldly values to become our

foundation? Recognizing our failures to live what we profess, let us humbly seek the Lord's mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Jesus calls us not merely to hear His Word but to put it into practice. Let us acknowledge the occasions when our lives have failed to reflect the Gospel and humbly ask for His forgiveness.

- Lord Jesus, You are the everlasting Rock and the sure foundation of our lives. Forgive us when we place our trust in passing things rather than in You. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You teach us to listen to Your Word and put it into practice. Forgive us when our actions contradict the faith we profess. Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You strengthen those who remain faithful amid life's storms. Forgive us when difficulties weaken our trust and lead us away from Your ways. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, strengthen our faith, establish our lives firmly upon the foundation of His Word, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Stir up Your power, O Lord, we pray, and come to our help, that our lives, founded firmly upon Your Word, may remain steadfast amid every trial. Grant us the grace not merely to hear the teachings of Your Son but to put them into practice through lives of faith, obedience and love. May we prepare our hearts to welcome Him with unwavering trust. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A young musician once asked his teacher, “What makes a great pianist?” The teacher replied, “Not how beautifully you play when everyone is listening, but how faithfully you practise when nobody is watching.”

That is also the difference between a genuine Christian and someone who merely appears religious.

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks about two builders. One builds his house on rock; the other builds on sand. Both hear His words, but only one puts them into practice.

Jesus makes a very important distinction:

Listening is not the same as living.

We can attend Mass, listen to beautiful sermons, recite prayers and call Jesus our Lord. But does His Word influence the way we treat our families? Does it make us more forgiving, honest, patient and compassionate?

The real test of faith is not what we profess with our lips, but what we practise through our lives.

The first reading gives us a beautiful description of God: “He is the everlasting Rock.” Human promises can fail, worldly security can disappear, and circumstances can change. But God remains faithful.

A tree with deep roots can survive strong winds because its strength lies beneath the ground, where nobody can see it.

Our Christian lives must have those deep roots: prayer, trust, forgiveness, honesty and obedience to God's Word.

Jesus does not promise that our lives will be free from storms. Sickness, bereavement, family problems, disappointment and uncertainty may come. But when our foundation is Christ, these storms need not destroy us.

A mother once told her children, “You may not always understand why I ask you to do something, but you can trust that I want what is good for you.”

Mary lived this kind of faith. When the angel announced God's plan, she did not understand everything, but she

surrendered herself completely: “Let it be done to me according to your word.” She listened, trusted and acted. That is the Advent faith we need.

Dear friends, do not wait until difficulties arrive before strengthening your relationship with God. Pray today. Forgive today. Reconcile today. Practise the Gospel today.

Every small act of faithfulness strengthens our foundation. Christ is our Rock, but we must choose to build upon Him.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, God is our everlasting Rock and the sure foundation of our lives. Trusting in His faithfulness, let us bring our prayers before Him, asking for the grace to listen to His Word and put it into practice.

Response: Lord, be the foundation of our lives.

1. For the Church: that she may faithfully proclaim the Word of God and inspire all believers to build their lives on the teachings of Christ through genuine love, service and obedience. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: that they may establish their decisions on the foundations of justice, truth and peace, and work for the common good rather than personal power and worldly interests. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those experiencing the storms of life through sickness, bereavement, family difficulties or uncertainty: that they may find strength in God, the everlasting Rock, and remain firm in faith and hope. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: that we may not merely listen to God's Word but put it into practice through forgiveness, patience, honesty, reconciliation and generous love. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: that the sick may receive healing, comfort and strength through the loving presence of Christ, and that our departed brothers and sisters, whose lives were founded on God's promises, may enjoy the everlasting security and peace of His heavenly kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You are the everlasting Rock in whom we place our trust. Hear our prayers, strengthen our faith and help us build our lives firmly upon the Word of Your Son, that we may remain faithful through every storm. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, as we prepare our gifts for the altar, let us offer not only the bread and wine but also our lives, our decisions and our commitment to live God's Word. May the Lord establish everything we offer upon the lasting foundation of His love, and pray, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the gifts we humbly offer You. May this sacred sacrifice strengthen our faith, establish our hearts firmly in Your Word and give us the grace to put into practice what Your Son has taught us. As we await His coming, make our lives a lasting testimony to Your truth and 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 You are the everlasting Rock, the sure foundation of all who place their trust in You. Through the prophets, You prepared Your people to welcome the promised Saviour, and in the fullness of time You sent Your Son to teach us the way of life.

He calls us not merely to hear His Word but to build our lives upon it through faith, obedience and love. Through Him, You strengthen us against the storms of life and lead us towards the eternal dwelling prepared for those who remain faithful.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus teaches us to build our lives upon the loving will of the Father. With the confidence of children who trust in His providence and remain steadfast in His love, let us pray:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and graciously grant peace in our days. Free our hearts from selfishness and indifference, and help us to trust in Your abundant providence. May we never keep Your gifts for ourselves, but generously share with others the blessings we have received, becoming instruments of Your compassion and love, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the everlasting Rock and the sure foundation of all who trust in You. You teach us to listen to Your Word and put it into practice through lives of faith, forgiveness and 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. Strengthen the foundations of our families and communities, remove the divisions that weaken our relationships and teach us to become builders of reconciliation and peace. May our lives remain firmly rooted in Your love, even amid the storms of this world. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus Christ, the everlasting Rock and the foundation of our salvation. He invites us to receive Him, so that our lives may be strengthened by His presence and our hearts firmly established in His Word. Let us approach Him with faith and trust.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You are the Rock upon which we want to build our lives. You know the storms we face, the uncertainties we carry and the weaknesses within us.

Strengthen our faith when we are tested.

Teach us to listen to Your Word and put it into practice.

Give us the courage to forgive, the patience to endure, the honesty to speak the truth and the generosity to love.
May our lives be deeply rooted in You, so that no storm can separate us from Your love.
Lord, be the foundation of my life today and always.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the holy mysteries we have received, O Lord, strengthen us in faith and establish our hearts firmly upon the Word of Your Son. Grant that, through our daily actions, we may bear witness to the Gospel and remain steadfast in Your love amid every trial, as we joyfully await the coming of our Saviour. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who is the everlasting Rock, establish your lives firmly in His love.

May He strengthen your faith in times of difficulty, guide your decisions through His Word and give you the courage to put His teachings into practice.

May your homes become places of prayer, forgiveness and peace, and may your lives remain steadfast through every storm.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth, build your lives on Christ, and put His Word into practice!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Do not merely hear the Word of God; build your life upon it.”

FRIDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Is 29:17–24; Mt 9:27–31:

“Lord, open our eyes: Faith that sees beyond darkness and trusts in Christ.”

INTRODUCTION

A lighthouse keeper once noticed a small fishing boat struggling in the darkness. He immediately switched on the lighthouse beam. The fishermen could not see the harbour, but they could see the light. Following it, they safely reached the shore. One fisherman later remarked, “The light did not bring the shore closer, but it showed us the way to reach it.” Faith does not always remove the darkness around us; it gives us the light to move forward. Dear brothers and sisters, as we continue our Advent journey, today's liturgy invites us to open the eyes of our hearts and recognize Christ as the Light who leads us through life's uncertainties.

In the first reading, Isaiah announces a time of salvation when the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the humble will rejoice and the poor will exult in the Holy One of Israel. God promises to transform human weakness into an occasion for His glory.

In the Gospel, two blind men follow Jesus, pleading for His mercy. Jesus asks them, “Do you believe that I can do this?” Their confident response, “Yes, Lord,” becomes the doorway to their healing. Their physical blindness does not prevent them from recognizing Jesus through the eyes of faith.

These readings remind us that Advent is a journey from darkness into light. We may not always understand our circumstances, but we can remain close to Christ through prayer, perseverance and trust. He invites us not only to seek healing for our physical needs but also to overcome the spiritual blindness that prevents us from recognizing His presence and seeing the needs of others.

Let us therefore ask ourselves whether we truly see God at work in our lives and whether we look at others with the compassionate eyes of Christ. Acknowledging our spiritual blindness, our doubts and our lack of perseverance, let us humbly seek His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the Light who opens the eyes of the blind and leads us from darkness into hope. Let us acknowledge the times when we have failed to recognize His presence, trust His Word and see others with compassion.

- Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the world who opens the eyes of the blind. Forgive us when we fail to recognize Your presence in our lives. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You respond to those who approach You with persevering faith. Forgive our doubts, discouragement and lack of trust in Your healing power. Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You teach us to see others with compassion and love. Forgive us when we remain blind to the suffering, loneliness and needs of those around us. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, open the eyes of our hearts, strengthen our faith and perseverance, and lead us from darkness into His wonderful light, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, You promised through the prophets that the eyes of the blind would see and the humble would rejoice in Your presence. Open the eyes of our hearts to recognize Your Son, strengthen our faith when we walk through darkness and teach us to persevere in prayer with unwavering trust. May Christ, the Light of the world, guide our steps and prepare us to welcome Him with hearts renewed by His grace.

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 little girl once became frightened during a power cut. Her father lit a small candle and placed it on the table. She looked at it and asked, “Daddy, is this little candle strong enough to fight all the darkness?”

Her father smiled and said, “It doesn't have to fight all the darkness. It only has to shine where we are.”

Sometimes a little light is enough to give us hope.

In today's Gospel, two blind men follow Jesus, crying out: “Take pity on us, Son of David!” They cannot see Jesus with their physical eyes, but they recognize Him through the eyes of faith.

Jesus asks them a profound question: “Do you believe that I can do this?”

They simply answer: “Yes, Lord.”
And Jesus touches their eyes, saying, “Your faith deserves it.” Their eyes are opened.

Notice that Jesus does not first ask how much they know, how strong they are or how well they understand everything. He asks whether they believe.
That is the heart of today's Gospel.
Faith is trusting Jesus even when we cannot see clearly.

A farmer once continued planting seeds despite a prolonged drought. His neighbour asked, “Why are you planting when there is no rain?” He replied, “Because I still believe the rain will come.”

That is perseverance. The two blind men teach us not to give up when our prayers seem unanswered.

Sometimes we experience sickness, disappointment, loneliness or uncertainty. We pray, but the situation does not change immediately. Yet God's apparent silence does not mean His absence.

The first reading gives us a beautiful promise: the eyes of the blind shall see, the deaf shall hear and the humble shall rejoice in the Lord.

But there is another kind of blindness we must overcome: spiritual blindness. We may fail to recognize God's blessings, overlook another person's suffering or refuse to see goodness in someone who has hurt us.

Advent invites us to ask Jesus to open not only our physical eyes but also the eyes of our hearts.

A mother once said to her son, “You have two eyes to see the world, but you need a heart to understand it.”

Dear friends, Jesus asks each of us today: “Do you believe that I can do this?”

Whatever darkness you are experiencing, answer Him with confidence: “Yes, Lord, I believe.”

For the eyes of faith will always discover a light that darkness cannot overcome.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the Light who opens the eyes of the blind, strengthens the weak and gives hope to those walking in darkness. With the faith and perseverance of the two blind men, let us bring our prayers before Him.

Response: Lord, open our eyes and strengthen our faith.

1. For the Church: that she may faithfully proclaim Christ, the Light of the world, and help all people recognize God's presence through lives of compassion, hope and loving service. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: that they may have the wisdom to recognize the suffering of the poor and marginalized, work for justice and peace, and ensure that no one is forgotten or deprived of human dignity. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those experiencing physical blindness, disability, emotional suffering or spiritual darkness: that they may find

strength in Christ, receive the support they need and discover hope through the compassion of others. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: that the Lord may open our eyes to recognize His blessings, make us sensitive to the suffering of others and give us the perseverance to remain faithful in prayer even when our difficulties seem unresolved. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: that the sick may experience the healing touch of Christ and find strength in His loving presence, and that our departed brothers and sisters may enter the eternal light of God's kingdom, where every darkness disappears. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You are the source of all light and hope. Hear the prayers we offer with faith, open the eyes of our hearts and strengthen us to follow Your Son with perseverance and trust. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, like the two blind men who approached Jesus with faith and confidence, let us now place our gifts and our lives before the Lord. May this offering deepen our trust in His healing presence and enlighten our hearts to recognize His love, and pray, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, these gifts we humbly bring before You. As we offer them with faith, enlighten the eyes of our hearts, strengthen our trust in Your mercy and prepare us to receive Christ, the Light of the world. May this sacred offering transform us into witnesses of Your healing love and 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, through Christ our Lord.

For through Your prophets You promised that the eyes of the blind would see, the deaf would hear and the humble would rejoice in Your salvation. In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son as the Light of the world, who opened the eyes of the blind, restored hope to the suffering and revealed the power of faith to all who sought Him.

Through Him, You call us out of darkness into the light of Your truth and teach us to persevere in prayer with confidence in Your mercy. As we await His coming, fill our hearts with the light of faith, that we may recognize His presence and walk faithfully towards the 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:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus invites us to approach the Father with the trusting faith of children who know that they are loved. Enlightened by Christ and strengthened by His Spirit, let us pray:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and graciously grant peace in our days. Free us from the darkness of doubt, fear and discouragement. Open the eyes of our hearts to recognize Your presence, strengthen our faith when our prayers seem unanswered, and help us persevere in trusting Your healing power, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Light who opens the eyes of the blind and leads Your people from darkness into hope. You praised the persevering faith of those who trusted in Your healing power. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Open our eyes to the suffering of others, remove the blindness of prejudice, hatred and indifference, and help us to recognize one another as brothers and sisters. May Your light shine in our families, communities and nations, bringing reconciliation, healing and lasting peace.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, who opens the eyes of the blind and strengthens all who place their trust in Him. Let us approach Him with the faith of the two blind men, believing that His presence can heal our souls and enlighten our lives. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You are my Light and my help.
You know the darkness I sometimes experience,
the fears I carry and the uncertainties I cannot understand.
Open my eyes to recognize Your presence.
Open my heart to see the goodness in others.
Give me the courage to persevere in prayer when answers seem delayed.
When I cannot see the road ahead, help me to hold on to You.
May Your light guide my steps and Your love strengthen my faith.
Lord, I cannot see everything, but I believe. You are my Light and my help.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the holy mysteries we have received, O Lord, enlighten our minds and strengthen our hearts, that we may walk in the light of faith, persevere in prayer and recognize Your presence in every circumstance of life.
As we await the coming of Your Son, make us witnesses of His healing love and instruments of His hope to all whom we encounter. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who opens the eyes of the blind and brings light to those walking in darkness, enlighten your hearts with His wisdom and strengthen you with His grace.
May He grant you persevering faith in times of difficulty, hope when the way ahead seems uncertain and compassion to see the needs of those around you.
May Christ, your Light and your help, guide you safely throughout your Advent journey.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth in the light of Christ, and never stop trusting Him!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Faith does not need to see the whole road; it only needs to trust the One who leads us.”

SATURDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Is 30:19–21, 23–26; Mt 9:35–10:1, 5a, 6–8

“Freely we have received; freely let us give: Becoming instruments of Christ's compassion.”

INTRODUCTION

A young man once noticed an elderly neighbour struggling to carry two heavy bags of groceries. He immediately offered to help. When the neighbour thanked him and asked how much he owed, the young man smiled and replied, “Nothing. Someone helped my grandmother yesterday. Today, I am simply passing on that kindness.” The best gifts are not repaid; they are passed on.

Dear brothers and sisters, as we conclude the first week of Advent, today's liturgy invites us to contemplate the compassionate heart of God and our responsibility to share that compassion with others.

In the first reading, Isaiah assures God's people that the Lord hears their cries, guides their steps, provides for their needs and binds up their wounds. God never abandons His people; He remains their healer, guide and source of hope.

In the Gospel, Jesus looks upon the crowds with compassion because they are harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. He heals their sicknesses, proclaims the Good News and sends His disciples to continue His mission, reminding them: “You received without charge; give without charge.”

These readings reveal the heart of our Advent mission: we are not merely waiting for Christ to come; we are called to make His compassion visible in the world. Having freely received His love, forgiveness and healing, we must freely share them with those who are lonely, wounded, discouraged and forgotten.

As we celebrate this Eucharist, let us examine whether our hearts reflect the generosity of Christ. Have we been compassionate towards the suffering? Have we shared our gifts without expecting anything in return? Have we made ourselves available to those who need us? Recognizing our failures in love and service, let us humbly seek the Lord's mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Jesus looks upon His people with compassion and sends His disciples to bring healing and hope. Let us acknowledge the times when we have failed to reflect His compassion and generosity in our lives.

- Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd who never abandons Your wounded and suffering people. Forgive us when we remain indifferent to the needs of others. Lord, have mercy.
- Christ Jesus, You freely give us Your love, forgiveness and healing. Forgive our selfishness and unwillingness to share the gifts we have received. Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, You send us to proclaim Your Kingdom through lives of service and compassion. Forgive us when we fail to respond generously to Your call. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, heal our wounded hearts, fill us with His compassion and generosity, and make us faithful instruments of His love, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful Father, You never abandon Your people but hear their cries, heal their wounds and guide their steps. Fill our hearts with the compassion of Your Son, who came to seek the lost, heal the suffering and proclaim the Good News. Having freely received Your love and mercy, may we generously share these gifts with all whom we encounter, and become faithful labourers in Your harvest.

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

HOMILY

A young volunteer once visited a home for elderly people. He noticed one man sitting alone, staring out of the window. The volunteer sat beside him and asked, “Would you like to talk?” The old man replied, “No, I just wanted someone to sit with me.” Sometimes, the greatest act of love is simply making ourselves available.

Today's Gospel reveals the compassionate heart of Jesus. Matthew tells us that when Jesus saw the crowds, He took pity on them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus did not see a faceless crowd. He saw individuals with wounds, worries, sicknesses and broken hopes. He taught them, healed them and proclaimed the Good News.

Then He turned to His disciples and said: “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest.” And He sent them out to continue His mission.

Here is an important lesson: Jesus wants to reach people through us.

A lonely person may need our company. A grieving person may need our presence. A discouraged person may need encouragement. A sick person may need our prayer and practical assistance.

We often pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” but perhaps Jesus is waiting to come to someone through our kindness.

The first reading assures us: “The Lord will bind up the wounds of his people.” The Psalm reminds us that He heals the broken-hearted.

But today's Gospel also gives us a challenge:
“You received without charge; give without charge.”

Everything we have is ultimately a gift from God: our life, our faith, our talents, our forgiveness and, above all, His Son.

We did not earn God's love. We received it freely. Therefore, we must not make others earn our kindness.

A teacher once told her students, “You cannot give everyone a beautiful gift, but you can give everyone a little respect.” One student replied, “And that costs nothing!”

How true! A smile, a listening ear, a visit, a word of encouragement or a sincere prayer can become an extraordinary gift.

Dear friends, Advent is not simply about preparing our homes for Christmas; it is about preparing our hearts to become dwelling places of Christ's compassion.

Perhaps someone around us is waiting for a little kindness. Perhaps we are the labourers Jesus is calling.

Let us therefore pray: “Lord, heal me where I am wounded, and use me to heal others. What I have received freely from You, help me give freely to others.”

For the world will recognize the compassion of Christ when it experiences His love through us.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, our Lord is a compassionate Shepherd who heals the broken-hearted, strengthens the weak and sends His disciples to bring hope to the world. Trusting in His loving providence, let us present our prayers before Him.

Lord, make us instruments of Your compassion.

1. For the Church: that, following the example of Jesus, she may reach out with compassion to the wounded, the suffering, the poor and the forgotten, and become a visible sign of God's healing love in the world. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: that they may recognize the suffering of their people, govern with compassion and justice, and work tirelessly to provide dignity, security and hope for the poor and vulnerable. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For missionaries, priests, religious, catechists and all pastoral workers: that the Lord of the harvest may strengthen them in their mission and inspire many

generous hearts to dedicate themselves to proclaiming the Gospel and serving those in need. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: that we may recognize the suffering and loneliness of those around us and generously share our time, talents, forgiveness and love without expecting anything in return. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: that the sick, especially those who feel abandoned or forgotten, may experience the healing touch and compassionate presence of Christ, and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal home of the Good Shepherd. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You have freely poured out Your love and mercy upon us. Hear our prayers, heal our wounded hearts and make us generous instruments of Your compassion, that through our lives others may experience the goodness of Your Son. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, everything we possess is a gift received from God's generous hands. Let us now offer these gifts with grateful hearts, together with our willingness to serve and care for those who need our compassion, and pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, these gifts we bring before You with grateful hearts. As Your Son gave Himself freely for the salvation of the world, may this sacred offering deepen our generosity, strengthen our compassion and teach us to share freely the gifts we have received. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

Suggested thematic composition – the approved Roman Missal Preface should be used.

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 infinite compassion, You never abandon Your people but hear their cries, bind up their wounds and lead them along the path of salvation. In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son as the Good Shepherd, who looked upon the suffering crowds with love, healed the sick, proclaimed the Good News and gathered the lost into Your kingdom.

Through Him, You have freely bestowed upon us the gifts of life, faith and salvation, and called us to share Your generosity with others. As we await His coming, strengthen us through Your Spirit to become faithful labourers in Your harvest and witnesses of Your compassionate 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...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus teaches us to recognize God as our loving Father, whose generosity knows no limits and whose compassion embraces all His children. With grateful and trusting hearts, let us pray as He Himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
and from all that makes our hearts indifferent
to the suffering and needs of others.
Graciously grant peace in our days,
and heal our wounded hearts,
that we may never remain blind
to those who are lonely, forgotten or discouraged.

Fill us with the compassion of your Son,
the Good Shepherd who heals the broken-hearted

and gathers the lost into his loving embrace.
May we generously share with others
the gifts we have freely received from you,
and become faithful labourers in your harvest,
bringing hope to the hopeless,
comfort to the suffering and love to those in need.

Keep us always free from sin and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Good Shepherd who looks upon Your people with compassion, heals their wounds and restores their hope. You freely give us Your love and call us to share it generously with others. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Heal the wounds of hatred, division and injustice in our world, and teach us to become instruments of reconciliation through forgiveness, generosity and compassionate service. May Your peace dwell in our hearts, our families and our communities, and make us witnesses of Your loving presence. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gives Himself freely for the life of the world. He invites us to His table to receive the Bread of Life and be strengthened in His compassion and love. Let us approach Him with grateful hearts, ready to share with others what we freely receive from Him.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have freely given Yourself to us. You have nourished us with Your Word and strengthened us with Your Body and Blood. Heal the wounds within us and teach us to recognize the wounds of others. Give us eyes that see the lonely, hearts that feel the suffering and hands that are ready to serve. May we never keep Your gifts for ourselves. Take our time, our talents, our words and our

love, and use them to bring hope to someone who needs You. Lord, what I have received freely from You, help me give freely to others.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the holy mysteries we have received, O Lord, strengthen us in faith and inflame our hearts with the compassion of Your Son. Having been nourished by His Body and Blood, may we generously share the gifts of Your love with those who are suffering, lonely and forgotten, and become faithful witnesses of Your Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who heals the broken-hearted and binds up the wounds of His people, fill your hearts with His compassion and strengthen you in His love.

May He open your eyes to recognize those who are suffering, give you generous hearts to share what you have received and make you faithful instruments of His healing and peace.

May you carry the compassionate presence of Christ wherever you go, especially to those who feel forgotten, lonely or abandoned.

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

DISMISSAL

Go forth, share freely what you have received, and let others experience the compassion of Christ through you!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“We have received God's love freely; let us make His love visible by giving freely.”