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# Lectio Divina

English | September 2025 | [carmelites.org.au](http://carmelites.org.au)



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<sup>1</sup> Cover Image: St. Teresa Margaret Redi (OCD), Virgin

# Monday, September 1, 2025

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God, every good thing comes from You. Fill our hearts with love for You, increase our faith, and by Your constant care protect the good you have given us. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 4: 16-30

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

## Reflection

Today we begin the meditation on the Gospel of Luke, which will extend three months until the end of the liturgical year. Today's Gospel speaks about Jesus' visit to Nazareth and the presentation of His program to the people of the synagogue. At first the people were amazed. But immediately, when they became aware that Jesus wanted to accept all, without excluding anyone, people rebelled and wanted to kill Him.

- Luke 4: 16-19: The proposal of Jesus. Urged by the Holy Spirit, Jesus returns to Galilee (Lk 4: 14) and begins to announce the Good News of the Kingdom of God. He goes to the community, teaches in the Synagogue and arrives in

Nazareth, where He had grown up. He was returning to the community in which He had participated since He was small and for thirty years. The following Saturday, as was the custom, Jesus went to the synagogue to participate in the celebration, and He stands up to read. He chooses the text of Isaiah which speaks about the poor, of prisoners, of the blind and the oppressed (Is 61: 1-2). This text is an image of the situation of the people of Galilee at the time of Jesus. The experience which Jesus had of God, the Father of Love, gave Him a new perspective to evaluate the reality. In the name of God, Jesus takes a stand to defend the life of His people and, with the words of Isaiah, He defines His mission:

- (1) to announce the Good News to the poor;
  - (2) to proclaim liberty to captives;
  - (3) to give sight to the blind;
  - (4) to release the oppressed, and taking the ancient tradition of the prophets;
  - (5) to proclaim “a year of grace from the Lord.” He proclaims the Jubilee Year!
- In the Bible, the "Jubilee Year" was an important law. Every seven years, at the beginning (Dt 15: 1; Lev 25: 3) it was necessary to restore the land to the clan of origin. All had to be able to return to their own property; and this way they prevented the formation of large estates, and families were guaranteed their livelihood. It was also necessary to forgive their debts and to redeem the people who were slaves. (Dt 15: 1-18). It was not easy to have the Jubilee Year every seven years (cf. Jer 34: 8-16). After the exile, it was decided to have it every fifty years (Lev 25: 8-12). The objective of the Jubilee was and continues to be to re-establish the rights of the poor, to accept the excluded and to re-integrate them into the society to live together with others. The Jubilee was a legal instrument to return to the original sense of the Law of God. This was an occasion offered by God to make a revision of the path being followed, to discover and to correct the errors and to start again from the beginning. Jesus begins His preaching proclaiming a Jubilee: “A year of grace from the Lord.”
  - Luke 4: 20-22: To unite the Bible and Life. Having finished the reading, Jesus comments on the text of Isaiah and says, “This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening!” Taking the words of Isaiah as His own, Jesus gives them a full and definitive sense and He declares Himself Messiah who comes to fulfill the prophecy. This way of interpreting the text provokes a reaction of disbelief on the part of those who were in the synagogue. They were scandalized and did not want to know anything about Him. They did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah announced by Isaiah. They said, “Is He not the son of Joseph?” They were scandalized because Jesus spoke about accepting the poor, the blind and the oppressed. The people do not accept Jesus’ proposal. And, thus when He presents the idea of accepting the excluded, He Himself is excluded.
  - Luke 4: 23-30: To overcome the limits of race. In order to help the community to overcome the scandal and to help them understand that His proposal

formed part of tradition. Jesus tells two stories known in the Bible, the story of Elijah and the one of Elisha. Both stories criticize the narrow-mindedness of the people of Nazareth. Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17: 7-16). Elisha was sent to take care of the Syrian (2 Kgs 5: 14). Here arises Luke's concern, who wants to show that openness stems from Jesus. Jesus had the same difficulty which the communities at the time of Luke were having. But the call of Jesus did not calm people down. Quite the contrary! The stories of Elijah and Elisha produced even greater anger. The community of Nazareth reaches the point of wanting to kill Jesus. But He remains calm. The anger of others does not succeed in drawing Him away from His own path. Luke tells us that it is difficult to overcome the mentality of privilege and of narrow-mindedness.

- It is important to notice the details used in the Old Testament. Jesus quotes the text of Isaiah up to the point where it says, "to proclaim a year of grace from the Lord." He does not quote the rest of the sentence which says, "and a day of vengeance from our God." The people of Nazareth throw stones at Jesus because He pretends to be the Messiah, because He wants to accept the excluded and because He has omitted the sentence about vengeance. They wanted the day of Yahweh to be a day of vengeance against the oppressors of the people. In this case, the coming of the Kingdom would not have been a true change or conversion of the system. Jesus does not accept this way of thinking; He does not accept vengeance (cf. Mt 5: 44-48) His new experience of God the Father helped Him to understand better the meaning of the prophecies.

## Personal Questions

- Jesus' objective is to accept the excluded. Do we accept everybody or do we exclude some? What are the reasons which lead us to exclude certain people?
- Is the mission of Jesus truly our mission, my mission? Who are the excluded whom we should accept better in our community? Who or what thing gives us the strength to carry out the mission entrusted to us by Jesus?

## Concluding Prayer

How I love Your Law, Lord! I ponder it all day long. You make me wiser than my enemies by Your commandment which is mine for ever. (Ps 119: 97-78)

## Tuesday, September 2, 2025

### Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith,

and by your constant care  
protect the good you have given us.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 4: 31-37

Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath.

And his teaching made a deep impression on them because his word carried authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean devil, and he shouted at the top of his voice, 'Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.'

But Jesus rebuked it, saying, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the devil, throwing the man into the middle, went out of him without hurting him at all. Astonishment seized them and they were all saying to one another, 'What is it in his words? He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority and power and they come out.' And the news of him travelled all through the surrounding countryside.

## Reflection

In today's Gospel we can see the facts more closely: the admiration of the people because of the way Jesus taught and the cure of a man who was possessed by an unclean spirit. Not all the Evangelists give this account in the same way. For Luke, the first miracle is the peace with which Jesus liberates himself from the threat of death on the part of the people of Nazareth (Lk 4: 29-30) and the cure of the possessed man (Lk 4: 33-35). For Matthew, the first miracle is the cure of the sick and of the possessed (Mt 4: 23) or, more specifically, the cure of a leper (Mt 8: 1-4). For Mark, the miracle was the expulsion of the devil (Mk 1: 23-26). For John, the first miracle was Cana, where Jesus changed the water into wine (Jn 2: 1-11). Thus, in the way of narrating things, each Evangelist, accordingly, indicates which was the greatest concern of Jesus.

- Luke 4: 31: The change of Jesus toward Capernaum: "Jesus descends to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and on Saturday he taught the people." Matthew says that Jesus went to live in Capernaum (Mt 4:13). He changed his residence. Capernaum was a small city on the crossroad between two important streets: the one coming from Asia Minor and was leading to Petra on the south of Transjordan, and the other one coming from the region of the two rivers: the Tigris and the Euphrates, and descended toward Egypt. The change toward Capernaum facilitated the contact with the people and the diffusion of the Good News.
- Luke 4: 32: Admiration of the people at the teaching of Jesus. The first thing that people perceive is that Jesus teaches in a different way. It is not so much the content that strikes them, but rather his way of teaching: "Jesus speaks with authority." Mark adds that because of his different way of teaching; Jesus

created a critical conscience among the people about the religious authority of his time. The people perceived and compared: "He teaches with authority, unlike the Scribes" (Mk 1: 22, 27). The Scribes taught quoting authority. Jesus does not quote any authority; rather he speaks starting from his experience of God and of his life.

- Luke 4: 33-35: Jesus fights against the power of evil. The first miracle is the expulsion of the devil. The power of evil took possession of persons, alienating them. Jesus restores the persons to be themselves again, giving them back the consciousness and liberty. He does this thanks to the force of his word: "Be quiet! Come out of him!" And on another occasion, he says: "But if it is through the finger of God that I drive devils out, then the Kingdom of God has indeed caught you unawares" (Lk 11: 20). Today, also, many people live alienated from themselves, subjugated by the means of communication, by the propaganda of the government and of business. They live slaves of consumerism, oppressed by debts and threatened by creditors. People think that they do not live well if they do not have everything which the propaganda announces. It is not easy to expel this power which today, alienates many people, and return the persons to be themselves again.
- Luke 4: 36-37: The reaction of the people: he gives orders to the unclean spirits. Jesus not only has a diverse way of teaching the things of God, but another aspect which causes admiration in the people is his power over unclean spirits: "What is it in his words? He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority and power and they come out." Jesus opens a new path so that the people can place themselves before God to pray and to receive the blessings promised to Abraham. Before, they had to purify themselves. There were many laws and norms which made the life of the people difficult and marginalized many persons who were considered impure. But now, purified by faith in Jesus, persons could once again place themselves before God and pray to him, without the need to have recourse to the complicated norms of purity which were frequently expensive.

## Personal Questions

- Jesus causes admiration and astonishment among the people. Does the way of acting of our community cause admiration among the people of the neighborhood? What type of admiration?
- Jesus drives out the power of evil and restores the persons to be themselves again. Today many persons live alienated from everything and from all. How can we help them to recover and be themselves again?

## Concluding Prayer

Yahweh is tenderness and pity, slow to anger, full of faithful love. Yahweh is generous to all, his tenderness embraces all his creatures. (Ps 145: 8-9)

# Wednesday, September 3, 2025

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith,  
and by your constant care  
protect the good you have given us.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 4: 38-44

Leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in the grip of a high fever and they asked him to do something for her. Standing over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got up and began to serve them.

At sunset all those who had friends suffering from diseases of one kind or another brought them to him, and laying his hands on each he cured them.

Devils too came out of many people, shouting, 'You are the Son of God.' But he warned them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him leaving them, but he answered, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do.' And he continued his proclamation in the synagogues of Judaea.

## Reflection

The Gospel today narrates four different events: the cure of Peter's mother-in-law (Lk 4: 38-39), the cure of many sick people at night, after Saturday (Lk 4: 40-41), the prayer of Jesus in a deserted place (Lk 4: 42) and his insistence on the mission (Lk 4: 43-44). With small differences Luke follows and adapts the information taken from the Gospel of Mark.

- Luke 4: 38-39: *Jesus restores life for service.* After having participated in the celebration of Saturday, in the Synagogue, Jesus goes to Peter's house and cures his mother-in-law. The cure causes her to render service immediately, already standing. Having recovered her health and dignity, she places herself at the service of the people. Jesus not only cures, but he cures in such a way that the person places herself at the service of life.
- Luke 4: 40-41: *Jesus accepts and cures the marginalized.* At night, when the first stars appear in the sky, after Saturday is over, Jesus accepts and cures the sick and those possessed who the people bring to him. The sick and the possessed were the most marginalized persons at that time. They had no one to whom to go. They were at the mercy of public charity; besides, religion considered them impure. They could not participate in the community. It was

as if God rejected and excluded them. Jesus accepts and cures them, placing his hands on each one of them. Thus, it is clear in what the Good News of God consists of and what he wants to do in the life of persons: to accept the marginalized and the excluded and to integrate them into the community, to live with others.

“Devils came out of many persons shouting: “You are the Son of God!” But he warned them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.” At that time the title Son of God did not have as yet the density and depth that it has for us today. Jesus did not allow the devils to speak. He did not want an easy propaganda dictated by spectacular expulsions.

- Luke 4: 42a: *To remain united to the Father by means of prayer.* “When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him from leaving them.” Here we see Jesus praying. He has to make an enormous effort to have time available and a place suitable for prayer. He goes to a deserted place to be able to stay alone with God. Many times, the Gospels speak about Jesus’ prayer, in silence (Lk 3: 21-22; 4: 1-2, 3-12; 5: 15-16; 6: 12; 9: 18; 10: 21; 5: 16; 9: 18; 11: 1; 9: 28; 23: 34; Mt 14: 22-23; 26: 38; Jn 11: 41-42; 17: 1-26; Mk 1: 35; Lk 3: 21-22). Through prayer, he maintains alive the conscience of his mission.
- Luke 4: 42b-44: *To maintain alive the conscience of one’s own mission and not think about the result.* Jesus becomes known. People follow him and they did not want him to leave them. Jesus does not respond to this petition and says: “I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do.” Jesus was very clear about his mission. He does not stop at the result that he has already obtained, but he wishes to maintain very alive the awareness of his mission. It is the mission received from the Father which orientates him when he has to take a decision. I have been sent for this! And here in this text this conscience which is so alive springs as fruit of his prayer.

## Personal Questions

- Jesus spent much time in prayer and to be alone with the Father, and he looked for this time. Do I dedicate time for prayer and to be alone with God?
- Jesus had a clear conscience of his mission. And I, a Christian, am I conscious that I have a mission, or do I live without a mission?

## Concluding Prayer

We are waiting for Yahweh; he is our help and our shield, for in him our heart rejoices,  
in his holy name we trust. (Ps 33: 20-21)

# Thursday, September 4, 2025

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith,  
and by your constant care  
protect the good you have given us.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 5: 1-11

Now it happened that Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats at the water's edge. The fishermen had got out of them and were washing their nets.  
He got into one of the boats - it was Simon's - and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.  
When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' Simon replied, 'Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signaled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled both boats to sinking point.  
When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely awestruck at the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is people you will be catching.'  
Then, bringing their boats back to land they left everything and followed him.

## Reflection

In today's Gospel we have the call of Jesus to Peter. The Gospel of Mark places the call of the first disciples after the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus (Mk 1: 16-20). Luke after that the fame of Jesus was already extended across the whole region (Lk 4: 14). Jesus had cured many people (Lk 4: 40) and had preached in the Synagogues of all the country (Lk 4: 44). The people looked for him and the crowds pushed him on all sides in order to hear the Word of God (Lk 5: 1). Luke makes more understandable the call. In the first place, Peter can listen to the words of Jesus to the people. And then he is a witness of the miraculous catch of fish. It is only after this double surprising experience that he understands the call of Jesus. Peter responds, he abandons everything and becomes a "fisherman of men."

- Luke 5: 1-3: Jesus teaches from the boat. People look for Jesus in order to listen to the Word of God. Many persons get together around Jesus, they make a throng around him. And Jesus seeks help from Simon Peter and from some

of his companions who had just returned from fishing. He goes into the boat with them and responds to the expectation of the people, communicating to them the Word of God. Sitting down, Jesus takes the attitude of a Teacher and speaks from a fisherman's boat. The novelty consists in the fact that he teaches, not only in the Synagogue for a choice public but in any place, where there are people who wish to listen, even on the seashore.

- Luke 5: 4-5: "But if you say so, I will pay out the nets." When he had finished speaking, he addresses himself to Simon and encourages him to fish again. In Simon's response there is frustration, tiredness and discouragement: "Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing!" But trustful in Jesus' word, they throw in the nets again and continue the struggle. The word of Jesus has greater force for them than the experience of frustration of that night!
- Luke 5: 6-7: The result is surprising. The catch is so abundant that the nets are about to tear and the boat begins to sink. Simon needs the help of John and of James who are in the other boat. Nobody is complete in himself, alone. One community has to help the other. The conflict among the communities, both at the time of Luke as well as today, should be overcome in order to attain a common objective, which is the mission. The experience of the force of the word of Jesus which transforms is the axis around which the differences are embraced and overcome.
- Luke 5: 8-11: "Be fishermen of men." The experience of the closeness of God in Jesus makes Peter understand who he is: "Leave me Lord, I am a sinful man!" Before God we are all sinners. Peter and his companions are afraid, and, at the same time, they feel attracted to Jesus. Jesus drives away fear: "Do not be afraid!" He calls Peter and commits him to the mission, ordering him to be a fisherman of men. Peter experiences, quite concretely, that the word of Jesus is like the word of God. It is capable to bring about what it affirms. In Jesus those rough and tough laborers will have an experience of power, of courage, of trust. And so then, "they will abandon everything and follow Jesus!" Up until now it was only Jesus who announced the Good News of the Kingdom. Now other persons will be called and involved in the mission. This way in which Jesus works, in 'equipe,' in a team is also Good News for the people.
- The episode of the catch of fish along the lake indicates the attraction and the force of the Word of Jesus. He attracts people (Lk 5: 1). He urges Peter to offer his boat to Jesus to be able to speak (Lk 5: 3). The word of Jesus is so strong that it overcomes the resistance in Peter, it convinces him to throw the nets into the sea again and there is the miraculous catch (Lk 5: 4-6). It overcomes in him the will to leave Jesus and attracts him to become a "fisherman of men" (Lk 5, \: 10). This is the way the Word of God acts in us, up until now!

## Personal Questions

- Where and how does the miraculous catch of fish take place today; the one which takes place paying attention to the word of Jesus?
- And they leaving everything followed Jesus. What do I have to leave in order to follow Jesus?

## Concluding Prayer

Who shall go up to the mountain of Yahweh? Who shall take a stand in his holy place?

The clean of hands and pure of heart,  
who does not swear an oath in order to deceive. (Ps 24: 3-4)

## Friday, September 5, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith,  
and by your constant care  
protect the good you have given us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 5: 33-39

The disciples said to Jesus, 'John's disciples are always fasting and saying prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees, too, but yours go on eating and drinking.'

Jesus replied, 'Surely you cannot make the bridegroom's attendants fast while the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then, in those days, they will fast.'

He also told them a parable, 'No one tears a piece from a new cloak to put it on an old cloak; otherwise, not only will the new one be torn, but the piece taken from the new will not match the old. 'And nobody puts new wine in old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and run to waste, and the skins will be ruined. No; new wine must be put in fresh skins. And nobody who has been drinking old wine wants new. "The old is good," he says.'

## Reflection

In today's Gospel we witness closely a conflict between Jesus and the religious authority of the time, the Scribes and the Pharisees (Lk 5: 3). This time the conflict is concerning the practice of fasting. Luke narrates diverse conflicts concerning the religious practice of the time: forgiveness of sins (Lk 5: 21-25), to eat with sinners (Lk 5: 29-32), fasting (Lk 5: 33-36), and two conflicts on the observance of Saturday, the Sabbath (Lk 6: 1-5 and Lk 6: 6-11).

- Luke 5: 33: Jesus does not insist on the practice of fasting. The conflict here is concerning the practice of fasting. Fasting is a very ancient use, practiced by almost all religions. Jesus Himself followed it during forty days (Mt 4: 2). But he does not insist with the disciples that they do the same. He leaves them free.

This is why, the disciples of John the Baptist and of the Pharisees, who were obliged to fast, want to know why Jesus does not insist on fasting.

- Luke 5: 34-35: When the bridegroom is with them they are not obliged to fast. Jesus responds with a comparison. When the bridegroom is with the friends of the bridegroom, that is, during the wedding feast, they should not fast. Jesus considers himself the bridegroom. During the time when Jesus is with the disciples, it is the wedding feast. One day will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then if they wish they can fast. Jesus refers to his death. He knows and he is aware that if he wants to continue along this path of liberty, the authority will want to kill him.
- Several times, in the Old Testament, God presents himself as the bridegroom of the people (Is 49: 15; 54: 5, 8; 62: 4-5; Os 2: 16-25). In the New Testament, Jesus is considered the bridegroom of his people (Ep 5: 25). The Apocalypses speaks of the celebration of the marriage of the Lamb with his spouse, the Heavenly Jerusalem (Rv 19: 7-8; 21: 2, 9).
- Luke 5: 36-39: New Wine in new skins! These words pronounced concerning the new piece of cloth on an old cloak and about new wine in old skins should be understood like a light which gives clarity on diverse conflicts, narrated by Luke, first and after the discussions concerning fasting. They clarify the attitude of Jesus concerning all the conflicts with the religious authority. Today, these would be conflicts such as: marriage between divorced persons, friendship with prostitutes and homosexuals, to receive communion without being married by the Church, not to go to Mass on Sunday, not to fast on Good Friday, etc.

A piece of new cloth is not sewed on an old cloak; because when it is washed the new piece of cloth shrinks and tears the old cloak more. Nobody puts new wine in old skins, because the new wine when it is fermented makes the old skins burst. New wine in new skins! The religion diffused by the religious authority was like an old cloak, like an old skin. It is not necessary to want to combine the novelty brought by Jesus with old customs or uses. Either one or the other! The new wine which Jesus brings bursts the old skins. It is necessary to know how to separate both of these things. Very probably, Luke gives these words of Jesus to orientate the communities of the years 80. There was a group of Christian Jews who wanted to reduce the novelty of Jesus to the Judaism of the beginning. Jesus is not against what is "ancient." But he does not want the ancient to be imposed on the new, preventing it from manifesting itself. It would be as if the Catholic Church reduced the message of Vatican Council II to the Church before the Council, like many persons today seem to want to do it.

## Personal Questions

- Which are the conflicts about religious practices which cause suffering to persons today and are the cause of much discussion and polemics? Which is the subjacent image of God in all these preconceptions, norms and prohibitions?

- How can we understand today the phrase of Jesus: “do not put a new piece of cloth on an old cloak? Which is the message which you can draw from this for your life and for the life of the community?

## Concluding Prayer

Commit your destiny to Yahweh, be confident in him, and he will act, making your uprightness clear as daylight, and the justice of your cause as the noon. (Ps 37: 5-6)

## Saturday, September 6, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith,  
and by your constant care  
protect the good you have given us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 1-5

It happened that one Sabbath Jesus was walking through the cornfields, and his disciples were picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands and eating them.

Some of the Pharisees said, ‘Why are you doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath day?’

Jesus answered them, ‘So you have not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry- how he went into the house of God and took the loaves of the offering and ate them and gave them to his followers, loaves which the priests alone are allowed to eat?’

And he said to them, ‘The Son of man is master of the Sabbath.’

## Reflection

The Gospel today speaks about the conflict concerning the observance of the Sabbath – Saturday. The observance of the Sabbath was a central law, one of the Ten Commandments. This was a very ancient Law the value of which was stressed after the Exile. During the Exile, the people had to work seven days a week from morning until evening, without any conditions to meet and meditate on the Word of God, to pray together and to share faith, their problems, and their hopes. Therefore, there was an urgent need to stop at least one day a week to get together and encourage one another during the very difficult situation of

the exile. Otherwise, they would have lost their faith. It was then that faith was reborn, and the observance of Saturday was re-established.

- Luke 6: 1-2: The cause of the conflict. On Saturday the disciples were walking across the cornfields and they were picking ears of corn. Matthew 12: 1 says that they were hungry (Mt 12: 1). The Pharisees invoke the Bible to say it was a transgression of the Law of Saturday: "Why do you do this which is not permitted to do on Saturday?" (cf. Ex 20: 8-11).
- Luke 6: 3-4: The response of Jesus. Immediately Jesus responds recalling that David himself also did things which were prohibited, because he took the sacred bread from the Temple and gave it to the soldiers to eat because they were hungry (1S 21: 2-7). Jesus knew the Bible and referred to it to show that the arguments of others had no foundation. In Matthew, the response of Jesus is more complete. He not only recalls the story of David, but also quotes the Legislation which permits the priests to work on Saturday and he quotes Prophet Hosea: "Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice." He quotes a Biblical text or a historical text, a legislative text and a prophetic text (cf. Mt 12: 1-18). At that time there was no printed Bible as we have it today. In each community there was only one Bible, handwritten, which remained in the Synagogue. If Jesus knew the Bible so well, it means that in the 30 years of his life in Nazareth he participated intensely in the life of the community, where every Saturday the Scriptures were read. We still lack very much to have the same familiarity with the Bible and the same participation in the community.
- Luke 6: 5: The conclusion for all of us. And Jesus ends with the following phrase: The Son of Man is Master of the Sabbath! The Lord of Saturday! Jesus, Son of Man, who lives in intimacy with God, discovers the sense of the Bible not from outside, from without, but from inside, that is, discovers the sense starting at the roots, beginning from his intimacy with the author of the Bible who is God himself. Because of this, he calls himself Master of Saturday. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus revitalizes the law of Saturday saying: "Saturday was instituted for man and not man for Saturday."

## Personal Questions

- How do you spend Sunday, which is our "Sabbath"? Do you go to Mass because it is an obligation, in order to avoid sin or to be with God?
- Jesus knew the Bible almost by heart. What does the Bible represent for me?

## Concluding Prayer

My mouth shall always praise Yahweh, let every creature bless his holy name for ever and ever. (Ps 145: 21)

## Sunday, September 7, 2025

*Twenty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Shaddai, God of the mountain, You who make of our fragile life the rock of your dwelling place, lead our mind to strike the rock of the desert, so that water may gush to quench our thirst. May the poverty of our feelings cover us as with a mantle in the darkness of the night and may it open our heart to hear the echo of silence until the dawn, wrapping us with the light of the new morning, may bring us, with the spent embers of the fire of the shepherds of the Absolute who have kept vigil for us close to the divine Master, the flavor of the holy memory.

## LECTIO

### **The Gospel Text – Luke 14: 25-33**

25 Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, 26 "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. 33 So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

### **A Moment of Silence:**

*Let us allow the voice of the Word to resonate within us.*

## MEDITATIO

### **Some Questions:**

- If any man comes to me without hating, he cannot be my disciple: Are we convinced that we must get to the point of separating ourselves from all that ties our hearts: affection received and given, life itself, in order to follow Jesus?
- Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple: Do I possess the logic of the cross, that is, the logic of love freely given?

- The means to fulfil this: does my capability to think inform my life of faith or is it just an interior impulse that dissolves with time and slips by the events of my daily life?
- To avoid having onlookers make fun of something started: does the reward of someone who started to follow the Lord and then did not have the human resources to go on, that is, derision for inability, apply to me?
- None of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions: am I convinced that the key to discipleship is the poverty of non-possession and the beatitude of belonging?

### **A Key to the Reading:**

We are among those who follow Jesus, with all our baggage of the past. One among so many, our name can be lost. But when He turns around and his word strikes the pain of the ties that strongly bind the pieces of our life, questions roll in the most

ancient valley of echoes and one single humble reply comes forth from the ruins of unfinished edifices: Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.

- **v. 25-26:** Great crowds accompanied him on his way and he turned and spoke to them:

«If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple.” The Lord is not interested in counting those who come to him. His words are strong and are free of all illusion. Is there anyone who does not know what it means to hate? If I hate a person, I stay away from that person. This choice between the Lord and affection for parents is the first demand of discipleship. To learn from Christ, it is necessary to find once more the nucleus of every love and interest. The love of a follower of the Lord is not a possessive love, but a love of freedom. To follow someone without any guarantees such as blood relationship can give, namely, family ties and one’s own blood, that is, one’s life, is discipleship, a place where life is born of divine Wisdom.

- **v. 27:** Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. The only tie that helps us follow Jesus is the cross. This symbol of love that cannot be taken back, capable of being word even when the world silences everything by condemnation and death, is the lesson of the Rabbi born in the smallest village in Judea.
- **v. 28:** Which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? To build a tower requires a large sum for someone who has limited resources. A good intention to build is not enough, it is necessary to sit down, calculate expenses, seek the means to bring the project to completion. Man’s life is incomplete and unsatisfied because the larger the project the larger the debt! A project made to measure: not to know how to calculate what is within our means to accomplish is not the wisdom of those who after having ploughed wait for the rain, but the lack of awareness of those to expect flowers and

harvest from seed thrown among stones and brambles, without making the effort to loosen the soil.

- **v. 29-30:** Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying: "Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish." The derision of others which grates like sand on one's the feelings of hope of the person who wanted to reach high on his own, is the reward of one's own arrogance clothed in good will. How many humiliations do we not carry with us, but what little fruit do we reap from these painful experiences! Putting down foundations and then not finish the building is useless. Shattered desires sometimes are good tutors to our naïve self-affirmation... but we fail to understand them so long as we try to cover up our failures and the delusion of our waking up from the fairytale world of the dreams of our childhood.

Yes, Jesus does tell us to become childlike, but a child will never pretend to build a "real" tower! The child will be happy with a small tower on the beach, because he/she knows well his/her capacity.

- **vv. 31-32:** Or, again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. No one can win a war without first sending envoys of peace. To fight for royal supremacy over every other is in itself a lost battle, because man is not called to be a ruling king, but the lord of peace. Approaching the other while still a long way away is the most beautiful sign of victory where no one wins and no one loses, but all become servants of the one true sovereignty in the world: peace and fullness of the gifts of God.
- **v. 33:** *So, in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.* If we examine the capital sins, we shall discover them in the manner of possessing that Jesus speaks of. A person who bases his/her life on possessions is a dissolute person who pretends having power over all things (pride), enjoying a life of pleasure (lust) going beyond the limits as a personal right (anger), being hungry for material goods (gluttony), stealing from others (envy), keeping things for him/herself (avarice), spoiling him/herself apathetically without committing to anything (sloth). The disciple, on the other hand, travels on the rails of the living virtues of the gifts of the Spirit: he/she is a person who has a sense of the things of God (wisdom) and shares it without keeping it to him/herself, and delves deep into the essential meaning of all that is Life (knowledge), who listens to the voice of the Spirit (counsel), and reflects on every discernment (counsel), who allows him/herself to be protected by the limitations of his/her being (fortitude) and does not give in to the allurements of sin, who knows the secrets of history (knowledge) to build horizons of goodness, who does not take unto him/herself the right of making sense, but who welcomes the source of divine intervention (piety) who springs from the abyss of silence and is thankful for the marvels of grace of his Creator (fear of God) without being afraid of his/her smallness. Thus, a disciple is another Jesus.

## Reflection:

Our hearts are nets made of chain. We have ties of tenderness and gratitude, ties of love and dependence, endless ties with everything that touches our feelings. Jesus speaks of ties of consanguinity: father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and of ties with life itself which in the Semitic mentality is symbolized by blood. But the heart must be free of these ties in order to go to Him and create a new tie that gives life because it gives the person freedom to be his/her authentic self. Every disciple has but one task: to learn and not to depend. Blood ties create dependence: how often does affective blackmail stop people from building the tower of their existence? How often do the words: If you love me, do this! Or: If you love me, do not do this...? Life itself can imprison you when it ties you to that which does not suit you physically or mentally thus influencing your complicated story, or when it ties you to that which you choose haphazardly by a will made weak by a thousand grids of events and blackmail. The cross does not tie, it urges that all that you have may be shed, blood and water, even to the last drop: your whole life as a gift that does not expect any reward. To belong rather than to possess is the secret of the gratuitous love of the Master and of the disciple. Anyone who follows Jesus is not just any disciple who learns a doctrine, but is one who becomes a beloved disciple, capable of narrating the wonders of God when the fire of the Spirit will turn him/her into a flame on the candlestick of the world.

## ORATIO

### Psalm 22

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;  
he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk  
through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil;  
for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.  
Thou prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
thou anoints my head with oil, my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall  
dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## CONTEMPLATIO

Lord, as you turn around and look at me, your words go through my mind and challenge me with everything that is my life. It is as though a pair of scissors unhesitatingly but sweetly cut the umbilical cords that nourish me to keep me going. And this certain and necessary action restores my full breath and my freedom. Scripture says in its first pages of the human race: Man will leave his father and mother and will go towards a new fullness, all his, towards the unity of one person, capable of bearing fruit and new life. But we have not grasped the key word of this magnificent project, a word that inconveniences because it

is like the waves of the sea where you cannot let yourself go with no security, the word: movement. Life does not stop. A love and a life received from a father and a mother. Yes, a full love, but one that does not limit horizons. Man will leave... and will go... A man and a woman, two in one, children who will be the face of their meeting of love, but who tomorrow will leave to go in their turn... if you stop to grasp life, life dies in your grasp. And with life also your unfulfilled dream dies, the dream of a full love that is never exhausted. Lord, grant us to understand that to love is to follow, to listen, to go, to stop, to lose oneself in order to find oneself in a movement of freedom that fulfills every desire for eternal possession. Let me not, for the sake of possessing a part of life, lose the joy of belonging to life, to that divine Life that comes and goes in me for others and from others to me to make of the days that go by waves of Freedom and of gift from God within the limitations of each life. Grant that I may always be the beloved disciple of your dying Life, capable of welcoming in inheritance the sonship and guardianship, in your Spirit, of every authentic motherhood.

## Monday, September 8, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

### Opening Prayer

God our Father, you redeem us  
and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us,  
give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel Reading - Matthew 1: 1-16, 18-23

Roll of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, Judah fathered Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse; and Jesse fathered King David.

David fathered Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, Abijah fathered Asa, Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, Joram fathered Uzziah, Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, Ahaz fathered Hezekiah, Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon, Amon fathered Josiah; and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers. Then the deportation to Babylon took place.

After the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah fathered Shealtiel, Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor, Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, Achim

fathered Eliud, Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob; and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally.

He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.'

Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: Look! the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

## Reflection

Today, September 8th, Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, the Gospel gives us the genealogy or Identity Card of Jesus. By means of the list of his ancestors, the Evangelist tells the communities who Jesus is and how God acts in a surprising way in order to fulfil his promise. On our identity card there is our name and the name of our parents. Some persons, to say who they are, also recall the names of the grandparents. Others are embarrassed of their ancestors, of their families, and hide behind appearances which deceive. The Identity Card of Jesus has many names. On the list of names there is a great novelty. At that time, the genealogy indicated only the name of the men. This is why, it surprises that Matthew also mentions five women among the ancestors of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah and Mary. Why does he choose precisely these five women and not others? This is the question which the Gospel of Matthew leaves for us.

- Matthew 1: 1-17: The long list of names – the beginning and the end of the genealogy. At the beginning and at the end of the genealogy, Matthew clearly makes us understand which is the identity of Jesus: He is the Messiah, son of David and son of Abraham. As descendant of David, Jesus is the response of God to the expectations of the Jewish people (2S 7: 12, and 16). As descendant of Abraham, he is source of blessings and of hope for all nations of the earth (Gn 12: 13). Therefore, in this way, both the Jews and the Pagans who formed part of the communities of Syria and of Palestine at the time of Matthew could see that their hope was fulfilled in Jesus. .
- Drawing up the list of the ancestors of Jesus, Matthew adopts a plan of 3 X 14 generations (Mt 1: 17). Number two is the number of the divinity. Number 14 is two times 7, which is the number of perfection. At that time, it was something common to interpret or calculate God's action by using the numbers and the dates. By means of these symbolical calculations, Matthew reveals the presence of God throughout the generations and expresses the conviction of the communities who said that Jesus appeared at the time established by God. With his coming history reaches its fulfilment.

- The message of the five women mentioned in the genealogy. Jesus is the response of God to the expectation both of the Jews and of the Pagans, but it is in a completely surprising way. In the stories of the four women of the Old Testament, mentioned in the genealogy, there is something abnormal. The four of them were foreigners, and they will conceive their sons outside the normal schema of the behavior of that time and they do not keep the requirements of the laws of purity of the time of Jesus. Tamar, a Canaanite, widow, dresses as a prostitute of Jericho to oblige Judah to be faithful to her and to give her a son (Gn 38: 1-30). Rahab, a prostitute from Jericho, makes an alliance with the Israelites. She helped them to enter into the Promised Land and professed the faith in a God who liberates from the Exodus. (Gs 2: 1-21). Bathsheba, a Hittite, wife of Uriah, was seduced, abused and made pregnant by King David, who in addition to that, ordered her husband to be killed (2S 11: 1-27). Ruth, a Moabite, a poor widow, chose to remain with Naomi and adhere to the people of God (Rt 1: 16-18). Advised by her mother-in-law Naomi, Ruth imitates Tamar and spends the night together with Boaz, obliging him to observe the law and to give her a son. From their relation Obed was born, the grandfather of King David (Rt 3: 1-15; 4: 13-17). These four women question the models of behavior imposed by the Patriarchal society. And thus, their conventional initiative will give continuity to the descendants of Jesus and will bring salvation to all the people. Through them, God realizes his plan and sends the promised Messiah. Truly, God's way of acting surprises and makes one think! At the end the reader will ask: "And Mary? Is there something irregular in her? What is it? We get the response from the story of Saint Joseph which follows in (Mt 1: 18-23).
- Mathew 1: 18-23: Saint Joseph was just. What was irregular in Mary is that she became pregnant before living together with Joseph, her promised spouse, who was a just man. Jesus says: "If your justice is not greater than the justice of the Pharisees and the Scribes, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." If Joseph had been just according to the justice of the Pharisees, he should have denounced Mary and she would have been stoned. Jesus would have died. Thanks to the true justice of Joseph, Jesus was able to be born.

## Personal Questions

- When I present myself to others, what do I say about myself and about my family?
- If the Evangelist mentions only these five women together with over forty men, no doubt, he wants to communicate a message, which is this message? What does all this tell us about the identity of Jesus? And what does this say about us?

## Concluding Prayer

They shall speak of the glory of your kingship and tell of your might, making known your mighty deeds to the children of Adam, the glory and majesty of your kingship. (Ps 145: 10-11)

# Tuesday, September 9, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

God our Father, you redeem us  
and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us,  
give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 12-19

Now it happened in those days that Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came, he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.

He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases.

People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.

## Reflection

The Gospel today presents two facts: the choice of the twelve apostles (Lk 6: 12-16) and the enormous crowds who want to meet Jesus (Lk 6: 17-19). The Gospel today invites us to reflect on the Twelve who were chosen to live with Jesus, being apostles. The first Christians remembered and registered the name of these twelve and of some other men and women, who followed Jesus and who, after His Resurrection, began to create the communities for the world outside. Today, also, all remember some catechists or persons, significant for their own Christian formation.

- Luke 6: 12-13: The choice of the 12 apostles. Before choosing the twelve apostles definitively, Jesus spent a whole night in prayer. He prays in order to know whom to choose and then chooses the Twelve, whose names are in the Gospels and they will receive the name of apostles. Apostle means sent, missionary. They were called to carry out a mission, the same mission that Jesus received from the Father (Jn 20: 21). Mark is more concrete and says that God called them to be with him and he sends them on mission (Mk 3: 14)..
- Luke 6: 14-16: The names of the 12 Apostles. With small differences the names of the Twelve are the same in the Gospels of Matthew (Mt 10: 2-4), Mark (Mk 3:

16-19) and Luke (Lk 6: 14-16). The majority of these names come from the Old Testament. For example, Simeon is the name of one of the sons of the Patriarch Jacob (Gn 29: 33). James (Giacomo) is the same name of Jacob (Gn 25: 26), Judah is the name of the other son of Jacob (Gn 35: 23). Matthew also had the name of Levi (Mk 2: 14), the other son of Jacob (Gn 35: 23) Of the twelve apostles, seven have a name that comes from the time of the Patriarchs: two times Simon, two times, James, two times Judah, and one time Levi! That reveals the wisdom and the pedagogy of the people. Through the names of the Patriarchs and the matriarchs, which were given to the sons and daughters, people maintained alive the tradition of the ancestors and helped their own children not to lose their identity. Which are the names which we give our children today?

- Luke 6: 17-19: Jesus goes down from the mountain and people are looking for him. Coming down from the mountain with the twelve, Jesus finds an immense crowd of people who were trying to hear his words and to touch him, because people knew that from him came out a force of life. In this crowd there were Jews and foreigners, people from Judaea and also from Tyre and Sidon. These were people who were abandoned, disoriented. Jesus accepts all those who look for him Jews and Pagans! This is one of the themes preferred by Luke!

These twelve persons, called by Jesus to form the first community, were not saints. They were common persons, like all of us. They had their virtues and their defects. The Gospels tell us very little on the temperament and the character of each one of them. But what they say, even if not much is for us a reason for consolation.

- Peter was a generous person and full of enthusiasm (Mk 14: 29.31; Mt 14: 28-29), but at the moment of danger and of taking a decision, his heart becomes small and cannot go ahead (Mt 14: 30; Mc 14: 66-72). He was even Satan for Jesus (Mk 8: 33). Jesus calls him Rock (Peter). Peter of himself was not '*Pietra*' - Rock, he becomes Rock (*Pietra*) because Jesus prays for him (Lc 22: 31-32).
- James and John are ready to suffer with and for Jesus (Mk 10: 39), but they were very violent (Lk 9: 54), Jesus calls them "sons of thunder" (Mk 3: 17). John seemed to have some sort of envy. He wanted Jesus only for his group (Mk 9: 38).
- Philip had a nice welcoming way. He knew how to put others in contact with Jesus (Jn 1: 45- 46), but he was not too practical in solving the problems (Jn 12: 20-22; 6: 7). Sometimes he was very naïve. There was a moment when Jesus lost his patience with him: Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? (Jn 14: 8-9).
- Andrew, the brother of Peter and friend of Philip, he was more practical. Philip goes to him to solve the problems (Jn 12: 21-22). Andrew calls Peter (Jn 1: 40-41), and Andrew found the boy who had five loaves of bread and two fish (Jn 6: 8-9).
- Bartholomew seems to be the same as Nathanael. This one was from there and could not admit that anything good could come from Nazareth (Jn 1: 46).
- Thomas was capable of sustaining his own opinion, for a whole week, against the witness of all the others (Jn 20: 24-25). But when he saw that he was

mistaken, he was not afraid to acknowledge his error (Jn 20: 26-28). He was generous, ready to die with Jesus (Jn 11: 16).

- Matthew or Levi was a Publican, a tax collector, like Zaccheus (Mt 9: 9; Lk 19: 2). They were persons who held to the system of oppression of that time.
- Simon, instead, seems that he belonged to the movement which radically opposed the system which the Roman Empire imposed on the Jewish people. This is why he was also called Zealot (Lk 6: 15). The group of the Zealots even succeeded to bring about an armed revolt against the Romans.
- Judah was the one who was in charge of the money in the group (Jn 13: 29). He betrayed Jesus.
- James, son of Alphaeus and Judas Taddaeus. The Gospels say nothing of these two, they only mention their name.

## Personal Questions

- Jesus spends the whole night in prayer to know whom to choose, and then he chooses those twelve. Which conclusions can you draw?
- Do you recall the persons who began the community to which you belong? What do you remember about them: the content of what they taught or the witness they gave?

## Concluding Prayer

They shall dance in praise of his name, play to him on tambourines and harp!  
For Yahweh loves his people,  
he will crown the humble with salvation. (Ps 149: 3-4)

# Wednesday, September 10, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

God our Father, you redeem us  
and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us,  
give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 20-26

Then fixing his eyes on his disciples Jesus said: How blessed are you who are poor: the kingdom of God is yours.  
Blessed are you who are hungry now: you shall have your fill. Blessed are you who are weeping now: you shall laugh.

'Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of man.

Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, look!-your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.

But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now.

Alas for you who have plenty to eat now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who are laughing now: you shall mourn and weep.

'Alas for you when everyone speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.

## Reflection

The Gospel today presents four blessings and four curses in Luke's Gospel. There is a progressive revelation in the way in which Luke presents the teaching of Jesus. Up to 6: 16, he says many times, that Jesus taught the people, but he did not describe the content of the teaching (Lk 4: 15, 31-32, 44; 5: 1, 3, 15, 17; 6: 6). Now, after having said that Jesus sees the crowd desirous to hear the Word of God, Luke presents the first great discourse which begins with the exclamation: "Blessed are you who are poor!" And "Alas for you, rich!" and then takes up all the rest of the chapter (Lk 6: 12-49). Some call this Discourse the "Discourse of the Plain" because, according to Luke, Jesus came down from the mountain and stopped in a place which was plain and there he pronounced his discourse. In Matthew's Gospel, this same discourse is given on the mountain (Mt 5: 1) and is called "The Sermon on the Mountain." In Matthew, in this discourse there are eight Beatitudes, which trace a program of life for the Christian communities of Jewish origin. In Luke, the sermon is shorter and more radical. It contains only four Beatitudes and four curses, directed to the Hellenistic communities, formed by rich and poor. This discourse of Jesus will be meditated on in the daily Gospel of the next days.

- Luke 6: 20: *Blessed are you, poor!* Looking at the disciples, Jesus declares: "Blessed are you who are poor, the Kingdom of Heaven is yours!" This declaration identifies the social category of the disciples. They are poor! And Jesus promises to them: "The Kingdom is yours!" It is not a promise made for the future. The verb is in the present. The Kingdom belongs to them already. They are blessed now. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus makes explicit the sense of this and says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit!" (Mt 5: 3). They are the poor who have the Spirit of Jesus; because there are some poor who have the mentality of the rich. The disciples of Jesus are poor and have the mentality of the poor. Like Jesus, they do not want to accumulate, but they assume their poverty and with him, they struggle for a more just life together, where there will be fraternity and sharing of goods, without any discrimination.
- Luke 6: 21-22: *Blessed are you, who now hunger and weep.* In the second and third Beatitude, Jesus says: "Blessed are who are hungry now, because you shall have your full! Blessed are you, who are weeping now, you shall laugh!" One part of the phrase is in the present and the other in the future. What we live and suffer now is not definitive; what is definitive is the Kingdom of God which we are constructing with the force of the Spirit of Jesus. To construct the Kingdom presupposes pain, suffering and persecution, but something is

certain: the Kingdom will be attained, and you will have your fill and you will laugh!”

- Luke 6: 23: *Blessed are you when people hate you...!* The fourth Beatitude refers to the future: “Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out on account of the Son of Man!” Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, look, your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way your ancestors treated the prophets!” With these words of Jesus, Luke encourages the communities of his time, because they were persecuted. Suffering is not death rattle, but the pain of birth pangs. It is a source of hope! Persecution was a sign that the future that had been announced by Jesus was arriving, being reached. The communities were following the right path.
- Luke 6: 24-25: *Alas for you who are rich!* Alas for you who now have your fill and who laugh! After the four Beatitudes in favour of the poor and of the excluded, follow four threats or curses against the rich and those for whom everything goes well and are praised by everybody. The four threats have the same identical literary form as the four Beatitudes. The first one is expressed in the present. The second and the third one have a part in the present and another part in the future. And the fourth one refers completely to the future. These threats are found only in Luke’s Gospel and not in that of Matthew. Luke is more radical in denouncing injustices.
- Before Jesus, on the plains there are no rich people. There are only sick and poor people, who have come from all parts (Lk 6: 17-19). But Jesus says: “Alas for you the rich!” And this because Luke, in transmitting these words of Jesus, is thinking more of the communities of his time. In those communities there are rich and poor people, and there is discrimination of the poor on the part of the rich, the same discrimination which marked the structure of the Roman Empire (cf. Jm 5: 1-6; Rv 3: 17-19). Jesus criticizes the rich very hard and directly: You rich have already received consolation! You are already filled, but you are still hungry! Now you are laughing, but you will be afflicted and will weep! This is a sign that for Jesus poverty is not something fatal, nor the fruit of prejudices, but it is the fruit of unjust enrichment on the part of others.
- Luke 6: 26: *Alas for you when everyone speaks well of you, because this was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets!* This fourth threat refers to the sons of those who in the past praised the false prophets; because some authority of the Jews used its prestige and authority to criticize Jesus.

## Personal Questions

- Do we look at life and at persons with the same look of Jesus? What do you think in your heart: is a poor and hungry person truly happy? The stories which we see on Television and the propaganda of the market, what ideal of happiness do they present?
- In saying: “Blessed are the poor,” did Jesus want to say that the poor have to continue to be poor?

## Concluding Prayer

Upright in all that he does, Yahweh acts only in faithful love.  
He is close to all who call upon him,  
all who call on him from the heart. (Ps 145: 17-18)

## Thursday, September 11, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

### Opening Prayer

God our Father, You redeem us and make us Your children in Christ. Look upon us, give us true freedom and bring us to the inheritance You promised.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 27-38

Jesus said to his disciples: "To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful. "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

### Reflection

In today's Gospel we have the second part of the "discourse on the plain." In the first part (Lk 6: 20-26), Jesus addresses Himself to the disciples (Lk 6: 20). In the second part (Lk 6: 27-49), He addresses Himself "to you who listen to Me," that is, the great crowds of poor and sick people, who had come from all parts (Lk 6: 17-19).

- Luke 6: 27-30: Love your enemies! The words that Jesus addresses to these people are demanding and difficult: to love your enemies, not to curse them, to present the other cheek to anyone who slaps you on one cheek, and do not protest or complain when somebody takes what is yours. Taken literally, these commands seem to favor the rich who rob, but not even Jesus observes them

literally. When the soldier struck Him on the face, He did not offer the other cheek but rather reacted firmly: "If there is some offense in what I said, point it out, but if not why do you strike Me?" (Jn 18: 22-23). Then, how are these words to be understood? The following verses help us to understand what Jesus wants to teach us.

- Luke 6: 31-36: The Golden Rule! to imitate God. Two sayings of Jesus help us to understand what He wants to teach. The first saying is the so-called Golden Rule: "Treat others as you would like people to treat you!" (Lk 6: 31). The second saying is "Be merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful!" (Lk 6: 36). These two directives indicate that Jesus does not want simply to change the situation, because nothing would change. He wants to change the system. The novelty which He wants to construct comes from the new experience of God the Father, full of tenderness who accepts all! The words of threat against the rich cannot be the occasion of revenge on the part of the poor! Jesus demands the contrary attitude: "Love your enemies!" Love cannot depend on what I receive from others. True love should want the good of others, independently of what he or she does for me. Love should be creative, because that is how God's love is for us: "Be merciful, as your Heavenly Father is merciful!" Matthew says the same thing with other words: "Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect" (Mt 5: 48). Never will anyone be able to say, "Today I have been perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect! I have been merciful as the Father in Heaven is merciful." We will always be below the measure which Jesus has placed before us.
- In Luke's Gospel, the Golden Rule says, "Treat others as you would like people to treat you!" (Lk 6: 31). Matthew, in his Gospel, gives a different formulation: "Treat others as you would like others to treat you." And he adds, "That is the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 7: 12). Practically, all religions in the whole world have the same Golden Rule with a diverse formulation. This is a sign that a universal intuition or desire is expressed which comes from God and is part of our being in the image of God.
- Luke 6: 37-38: "Do not judge and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; give and there will be gifts for you; a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap; because the standard you use will be the standard used for you." These are four counsels: two in a negative form, do not judge and do not condemn; and two in positive form: to forgive and to give an abundant measure. When He says, "there will be gifts for you," Jesus refers to the treatment which God wants to bestow on us. But when our way of treating others is mean, God cannot use with us the abundant and overflowing measure that He would want to use.
- Celebrate the visit of God. The Discourse on the Plains or the Sermon on the Mount, from the beginning, leads the listeners to make a choice, to opt, in favor of the poor. In the Old Testament, several times, God placed before people this same choice, blessing or curse. People were given the freedom to choose: "Today I call heaven and earth to witness against you: I am offering you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live" (Deut 30: 19). It is not God who condemns, but the

people themselves according to the choice that they make between life and death, good or evil. These moments of choosing are moments of the visit of God to His people (Gen 21: 1; 50: 24-25); Ex 3: 16; 32: 34; Jr 20: 10; Ps 65: 10; Ps 80: 15; Ps 106: 4). Luke is the only Evangelist who uses this image of the visit of God (Lk 1: 68, 78; 7: 16; 19: 44; Acts 15: 16). For Luke it is the visit of God which places the choice between blessing or curse before people: "Blessed are you who are poor" and "Alas for you, the rich!" But people do not recognize the visit of God (Lk 19: 44).

## Personal Questions

- Do we look at life and at people with the same viewpoint as Jesus?
- What does it mean today "be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful"?
- Am I as literal as Jesus in love and mercy, or do I rationalize it away and compartmentalize it so it doesn't apply to situations in my life?

## Concluding Prayer

Yahweh, You examine me and know me, You know when I sit, when I rise, You understand my thoughts from afar. You watch when I walk or lie down, You know every detail of my conduct. (Ps 139: 1-3)

## Friday, September 12, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

God our Father, you redeem us  
and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us,  
give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 39-42

Jesus also told them a parable, 'Can one blind person guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? Disciple is not superior to teacher; but fully trained disciple will be like teacher.

Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out that splinter in your eye," when you cannot see the great log in your own? Hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter in your brother's eye.

## Reflection

Today's Gospel gives us some passages of the discourse which Jesus pronounced on the plains after having spent the night in prayer (Lk 6: 12) and after he had called the twelve to be his apostles (Lk 6: 13-14). Many of the phrases in this discourse had already been pronounced on other occasions, but Luke, imitating Matthew, puts them together in this Discourse of the Plains.

- Luke 6: 39: The parable of the blind man who guides another blind man. Jesus tells a parable to the disciples: "Can a blind man guide another blind man? Will not both of them fall into a hole?" A parable of one line, quite similar to the warnings which, in Matthew's Gospel, are addressed to the Pharisees: "Alas for you, blind guides!" (Mt 23: 16, 17, 19, 24, 26) Here in the context of the Gospel of Luke, this parable is addressed to the animators of the communities who consider themselves the masters of truth, superior to others. Because of this they are blind guides.
- Luke 6: 40: Disciple – Master. "The disciple is not greater than the teacher, but the well-prepared disciple will be like the teacher" Jesus is the Master, not the professor. The professor in class teaches different subjects but does not live with the pupils. The Master or Lord does not teach lessons, he lives with the pupils. His subject matter is himself, his life witness, his way of living the things that he teaches. Living together with the Master, the Lord has three aspects:
  - (1) the Master is the model or example to be imitated (cf. Jn 13: 13-15).
  - (2) The disciple not only contemplates and imitates, he commits himself to the same destiny of the Master, with his temptations (Lk 22: 28). His persecution (Mt 10: 24-25), his death (Jn 11: 16);
  - (3) He not only imitates the model, he not only assumes the commitment, but arrives at identifying himself with him: "I live, but it is not I who live, but Christ lives in me!" (Ga 2: 20). This third aspect is the mystical dimension of the following of Jesus, fruit of the action of the Spirit.
- Luke 6: 41-42: The splinter in the brother's eye. "Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own? How can you say to your brother: 'Brother, let me take out that splinter in your eye, when you cannot see the great log in your own? Hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter in your brother's eye.'" In the Sermon on the Mountain, Matthew treats the same theme and explains a bit better the parable of the splinter in the eye. Jesus asks for a creative attitude which will make us capable to go and encounter the others without judging them, without preconceptions and rationalizing, but accepting the brother (Mt 7: 1-5). This total openness toward others considering them as brothers/sisters will arise in us only when we are capable of relating with God with total trust as his children (Mt 7: 7-11).

## Personal Questions

- Splinter and log in the eye. How do I relate with others at home and in my family, in work and with my colleagues, in community and with the brothers and sisters?
- Master and disciple. How am I a disciple of Jesus?

## Concluding Prayer

Lord, how blessed are those who live in your house; they shall praise you continually.

Blessed those who find their strength in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. (Ps 84: 4-5)

## Saturday, September 13, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

God our Father, you redeem us  
and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us,  
give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 43-49

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. Every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. Good people draw what is good from the store of goodness in their hearts; bad people draw what is bad from the store of badness. For the words of the mouth flow out of what fills the heart. 'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say?

'Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them—I will show you what such a person is like. Such a person is like the man who, when he built a house, dug, and dug deep, and laid the foundations on rock; when the river was in flood it bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. But someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!'

## Reflection

In today's Gospel we have the last part of the Discourse of the Plains that is, the version which Luke presents in the Sermon on the Mountain of the Gospel of Matthew. And Luke puts together what follows:

- Luke 6: 43-45: The parable of the tree that bears good fruit. “There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. Every tree can be known by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns or gather grapes from brambles.” The letter of James the Apostle serves as a comment to this parable of Jesus: “Does any water supply give a flow of fresh water and salt water out of the same pipe? Can a fig tree yield olives, my brothers, or a vine yield figs? No more can sea water yield fresh water” (James 3: 11-12). A person who is well formed in the tradition of living together in community develops within self a good nature which leads him/her to do good. “The good of the treasure of his/her heart is brought out,” but the person who does not pay attention to his/her formation will have difficulty in producing good deeds. Rather, “from his/her evil treasure evil will come out evil, because the mouth speaks of the fullness of the heart.” Concerning the “good treasure of the heart” it is worthwhile to remember what the Book of Ecclesiasticus’ says on the heart, the source of good counsel: “Stick to the advice your own heart gives you, no one can be truer to you than that; since a person’s soul often gives a clearer warning than seven watchmen perched on a watchtower. And besides all this beg the Most High to guide your steps into the truth” (Si 37: 13-15).
- Luke 6: 46: It is not sufficient to say, Lord, Lord. What is important is not to say beautiful things about God, but rather to do the will of the Father and in this way be a revelation of his face and of his presence in the world.
- Luke 6: 47-49: To construct the house on rock. To listen and to put into practice, this is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mountain. Many people sought security and religious power in the extraordinary heads (gifts) or in the observance. But true security does not come from power; it does not come from any of those things. It comes from God! And God becomes the source of security, when we seek to do his will. And in this way he will be the rock which will support us, in the difficult hours and in the storms.

God is the rock of our life. In the Book of Psalms, we frequently find the expression: “God is my rock, my fortress... My God, my Rock, my refuge, my shield, the force which saves me...” (Ps 18: 3). He is the defence and the force of those who believe in him and who seek justice (Ps 18: 21-24). The persons, who trust in this God, become, in turn, a rock for others. Thus the prophet Isaiah invites the people who were in exile: “Listen to me, you who pursue saving justice, you who seek Yahweh. Consider the rock from which you were hewn, the quarry from which you were dug. Consider Abraham your father and Sarah who gave you birth” (Is 51: 1- 2). The prophet asks the people not to forget the past and to remember Abraham and Sarah who because of their faith in God became a rock, the beginning of the People of God. Looking toward this rock, the people should draw courage to fight and get out of the exile. And thus, Matthew exhorts the communities to have as an incentive or encouragement this same rock (Mt 7: 24-25) and in this way be themselves rocks to strengthen their brothers in the faith. This is also the significance which Jesus gives to Peter: “You are Peter and on this Rock I will build my Church” (Mt 16: 18). This is the vocation of the first communities called to unite themselves to Jesus, the living Rock, so as to become themselves living rocks,

listening and putting into practice the Word (P 2: 4-10; 2: 5; Ep 2: 19-22).

## Personal Questions

- Which is the quality of my heart?
- Is my house built on rock?

## Concluding Prayer

Lord, you created my inmost self,  
knit me together in my mother's womb.  
For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders.  
(Ps 139: 13-14)

# Sunday, September 14, 2025

*Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross*

## Opening Prayer

Oh Father who wanted to save man by the Cross of Christ, Your Son, grant to us who have known on earth His mystery of love, to enjoy in Heaven the fruits of His redemption. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

## LECTIO

### **Gospel Reading – John 3: 13-17:**

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

## MEDITATIO

### **a) Key for the reading:**

The text for today's Liturgy has been taken from the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. It should not surprise us that the passage chosen for this celebration forms part of the fourth Gospel, because, it is precisely this Gospel which presents the mystery of the cross of the Lord as the exaltation. This is clear from the beginning of the Gospel: "as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up" (Jn 3: 14; Dan 7: 13). John explains the mystery of the Incarnate Word in the paradoxical movement of the descent-ascent (Jn 1: 14, 18; 3: 13). In fact, it is this mystery which offers the key for the reading in order to understand the evolution of the identity and of the mission of the *passus et*

*gloriosus* (suffering and glorious) of Jesus Christ, and that we may well say that this is not only valid for the text of John. The Letter to the Ephesians, for example, uses this paradoxical movement to explain the mystery of Christ: “Now, when it says, ‘He went up’, it must mean that He had gone down to the deepest levels of the earth” (Eph 4: 9).

Jesus is the Son of God who becoming Son of man (Jn 3: 13) makes known to us the mysteries of God (Jn 1:18). He alone can do this, in so far as He alone has seen the Father (Jn 6: 46). We can say that the mystery of the Word who descends from Heaven responds to the yearning of the prophets: who will go up to heaven to reveal this mystery to us? (cf. Deut 30: 12; Prov 30: 4). The fourth Gospel is full of references to the mystery of He who “is from Heaven” (1 Cor 15: 47). The following are some quotations or references: Jn 6: 33, 38,51, 62; 8: 42; 16: 28-30; 17: 5.

The exaltation of Jesus is precisely in His descent to come to us, unto death, and death on the Cross, on which He was lifted up like the serpent in the desert, which, “anybody... who looked at it would survive” (Num 21: 7-9; Zech 12: 10). John reminds us in the scene of the death of Jesus Christ being lifted up: “They will look to the one whom they have pierced” (Jn 19: 37). In the context of the fourth Gospel, “to turn and look” means “to know,” “to understand,” “to see.”

Frequently, in John’s Gospel, Jesus speaks about His being lifted up: “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He” (Jn 8: 28); “when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all peoples to Myself. By these words He indicated the kind of death He would die” (Jn 12: 32-33). In the synoptics also Jesus announces to His disciples the mystery of His condemnation to death on the cross (see Mt 20: 27-29; Mk 10: 32-34; Lk 18: 31-33). In fact, Christ had “to suffer all that to enter into His glory” (Lk 24: 26).

This mystery reveals the great love which God has for us. He is the Son given to us, “so that anyone who believes in Him will not be lost, but will have eternal life,” this Son whom we have rejected and crucified. But precisely in this rejection on our part, God has manifested Himself to us His fidelity and His love which does not stop before the hardness of our heart. And even in spite of our rejection and our contempt He gives us salvation (cf. Acts 4: 27-28), remaining firm in fulfilling His plan of mercy: God, in fact, has not sent His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world may be saved through Him.”

### **b) A few questions:**

- What struck you in the Gospel?
- What does the exaltation of Christ and of His cross mean for you?
- What consequences does this paradoxical movement of descent-ascent imply in the living out of faith?

## ORATIO

### **Psalm 77 (1-2, 34-38)**

My people, listen to My teaching, pay attention to what I say. I will speak to you in a parable, unfold the mysteries of the past.

Whenever He slaughtered them, they began to seek Him; they turned back and looked eagerly for Him, recalling that God was their rock, God the Most High, their redeemer.

They tried to flatter Him with their mouths; their tongues were deceitful towards Him. Their hearts were not loyal to Him; they were not faithful to His covenant.

But in His compassion, He forgave their guilt instead of killing them, time and again repressing His anger instead of rousing His full wrath.

## CONTEMPLATIO

"Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil 2: 11)

## Monday, September 15, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

### Let us recollect ourselves in prayer - Statio

Come, Holy Spirit, fill our minds with Your light so that we can understand the true meaning of Your Word.

Come, Holy Spirit, enkindle in our hearts the fire of Your love to inflame our faith. Come, Holy Spirit, fill our being with Your force to strengthen what is weak in us, in our service to God.

Come, Holy Spirit, with the gift of prudence to control our enthusiasm which prevents us from loving God and our neighbor.

### Prayerful Reading of the Word – Lectio

#### **From the Gospel according to John 19: 25-27**

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

### Ponder the Word - Meditatio

#### **3.1. To understand the Reading**

- With your spirit go up to Calvary up to the Cross of Jesus and try to understand what is happening.
- From the passage that you have read, ask yourself what has struck you the most and why.
- What are the sentiments that this brief passage has aroused in you?

## **3.2. Key for the Reading**

### **Jesus Holds His Own Destiny in His Hand**

We are in the middle of chapter 19 of John's Gospel which begins with the scourging, the crowing of Jesus with a crown of thorns, the presentation of Jesus by Pilate to the crowds: "Behold the man" (Jn 19:5), the condemnation to death on the cross, the Way of the Cross and the crucifixion. In the account of the passion according to John, Jesus has control in His hand of His life and of everything which is taking place around Him. And for this reason, for example, we find sentences such as this: "Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and a purple robe" (v. 5), or the words said to Pilate: "You would have no power over Me at all if it had not been given you from above" (v. 11).

The text presented in the daily Liturgy also shows that Jesus not only has control over everything which is happening to Him but also on what is taking place around Him. What the Evangelist describes is very important: "Jesus then, seeing His mother and the disciple whom He loved, said..." (v. 26). The words of Jesus in their simplicity are words of revelation, words with which He wants to express His will: "Behold your son" (v. 26), "Behold your mother" (v. 27). These words of Jesus recall to mind the words of Pilate with which he presented the person of Jesus to the crowds: "Behold the man" (v. 5). Jesus from His throne, the Cross, with His words not only pronounces His will, but also that it is truly His love for us and the fruit of this love. He is the Lamb of God, the Shepherd who gives His life in order to gather all into one flock, in the Church.

### **Near the Cross**

In this passage we also find a very important word which is repeated twice when the Evangelist speaks about the mother of Jesus and of the disciple whom He loved. The Evangelist says that the mother of Jesus was "near the Cross" (v. 25) and the disciple whom He loves was "standing near her" (v. 26). This important detail has a very deep Biblical significance. Only the fourth Evangelist says that the Mother of Jesus was near the cross. The other Evangelists do not specify this. Luke says that "All His friends stood at a distance; so also did the women who had accompanied Him from Galilee and saw all this happen" (Lk 23: 49). Matthew writes, "And many women were there, watching from a distance; the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after Him. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of Zebedee's sons." (Mt 27: 55-56). Mark says that "There were also some women, watching from a distance. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary who was the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome. They used to follow Him and look after Him when He was in Galilee. And many other women were there who had come up to Jerusalem with Him." (Mk 15: 40-41). Therefore, only John stresses that the mother of Jesus was present, not following Him from a distance, but was near the cross together with the other women. Standing up, like a strong woman who has continued to believe, to hope and to have trust in God, even in that most difficult moment. The mother of Jesus is present in the important moment in which "Everything is fulfilled" (v. 30) in Jesus' mission. Besides, the Evangelist stresses the presence of the mother of Jesus from the beginning of His mission, in the wedding at

Cana, where John uses almost the same expression: "The mother of Jesus was there." (Jn 2: 1).

### **The Woman and the Disciple**

In the wedding at Cana and on the Cross, Jesus shows His glory, and His mother is present in an active way. In the wedding at Cana it is made evident, in a symbolical way, what took place on the cross. During the feast of the wedding Jesus changed the water contained in six jars (Jn 2: 6). Number six symbolizes imperfection. The perfect number is seven. For this reason Jesus responds to His mother: "My hour has not yet come" (Jn 2: 4). The hour in which Jesus renewed everything was the hour of the cross. The Disciples asked Him: "Lord, has the time come for You to restore the kingdom of Israel?" (Acts 1: 6). On the cross, with the water and blood, Jesus gives birth to the Church and at the same time the Church becomes His spouse. It is the beginning of the new time. Both at the wedding in Cana and at the foot of the cross, Jesus does not call His mother by her proper name, but calls her with the beautiful title of "Woman" (Jn 2: 19, 26). On the cross He is not speaking with His mother moved only by a natural sentiment, of a son toward his mother. The title of "Woman" is a sign that in that moment Jesus was opening His mother's heart to the spiritual maternity of His disciples, represented in the person of the disciple whom He loved who is always near Jesus, the Disciple who at the Last Supper reclined his head on Jesus' chest (Jn 13: 23-26), the Disciple who understood the mystery of Jesus and always remains faithful to his Master up to the time of His crucifixion, and later on was the first disciple to believe that Christ is risen in seeing the empty tomb and the linen cloths on the ground (Jn 20: 4-8), while Mary of Magdala believed that they had taken away the body of Jesus (Jn 20: 2). Then, Jesus' beloved Disciple is the one who believes and remains faithful to His Master in all the trials of his life. The Disciple whom Jesus loved has no name, because he represents you and me, and all those who are His true disciples. The woman becomes the mother of the Disciple. The woman is never called by the Evangelist by her proper name, she is not only the Mother of Jesus, but she is also the Church. John the Evangelist likes to call the Church "woman" or "lady." This title is found in the Second Letter of John (2 Jn 1: 5) and in the Apocalypses: "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, robed with the sun, standing on the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant, and in labor, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth." (Rev 12: 1-2). Therefore, the woman is the image of the Mother Church which is in labor to generate new sons for God.

The Mother of Jesus is the perfect image of the Church, spouse of Christ who is in labor to generate new children for her spouse Jesus.

### **The Disciple Takes the Woman to His House**

If Jesus has left in the hands of the woman (His mother and the Church) His disciples, represented in the person of the beloved Disciple, in the same way, He has left in the hands of His disciples, the woman (His mother and the Church). The Evangelist says that Jesus had just seen the disciple whom he loved next to His mother. He told him, "Behold your mother!" (v. 27). The Evangelist continues: "And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (v. 27). That means that the disciple took the woman as a very dear and

valuable person. This again reminds us all that John says in his letter when he calls himself the elder who loves the lady in truth (2 Jn: 1) who prays for her (2 Jn: 5) so that he takes care of her and defends her against the Antichrist, that is, all those who do not know Christ and seek to trouble the children of the Church, the disciples of Jesus (2 Jn 7: 10).

The words of verse 27 "And from that hour he took her into his home" reminds us what we also find in the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Evangelist opens his account telling about the vision of the angel which Joseph, the spouse of Mary, had in his dream. In this vision the angel tells Joseph, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit." (Mt 1: 20). Matthew begins his Gospel with entrusting Mary and Jesus to Joseph, while John concludes his account with Jesus entrusting His Mother and the Church into the hands of His beloved disciple!

## Questions to Orientate the Meditation

- What has struck you most in this passage and in the reflection?
- On the Cross Jesus has given us everything: His life and His mother. And you, are you ready to sacrifice something for the Lord? Are you capable of renouncing your possessions, your likes, desires, etc., to serve God and to help your neighbor?
- "From that hour the disciple took her to his home." Do you believe that families today continue to follow the example of the disciple whom Jesus loved? What meaning do these words have for your Christian life?

## Oratio

### **Canticle of the Blessed Virgin: Luke 1, 46-55**

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; because He has looked upon the lowliness of His servant. Yes, from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is His name, and His faithful love extends age after age to those who fear Him. He has used the power of His arm, He has routed the arrogant of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly. He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty. He has come to the help of Israel His servant, mindful of His faithful love -according to the promise He made to our ancestors -- of His mercy to Abraham and to His descendants for ever.

## Contemplatio

Let us adore together the goodness of God who has given us Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as our Mother, and let us repeat in silence: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

# Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Ordinary Time

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
our creator and guide,  
may we serve you with all our hearts and know your forgiveness in our lives.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 7: 11-17

It happened that soon afterwards Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. Now when he was near the gate of the town there was a dead man being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople was with her. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her and said to her, 'Don't cry.' Then he went up and touched the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you: get up.' And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.' And this view of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

## Reflection

Today's Gospel presents the episode of the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain. The literary context of this episode of the VII chapter of Luke helps one to understand. The Evangelist wants to show that Jesus opens the road, revealing the novelty of God which is presented to us in the announcement of the Good News. And in this way the transformation and openness take place: Jesus accepts the request of a foreigner, a non-Jew (Lk 7: 1-10) and resurrects the son of a widow (Lk 7: 11-17). The way in which Jesus reveals the Kingdom surprises the Jewish brothers who were not accustomed to such great openness. Even John the Baptist is surprised and orders to go and ask: "Are you the one who is to come or are we to expect someone else?" (Lk 7: 18-30). Jesus denounces the incoherence of his patricians: "They are like children shouting to one another without knowing what they want!" (Lk 7: 31-35). And finally, there is the openness of Jesus toward women (7: 36-50).

- Luke 7: 11-12: *The meeting of the two processions.* "Jesus went to a town called Nain. His disciples and a great crowd were going with him. When he was close to the gate of the town, there was a dead man being carried out to the cemetery, the only son of his mother and she was a widow." Luke is like a painter. With few words he succeeds to paint a very beautiful picture on the encounter of the two processions: the procession of death which is going out

of the city and accompanies the widow who is taking her only son towards the cemetery; the procession of life which enters the city and accompanies Jesus. The two meet in the small square at the side of the gate of the town of Nain.

- Luke 7: 13: *Compassion begins to act here.* “When the Lord saw her, he felt sorry for her and said to her: “Do not cry!” It is compassion which moves Jesus to speak and to act. Compassion signifies literally: “to suffer with,” to assume or make ours the suffering of the other person, identifying oneself with the person, feeling the pain, the suffering. It is compassion which puts into action the power of Jesus, the power of life over death, the creative power.
- Luke 7: 14-15: “Young man, I tell you, get up!” Jesus gets near the bier and says: “Young man, I tell you, get up!” And the dead man sat up and began to talk; and Jesus gave him to his mother.” Sometimes, at the moment of a great sorrow caused by the death of a loved person, people say: “In Jesus’ time, when he walked on this earth there was hope not to lose a loved person because Jesus could resurrect her.” These persons consider the episode of the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain as an event of the past which arouses nostalgia and also certain envy. The intention of the Gospel, instead, is not, that of arousing nostalgia or envy, but rather of helping us to experience better the living presence of Jesus in our midst. It is the same Jesus, who continues alive in our midst, capable of overcoming death and the sorrow of death. He is with us today, and in the face of the problems of sorrow which strike us, he tells us: “I tell you, get up!”
- Luke 7: 16-17: *The repercussion.* “Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God saying: ‘A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.’ The fame of these events spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.” It is the prophet who was announced by Moses (Dt 18: 15). It is God who comes to visit us and the “Father of orphans and protector of the widows” (Ps 68: 6: Judith 9: 11).

## Personal Questions

- Compassion moves Jesus to resurrect the son of the widow. Does the suffering, the sorrow of others produce in me the same compassion? What do I do to help the others to overcome the sorrow and to create a new life?
- God visited his people. Do I perceive the many visits of God in my life and in the life of the people?

## Concluding Prayer

Serve Yahweh with gladness,  
come into his presence with songs of joy! Be sure that Yahweh is God, he made us,  
we belong to him, his people, the flock of his sheepfold. (Ps 100: 2-3)

# Wednesday, September 17, 2025

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God, our creator and guide, may we serve You with all our hearts and know Your forgiveness in our lives. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 7: 31-35

Jesus said to the crowds: "To what shall I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance. We sang a dirge, but you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating food nor drinking wine, and you said, 'He is possessed by a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking and you said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

## Reflection

In today's Gospel we see the originality of the Good News which opens the way for people who are attached to ancient forms of faith who feel lost and do not understand anything more of God's action. In order to hide their lack of openness and of understanding they defend and seek childish pretexts to justify their attitude of lack of acceptance. Jesus reacts with a parable to denounce the confusion of His enemies: "You are similar to children who do not know what they want."

- Luke 7: 31: To whom, then, shall I compare you? Jesus is struck by the reaction of the people and say: "What comparison, then, can I find for the people of this generation? What are they like?" When something is evident and the persons, out of ignorance or because of bad will, do not perceive things and do not want to perceive them, it is good to find an evident comparison which will reveal their incoherence and the ill will. And Jesus is a Master in finding comparisons which speak for themselves.
- Luke 7: 32: Like children without judgment. The comparison which Jesus finds is this one. You are like "those children, shouting to one another while they sit in the market place: we played the pipes for you, and you would not dance; we sang dirges and you would not cry!" Spoiled children, all over the world, have the same reaction. They complain when others do not do and act as they say. The reason for Jesus' complaint is the arbitrary way with which people in the past reacted before John the Baptist and how they react now before Jesus.
- Luke 7: 33-34: Their opinion on John and on Jesus. "For John the Baptist has come, not eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say: he is possessed. The Son of man has come eating and drinking, and you say: look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist; He believed in him and was baptized by him. On the occasion of

this Baptism in the Jordan, He had the revelation of the Father regarding His mission as Messiah-Servant (Mk 1: 10). At the same time, Jesus stressed the difference between Him and John. John was more severe, more ascetical, did not eat nor drink. He remained in the desert and threatened the people with the punishment of the Last Judgment (Lk 3: 7-9). Because of this, people said that he was possessed. Jesus was more welcoming; He ate and drank like everybody else. He went through the towns and entered the houses of the people; He accepted the tax collectors and the prostitutes. This is why they said that He was a glutton and a drunkard. Even considering His words regarding “the men of this generation” (Lk 7: 31), in a general way, probably, Jesus had in mind the opinion of the religious authority who did not believe in Jesus (Mk 11: 29-33).

• Luke 7: 35: The obvious conclusion to which Jesus arrives. And Jesus ends drawing this conclusion: “Yet, wisdom is justified by all her children.” The lack of seriousness and of coherence is clearly seen in the opinion given on Jesus and on John. The bad will is so evident that it needs no proof. That recalls the response of Job to his friends who believe that they are wise: “Will no one teach you to be quiet! - the only wisdom that becomes you!” (Job 13: 5).

## Personal Questions

- When I express my opinion on others, am I like the Pharisees and the scribes who gave their opinion on Jesus and John? They expressed only their preconceptions and said nothing on the persons whom they judged.
- Do you know any groups in the Church who would merit the parable of Jesus?

## Concluding Prayer

How blessed the nation whose God is Yahweh, the people He has chosen as His heritage. From heaven Yahweh looks down, He sees all the children of Adam. (Ps 33: 12-13)

# Thursday, September 18, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God, our creator and guide, may we serve You with all our hearts and know Your forgiveness in our lives. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 7: 36-50

A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee, who had invited him, saw this he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The others at table said to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

## Reflection

Today's Gospel presents the episode of the woman with the perfume who was accepted by Jesus during a feast in house of Simon the Pharisee. One of the aspects of the novelty of the Good News of Jesus is the surprising attitude of Jesus toward women. At the time of the New Testament women lived marginalized. In the Synagogue they could not participate in the public life and they could not be witnesses. Many women, though, resisted this exclusion. From the time of Ezra, the marginalization of women had been increasing on the part of the religious authority (Ezr 9: 1 to 10: 44), and the resistance of women against their exclusion, also increased, as we can see in the stories of Judith, Esther, Ruth, Noemi, Suzanne, and the Sulamite and others. This resistance found echo and acceptance in Jesus. In the episode of the woman with the perfume there is inconformity which springs up and the resistance of the women in the life of every day and the acceptance of Jesus.

- Luke 7: 36-38: The situation which breaks out the debate. Three completely different persons meet with one another: Jesus, Simon, the Pharisee, a practicing Jew, and the woman, whom they said that she was a sinner. Jesus is in the house of Simon who has invited Him to dinner with him. The woman enters, and she places herself at the feet of Jesus, and begins to cry, bathing Jesus' feet with her tears, and dries them with her loose hair. She kisses His feet and anoints them with perfume. To get the hair loose in public was a gesture of independence. Jesus does not draw back, nor does He send the woman away, rather He accepts her gesture.

- Luke 7: 39-40: The reaction of the Pharisee and the response of Jesus. Jesus was accepting a person, who, according to the custom of the time, could not be accepted, because she was a sinner. The Pharisee, observing everything, criticizes Jesus and condemns the woman: "If this man were a prophet, He would know who this woman is and what sort of person it is who is touching Him and what a bad name she has." Jesus uses a parable to respond to the provocation of the Pharisee.
- Luke 7: 41-43: The parable of the two debtors. One owed 500 denarii, the other 50. Neither one was able to pay, both of them were forgiven. Which of them will love their master more? Response of the Pharisee: "The one who was let off more, I suppose!" The parable presupposes that both, the Pharisee and the woman, had received some favor from Jesus. By the attitude that both take before Jesus they indicate how much they appreciate the favor received. The Pharisee shows his love, his gratitude, by inviting Jesus to eat with him. The woman shows her love, her gratitude, by her tears, the kisses and the perfume.
- Luke 7: 44-47: The message of Jesus for the Pharisee. After having received the response of the Pharisee, Jesus applies the parable. Even if He was in the house of the Pharisee, invited by him, Jesus does not lose the freedom to speak and to act. He defends the woman against the criticism of the practicing Jew. The message of Jesus for the Pharisees of all times is this one: "The one who is forgiven little, loves little!" A Pharisee thinks that he is not a sinner because he observes the law in everything. The personal assurance that I, a Pharisee, create for myself many times, in the observance of the Law of God and of the Church, prevents me from experiencing the gratuity of the love of God. What is important is not the observance of the law, but the love with which I observe the law. And using the symbols of the love of the woman, Jesus responds to the Pharisee who considered himself to be in peace with God: "you poured no water over My feet; you gave Me no kiss, you did not anoint My head with perfumed oil! Simon, in spite of the banquet that you have offered Me, you have loved very little!"
- Luke 7: 48-50: The word of Jesus to the woman. Jesus declares that the woman is forgiven and then adds: "Your faith has saved you, go in peace!" Here we have the novelty of the attitude of Jesus. He does not condemn but He accepts. It is faith which helps the woman to encounter herself and to encounter God. In the relationship with Jesus, a new force springs up in her and makes her be born again.

## Personal Questions

- Where, when, and how are women despised or rejected by the Pharisee of today
- The woman certainly would not have done what she did if she was not absolutely certain that Jesus would accept her. Do the marginalized and migrant persons have the same certainty today?

## Concluding Prayer

For Yahweh is good, His faithful love is everlasting, His constancy from age to age. (Ps 100: 5)

## Friday, September 19, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

### Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
our creator and guide,  
may we serve you with all our hearts and know your forgiveness in our lives.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel Reading - Luke 8: 1-3

Now it happened that Jesus made his way through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their own resources.

### Reflection

In today's Gospel we have the continuation of yesterday's episode which spoke about the surprising attitude of Jesus with regard to women, when he defends the woman, who was known in the town as a sinner, against the criticism of the Pharisee. Now at the beginning of chapter 8, Luke describes Jesus who goes through the villages and towns of Galilee and the novelty is that he was not only accompanied by the disciples, but also by the women disciples.

- Luke 8: 1: The Twelve who follow Jesus. In one phrase alone, Luke describes the situation: Jesus goes through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the Twelve are with him. The expression "to follow Jesus" (cf. Mk 1: 18; 15: 41) indicates the condition of the disciple who follows the Master, twenty-four hours a day, trying to imitate his example and to participate in his destiny.
- Luke 8: 2-3: The women follow Jesus. What surprises is that at the side of the men there are also women "together with Jesus." Luke places both the men and the women disciples at the same level because all of them follow Jesus. Luke has also kept some of the names of some of these women disciples: Mary Magdalene, born in the town of Magdala. She had been cured, and delivered from seven demons; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, steward of Herod Antipa, who was Governor of Galilee; Suzanne and several others. It is said that they "served Jesus with their own goods" Jesus allows a group of women "to follow" him (Lk 8: 2-3; 23: 49; Mk 15: 41). The Gospel of Mark when speaking

about the women at the moment of Jesus' death says: "There were some women who were observing at a distance and among them Mary of Magdala, Mary, the mother of James the younger and Joset, and Salome, who followed him and served him when he was still in Galilee, and many others who had gone up with him to Jerusalem (Mk 15: 40-41). Mark defines their attitude with three words: to follow, to serve, to go up to Jerusalem. The first Christians did not draw up a list of these women disciples who followed Jesus as they had done with the twelve disciples. But in the pages of the Gospel of Luke the name of seven of these women disciples are mentioned: Mary Magdalene, Jeanna, wife of Chuza, Suzanne (Lk 8: 3), Martha and Mary (Lk 10: 38), Mary, the mother of James (Lk 24: 10) and Anna, the prophetess (Lk 2: 36), who was eighty-four years old. Number eighty-four is seven times twelve: the perfect age! The later Ecclesiastical tradition does not value this fact about the discipleship of women with the same importance with which it values the following of Jesus on the part of men. It is a sin!

The Gospel of Luke has always been considered as the Gospel of women. In fact, Luke is the Evangelist who presents the largest number of episodes in which he underlines the relationship of Jesus with the women, and the novelty is not only in the presence of the women around Jesus, but also and, above all, in the attitude of Jesus in relation to them. Jesus touches them and allows them to touch him without fear of being contaminated (Lk 7: 39; 8: 44-45, 54). This was different from the teachers of that time, Jesus accepts women who follow him and who are his disciples (Lk 8: 2-3; 10: 39). The liberating force of God, which acts in Jesus, allows women to raise and to assume their dignity (Lk 13: 13). Jesus is sensitive to the suffering of the widow and is in solidarity with her sorrow (Lk 7: 13). The work of the woman who prepares the meal is considered by Jesus like a sign of the Kingdom (Lk 13: 20-21). The insistent widow who struggles for her rights is considered the model of prayer (Lk 18: 1-8), and the poor widow who shares the little that she has with others is the model of dedication and donation (Lk 21: 1-4). At a time when the witness of women is not accepted as something valid, Jesus accepts women and considers them witnesses of his death (Lk 23: 49), of his burial (Lk 22: 55-56) and of his resurrection (Lk 24: 1-11, 22-24).

## Personal Questions

- How is woman considered in your community, in your country, in your Church?
- Compare the attitude of our Church with the attitude of Jesus.

## Concluding Prayer

God, examine me and know my heart, test me and know my concerns.  
Make sure that I am not on my way to ruin,  
and guide me on the road of eternity. (Ps 139: 23-24)

# Saturday, September 20, 2025

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
our creator and guide,  
may we serve you with all our hearts and know your forgiveness in our lives.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 8: 4-15

With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to Jesus, he told this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. Now as he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell in the middle of thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into good soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Anyone who has ears for listening should listen!' His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, 'To you is granted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God; for the rest it remains in parables, so that they may look but not perceive, listen but not understand.

'This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved.

Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up.

As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and never produce any crops. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

## Reflection

In today's Gospel, we will meditate on the parable of the seed. Jesus had a very popular word to teach by means of parables. A parable is a comparison which uses the visible things of life that are known to explain the invisible and unknown things of the Kingdom of God. Jesus had an enormous capacity to find very simple images to compare the things of God with the things of life which people knew and experienced in their daily struggle to survive. This presupposes two things: to be within the things of life, and to be within the things of God, of the Kingdom of God. For example, the people of Galilee understood all about seeds, of land, of rain, of the sun, of salt of flowers, of the harvest, of fishing, etc. Now, there are exactly these known things that Jesus uses in the parables to explain the mystery of the Kingdom. The farmer who listens

says: "The seed in the ground, I know what this means. Jesus says that this has something to do with the Kingdom of God. What could this ever be?" It is possible to imagine the long conversations with the people! The parable enters into the heart of the people and urges them to listen to nature and to think about life.

When he finishes telling the parable, Jesus does not explain it, but he usually says: "Who has ears to hear, let him hear" This means: "This is: You have heard and so now try to understand!" From time to time he would explain to the disciples: People like this way of teaching, because Jesus believed in the personal capacity to discover the sense of the parables. The experience which people had of life was for him a means to discover the presence of the mystery of God in their life and to have courage not to be discouraged along the way.

- Luke 8: 4: The crowds follow Jesus. Luke says: a large crowd got around him and people from all the towns ran to him from all the towns. So then he tells them this parable. Mark describes how Jesus told the parable. There were so many people that he, in order not to fall, went into a boat and sitting down he taught the people who were on the seashore (Mk 4: 1).
- Luke 8: 5-8<sup>o</sup>: The parable of the seed is a mirror of the life of the farmers. At that time, it was not easy to live from agriculture. The ground was full of rocks; there was little rain, much sun. Besides, many times, people, to shorten the way, passed through the fields and stepped on the plants (Mk 2: 23). But in spite of that, every year the farmer sowed and planted, trusting in the force of the seed, in the generosity of nature.
- Luke 8: 8b: Anyone who has ears to hear let him hear! At the end, Jesus says: "Anyone who has ears to hear, let him hear!" The way to be able to understand the parable is to search: "Try to understand!" The parable does not say everything immediately but moves the person to think. It does it in such a way that the person discovers the message beginning from the experience which the person has of the seed. It urges the person to be creative and to participate. It is not a doctrine which is presented ready to be taught and decorated. The parable is not water in a bottle, it is the source.
- Luke 8: 9-10: Jesus explains the parable to the disciples. At home, alone with Jesus, the disciples want to know the meaning of the parable. Jesus responds by means of a difficult and mysterious phrase. He says to the Disciples: "To you is granted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God, for the rest it remains in parables so that "they may look but not perceive, listen but not understand." This phrase gives rise to a question in the heart of the people: What is the purpose of a parable? Is it to clarify or to hide things? Did Jesus use the parables in order that people continue in their ignorance and would not convert themselves? Certainly not! In another place it is said that Jesus used the parables "according to what they could understand" (Mk 4: 33). The parable reveals and hides at the same time" It reveals for those who are "inside, within" who accept Jesus Messiah Servant. It hides for those who insist in seeing in him the Messiah the glorious King. These understand the images of the parable, but do not understand its meaning.
- Luke 8: 11-15: The explanation of the parable, in its diverse parts. One by one, Jesus explains the parts of the parable, the seed, and the earth up to the

harvest time. Some scholars think that this explanation was added afterwards; that it would not be from Jesus', but from one of the communities. This is possible! It does not matter! Because in the bud of the parable there is the flower of the explanation. Buds and flowers, both of them have the same origin, that is, Jesus. This is why we also can continue to reflect and to discover other beautiful things in the parable. Once, a person in a community asked: "Jesus says that we have to be salt. For what does salt serve?" The persons gave their opinion starting from the experience which each one had regarding salt! And they applied all this to the life of the community and discovered that to be salt is difficult and demanding. The parable functioned well! The same thing can be applied to the seeds. All have a certain experience.

## Personal Questions

- The seed falls in four different places: on the roadside, among the rocks, among the thorns and in the good earth. What does each one of these four places mean? What type of earth am I? Sometimes, people are rock; other times thistles; other roadside, other times good ground. Normally, what are we in our community?
- Which are the fruits which the Word of God is producing in our life and in our community?

## Concluding Prayer

Your kingship is a kingship for ever, your reign lasts from age to age.  
Yahweh is trustworthy in all his words, and upright in all his deeds. (Ps 145: 12-13)

## Sunday, September 21, 2025

*Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Lord, my Father, today I bring before you my weakness, my shame, my distance from you; I no longer hide my dishonesty and infidelity, because you know and see everything, in depth, with the eyes of your love and of your compassion. I ask you, good Doctor, pour on my wound the balm of your Word, of your voice which speaks to me, calls me and teaches me. Do not take away your gift, Who is the Holy Spirit: allow him to breathe on me, as a breath of life, from the four winds; that He envelops me as a tongue of fire and inundates me as water of salvation; send Him to me from your holy Heaven, as the dove of truth, to announce, today also, that you are and that you wait for me, that you take me with you, after all, as on the first day, when you shaped me and created and called me.

## Gospel Reading

## To Insert the Passage in its Context:

This evangelical pericope belongs to the great section of the narration of Luke which includes the long journey of Jesus towards Jerusalem; it opens in Lk 9: 51 to end in Lk 19: 27. This section, in turn, is subdivided into three parts, as three stages in the journey of Jesus, each one of which is introduced by an annotation almost like a repetition: "Jesus resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem" (9: 51); "Through towns and villages he went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem" (13: 22); "...on the way to Jerusalem he was travelling in the borderlands of Samaria and Galilee" (17: 11); to reach the conclusion in 19: 28: "When he had said this he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem," when Jesus enters the City.

We find ourselves in the second part, from Lk 13: 22 to 17, 10 which includes diverse teachings, which Jesus offers to his interlocutors: the crowds, the Pharisees, the Scribes, the disciples. In this unity, Jesus enters into dialogue with his disciples and offers them a parable, to indicate which is the correct use of the goods of this world and how our own life should be concretely administered, inserted in a filial relation with God. Then follow three "sayings" or secondary applications of the same parable in diverse situations, which help the disciples to make space for the new life in the Spirit, which the Father offers them.

## To Help in the Reading of the Passage:

- **vv. 1-8:** Jesus tells the parable of the wise and shrewd steward: a man, accused of his excessive greed, which has become unbearable, who finds himself in a decisive and difficult moment in his life, but who succeeds to use all his human resources to turn to good his clamorous failure. Just like this son of the world has known how to discern his own interests, so also the children of light have to learn to discern the will of love and the gift of their Father, to live like Him.
- **v. 9:** Jesus makes us understand that also dishonest and unjust richness, which is that of this world, if used for the good, as a gift, leads to salvation.
- **vv. 10-12:** Jesus explains that the goods of this world are not to be demonized, but rather are to be understood for the value which they have. They are said to be
- "minimum," they are "the little" of our life, but we are called to administer them faithfully and attentively, because they are a means to enter into communion with the brothers and sisters and therefore, with the Father.
- **v. 13:** Jesus offers a fundamental teaching: there is only one and unique end in our life and this is God, the Lord. To seek to serve any other reality means to become slaves, to bind ourselves to deceit and to die even now.

## The Gospel Text - Luke 16: 1-13:

1 He also said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. 2 He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." 3 Then the

steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. 4 Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes." 5 'Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" 6 "One hundred measures of oil," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty." 7 To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty." 8 'The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.'

9 'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings.

10 Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great; anyone who is dishonest in little things is dishonest in great. 11 If then you are not trustworthy with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? 12 And if you are not trustworthy with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?

13 'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

## A Moment of Prayerful Silence

I accept the silence of this moment, of this sacred time of encounter with Him. I who am poor, without money, without possessions, without house and without my own strength, because nothing comes from me, but everything comes from Him, it is His, I allow myself to be taken in by His richness of compassion and of mercy.

## Some Questions

- Like any Christian I am also an "administrator" of the Lord, the rich Man of our existence, the Only One Who possesses goods and riches. What is it that regulates my thoughts daily and, consequently, my daily choices, my actions, my relations?
- Life, goods, the gifts which my Father has given me, these infinite riches, which are worth more than any other thing in the world, am I wasting them, am I throwing them away like pearls to the pigs?
- The unfaithful steward, but wise and shrewd, suddenly changes his life, changes relations, calculations, thoughts. Today is a new day, it is the beginning of a new life, regulated according to the logics of remission, of pardon, of distribution: do I know that true wisdom is hidden in mercy?

- “Either you will love one or will love the other....” Whose servant do I want to be? In whose house do I want to live? Together with whom do I want to live my life?

## A Key for Reading

### “Who is the steward of the Lord?”

Luke in the parable uses the term **“administrator or steward” or “administration”** seven times, and thus it becomes the key word of the passage and of the message that the Lord wants to give me. Then, I try to look in Scripture for some traces, or a light which will help me to understand better and to verify my life, the administration that the Lord has entrusted to me. In the Old Testament several times this reality is repeated, especially referring to the royal richness or to the richness of the city or of the empires: in the Books of the Chronicles, for example, it is spoken about the administrators of King David (1 Ch 27: 31; 28: 1) and also in the Book of Esther (3: 9), Daniel (2: 49; 6: 4) and Tobias (1: 22) the meeting of administrators of the kings and the princes. It is totally worldly administration, linked to possessions, to money, to wealth, to power; therefore, bound to a negative reality, such as the accumulation, usurpation, violence. It is, in one word, an administration which ends, which is short-lived and deceitful, no matter if it is recognized that this is also, in a certain way, necessary for the good functioning of society.

The New Testament, on the other hand, immediately introduces me into a diverse dimension, higher, because it concerns the things of the spirit, of the soul, those things which do not end, do not change with the change of time and of persons. Saint Paul says: “Each one should consider himself as Christ’s servant, steward entrusted with the mysteries of God. In such a matter, what is expected of stewards is that each one should be found trustworthy” (1Cor 4: 1 ff). and Peter: “Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these varied graces of God, put it at the service of others” (1P 4: 10). Therefore, I understand that I am also an administrator of the mysteries and of the grace of God, through the simple and poor instrument, which is my own life; in it I am called to be *faithful and good*. *But this adjective “good,” is the same which John uses referring to the Shepherd, to Jesus: “kalòs” that is, beautiful and good*. And, why? Simply, because He *offers His life to the Father* for the sheep. This is the unique, true administration which is entrusted to me in this world, for the future world.

### What is the shrewdness of the administrator of the Lord?

The passage says that the master praises his dishonest steward, because he acted with “astuteness” and he repeats the word “shrewd,” a bit later. Perhaps a more correct translation could be “sage,” that is “wise,” or “prudent.” It is a wisdom that results from an attentive, deep thinking, from reflection, from study and the application of the mind, of affection to something which is of great interest. As an adjective this term is found, for example in Mt 7: 24, where true wisdom is shown of the man who builds his house on the rock and not on the sand, that is the man who founds his existence on the Word of the Lord or also in Mt 25, where he says that the virgins who, together with their lamps, had the oil

were wise, so that they will not be taken over by darkness, but who know how to wait always with invincible, incorruptible love, for their Spouse and Lord, when he returns. Therefore, this steward is wise and prudent, not because he takes advantage of others, but because he has known how to regulate and transform his life according to the measure and the form of the life of his Lord: he has committed himself totally, with his whole being, mind, heart, will, desire in imitating the one he serves.

### **Dishonesty and injustice**

Another word which is repeated many times is “dishonest,” “dishonesty”; the steward is said to be dishonest and thus also richness. Dishonesty is a characteristic which can corrode the being, in big things, in the great, but also in the minimum, in the small. The Greek text does not precisely use the word “dishonest,” but the “administrator or steward of injustice,” “richness of injustice,” and “unjust in the minimum,” “unjust in much.” Injustice is a bad distribution, not impartial or just, not balanced; it lacks harmony, it lacks a centre which will attract all energy, all care and intent to itself; it causes fractures, wounds, pain over pain, accumulation on one side and lack of all on the other. All of us, in some way, come into contact, with the reality of injustice, because it belongs to this world. And we feel dragged on one and other side, we lose harmony, balance and beauty; and we cannot deny it because it is like that. The Gospel precisely condemns this strong lack of harmony, which is accumulation, to keep things aside, to increase them always more, possession and it shows us the way to obtain healing, which is a gift or giving, sharing, to give with an open heart, with mercy, like the Father does with us, without getting tired, without becoming less or poor.

### **And, what is mammon?**

The word mammon appears in the whole Bible, in this chapter of Luke in (vv. 9, 11, and 13) and in Mt 6: 24. It is a Semitic term which corresponds to “riches,” “possession,” “gain,” but it becomes almost the personification of the god-money which men serve very foolishly, slaves of that “unquenchable greed, which is idolatry” (Col. 3: 5). Here everything becomes clear, it is full light. Now, I know well which is the question which I still have, after the encounter with this Word of the Lord: “I, whom do I want to serve?” The choice is only one, unique, concrete. I keep in my heart this stupendous, marvelous and sweet verb, the verb “to serve” and I ponder it, and I draw from it all the substance of truth which it contains. The words of Joshua to the people come to my mind: “If serving Yahweh seems a bad thing to you, today you must make up your minds whom you do mean to serve!” (Jos 24: 15). I know that I am unjust, that I am an unfaithful administrator, foolish, I know that I have nothing, but today I choose, with everything that I am, to serve the Lord. (cf. Ac 20: 19; I Th 1: 9; Ga 1: 10; Rm 12: 11).

## **A Moment of Prayer: Psalm 49**

### **Reflection of Wisdom on the heart which finds its riches in the presence of God**

*Rit.* Blessed are you who are poor: the kingdom of God is yours.  
Hear this, all nations, listen, all who dwell on earth, people high and low, rich and poor alike!

My lips have wisdom to utter,  
my heart good sense to whisper. I listen carefully to a proverb,  
I set my riddle to the music of the harp.

*Rit.*

Why should I be afraid in times of trouble? Malice dogs me and hems me in.  
They trust in their wealth and boast of the profusion of their riches.  
But no one can ever redeem himself or pay his own ransom to God,  
the price for himself is too high; it can never be that he will live on for ever  
and avoid the sight of the abyss.

*Rit.*

For he will see the wise also die no less than the fool and the brute,  
and leave their wealth behind for others. In prosperity people lose their good  
sense, they become no better than dumb animals.  
But my soul God will ransom from the clutches of Sheol and will snatch me up.

*Rit.*

Do not be overawed when someone gets rich, and lives in ever greater splendor;  
when he dies he will take nothing with him, his wealth will not go down with  
him.

Though he pampered himself while he lived  
- and people praise you for looking after yourself -  
he will go to join the ranks of his ancestors, who will never again see the light.

*Rit.*

“God wants a gratuitous love, that is a pure love...God fills the hearts, not the  
strongbox or coffer. What are riches good for if your heart is empty?” (St.  
Augustine).

## Closing Prayer

Lord, thank you for this time spent with you, listening to your voice which spoke  
to me with love and infinite mercy; I feel that my life is healed only when I remain  
with you, in you, when I allow you to take me. You have taken in your hands my  
greed, which renders me dry and arid, which closes me up, and makes me sad  
and leaves me alone; you have taken my insatiable avarice, which fills me with  
emptiness and pain; you have accepted and taken upon yourself my ambiguity  
and infidelity, my tired and awkward limping. Lord, I am happy when I open  
myself to you and show you all my wounds! Thank you for the balm of your Word  
and of your silence. Thank you for the breath of your Spirit, which takes away the  
bad breath of evil, of the enemy.

Lord, I have robbed, I know it, I have taken away what was not mine, I have buried  
it, I have wasted it; from now on I want to begin to return, to give back, I want to  
live my life as a gift always multiplied and shared among many. My life is a small  
thing, but in your hands it will become barrels of oil, measures of grain,  
consolation and food for my brothers and sisters.

Lord, I have no other words to say before such great and overflowing love, that  
is why I do only one thing: I open the doors of the heart and with a smile, I will  
accept all those whom you will send to me... (Ac 28: 30).

# Monday, September 22, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
guide us, as you guide creation according to your law of love.  
May we love one another and come to perfection  
in the eternal life prepared for us.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 8: 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: 'No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, it is put on a lampstand so that people may see the light when they come in. For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be made known and brought to light.

So take care how you listen; anyone who has, will be given more; anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has.'

## Reflection

Today's Gospel presents three brief phrases pronounced by Jesus. They are phrases scattered in different places which Luke collected here after the parable of the seed (Lk 8: 4-8) and of his explanation to the disciples (Lk 8: 9-15). This literary context, in which Luke places the three phrases, helps us to understand how he wants people to understand these phrases of Jesus.

- Luke 8: 16: The lamp which gives light. "No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed; no, it is put on a lampstand so that people may see the light when they come in. This phrase of Jesus is a brief parable. Jesus does not explain, because all know what he is speaking about. This belonged to everyday life. At that time, there was no electric light. Just imagine this! The family meets at home. The sun begins to set. A person gets up, lights the lamp, covers it with a vase or places it under the bed. What will the others say? All will scream out: "But are you crazy... place the lamp on the table!" In a Biblical meeting somebody made the following comment: The Word of God is a lamp which is necessary to light in the darkness of the night. If it remains closed in the Book of the Bible, it will be like the lamp under a vase. But when it is placed on the table it gives light to the whole house, when it is read in community and is connected to life.
- In the context in which Luke places this phrase, he is referring to the explanation which Jesus gave about the parable of the seeds (Lk 8: 9-15). It is as if he would say: the things which you have just heard you should not keep them only for yourselves, but you should share them with others. A Christian should not be afraid to give witness and spread the Good News. Humility is

important, but the humility which hides the gifts of God given to edify the community is false (1Cor 12: 4-26; Rom 12: 3-8).

- Luke 8: 17: That which is hidden will be manifested. “There is nothing hidden which will not be manifested, nothing secret which will not be known and brought to light.” In the context in which Luke places this second phrase of Jesus, it also refers to the teachings given by Jesus particularly to the disciples (Lk 8: 9-10). The disciples cannot keep these only for themselves, but they should diffuse them, because they form part of the Good News which Jesus has brought.
- Luke 8: 18: Attention to preconceptions. “So take care how you listen, anyone who has will be given more, anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has.” At that time, there were many preconceptions on the Messiah which prevented people from understanding, in a correct way, the Good News of the Kingdom which Jesus announced. “For this reason, this warning of Jesus concerning preconceptions is quite actual. Jesus asks the disciples to be aware of the preconceptions with which they listen to the teaching that he presents. With this phrase of Jesus, Luke is saying to the communities and to all of us: “Be attentive to the ideas with which you look at Jesus!” Because if the color of the eyes is green, everything will seem to be green. If it were blue, everything would be blue! If the idea that I have when I look at Jesus is mistaken, erroneous, everything which I receive and teach about Jesus will be threatened by error! If I think that the Messiah has to be a glorious King, I will not want to hear anything which Jesus teaches about the Cross, about suffering, persecution and about commitment, and to lose even what I thought I possessed. Joining this third phrase to the first one, I can conclude what follows: anyone who keeps for himself what he receives and does not distribute it to others, loses what he has, because it becomes corrupt.

## Personal Questions

- Have you had any experience of preconceptions which have prevented you from perceiving and appreciating in their just value, the good things that persons have?
- Have you perceived the preconceptions which are behind certain stories, accounts and parables which certain persons tell us?

## Concluding Prayer

How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of Yahweh! Blessed are those who observe his instructions, who seek him with all their hearts. (Ps 119: 1-2)

## Tuesday, September 23, 2025

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
guide us, as you guide creation according to your law of love.  
May we love one another and come to perfection  
in the eternal life prepared for us.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 8: 19-21

Jesus' mother and his brothers came looking for him, but they could not get to him because of the crowd.

He was told, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to see you.' But he said in answer, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.'

## Reflection

The Gospel today presents the episode in which the relatives of Jesus and also his Mother want to speak with him, but Jesus does not pay attention to them. Jesus had problems with his family. Sometimes the family helps one to live the Gospel and to participate in the community. Other times, the family prevents this. This is what happened to Jesus and this is what happens to us.

- Luke 8: 19-20: The family looks for Jesus. The relatives reach the house where Jesus was staying. Probably, they had come from Nazareth. From there to Capernaum the distance is about 40 kilometers. His Mother was with them. Probably, they did not enter because there were many people, but they sent somebody to tell him: "Your Mother and your brothers are outside and want to see you." According to the Gospel of Mark, the relatives do not want to see Jesus, they want to take him back home (Mk 3: 32). They thought that Jesus had lost his head (Mk 3: 21). Probably, they were afraid, because according to what history says, the Romans watched very closely all that he did, in one way or other, with the people (cf. Ac 5: 36-39). In Nazareth, up on the mountains he would have been safer than in Capernaum.
- Luke 8: 21: The response of Jesus. The reaction of Jesus is clear: "My mother and my brothers are those who listen to the Word of God and put it into practice." In Mark the reaction of Jesus is more concrete. Mark says: Looking around at those who were sitting there he said: "Look, my mother and my brothers! Anyone who does the will of God, he is my brother, sister and mother (Mk 3: 34-35). Jesus extends his family! He does not permit the family to draw him away from the mission: neither the family (Jn 7: 3-6), nor Peter (Mk 8: 33), nor the disciples (Mk 1: 36-38), nor Herod (Lk 13: 32), nor anybody else (Jn 10: 18).
- It is the Word of God which creates a new family around Jesus: "My mother and my brothers are those who listen to the Word of God and put it into practice." A good commentary on this episode is what the Gospel of John says in the Prologue: "He was in the world that had come into being through him and the world did not recognize him. He came to his own and his own people did not accept him." But to those who did accept him he gave them power to

become children of God: to those who believed in his name, who were born not from human stock or human desire, or human will, but from God himself. And the Word became flesh, he lived among us; and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1: 10-14). The family, the relatives, do not understand Jesus (Jn 7: 3-5; Mk 3: 21), they do not form part of the new family. Only those who receive the Word, that is, who believe in Jesus, form part of the new family. These are born of God and form part of God's Family.

- The situation of the family at the time of Jesus. In the time of Jesus, the political social and economic moment or the religious ideology, everything conspired in favor of weakening the central values of the clan, of the community. The concern for the problems of the family prevented persons from being united in the community. Rather, in order that the Kingdom of God could manifest itself anew, in the community life of the people, persons had to go beyond, to pass the narrow limits of the small family and open themselves to the large family, toward the Community. Jesus gives the example. When his own family tried to take hold of him, Jesus reacted and extended the family (Mk 3: 33-35). He created the Community.
- The brothers and the sisters of Jesus. The expression "brothers and sisters of Jesus" causes much polemics among Catholics and Protestants. Basing themselves on this and on other texts, the Protestants say that Jesus had more brothers and sisters, and that Mary had more sons! The Catholics say that Mary did not have other sons. What should we think about this? In the first place, both positions: that of the Catholics as well as that of the Protestants, start from the arguments drawn from the Bible and from the Traditions of their respective Churches. Because of this, it is not convenient to discuss on this question with only intellectual arguments. Because here it is a question of the convictions that they have, and which have to do with faith and sentiments. The intellectual argument alone does not succeed in changing a conviction of the heart! Rather, it irritates and draws away! And even if I do not agree with the opinion of the other person, I must respect it. In the second place, instead of discussing about texts, both we Catholics and the Protestants, we should unite to fight in defense of life, created by God, a life totally disfigured by poverty, injustice, by the lack of faith. We should recall some phrase of Jesus: "I have come so that they may have life and life in abundance" (Jn 10: 10). "So that all may be one so that the world will believe that it was you who sent me" (Jn 17: 21). "Do not prevent them! Anyone who is not against us is for us" (Mk 9: 39, 40).

## Personal Questions

- Does your family help or make it difficult for you to participate in the Christian community?
- How do you assume your commitment in the Christian community without prejudice for the family or for the community?

## Concluding Prayer

Teach me, Yahweh, the way of your will, and I will observe it.  
Give me understanding and I will observe your Law, and keep it wholeheartedly.  
(Ps 119: 33-34)

## Wednesday, September 24, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

### Opening Prayer

Father, guide us, as You guide creation according to Your law of love. May we love one another and come to perfection in the eternal life prepared for us. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel Reading - Luke 9: 1-6

Jesus summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. And as for those who do not welcome you, when you leave that town, shake the dust from your feet in testimony against them." Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the Good News and curing diseases everywhere.

### Reflection

Today's Gospel describes the mission which the twelve received from Jesus. Later, Luke speaks about the mission of the seventy-two disciples (Lk 10: 1-12). The two Gospels complete one another and reveal the mission of the Church.

- Luke 9: 1-2: The sending out of the twelve on mission. "Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal." In calling the Twelve, Jesus intensifies the announcement of the Good News. The objective of the mission is simple and clear: they received the power and authority to cast out devils, to cure the sick and to announce the Kingdom of God. Just as people were admired, astonished seeing Jesus' authority over the unclean spirits, and seeing His way of announcing the Good News (Lk 4: 32, 36), the same thing should happen with the preaching of the twelve apostles.
- Luke 9: 3-5. The instructions for the mission. Jesus sends them out with the following recommendations: "Take nothing for the journey, neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money and do not have a spare tunic." Do not go from one house to another, but "Whatever house you enter stay there; and when you leave let your departure be from there." "As for those who do not welcome you, when you leave their town shake the dust from your feet as

evidence against them.” As you will see these recommendations, which seem strange to us, have a very important significance.

- Luke 9: 6. The execution of the mission. They go. It is the beginning of a new stage. Now, not only Jesus, but the whole group goes to announce the Good News to the people. If the preaching of Jesus caused conflict, now, with the preaching of the whole group, there will be a greater conflict.
- The four fundamental points of the mission. At the time of Jesus, there were diverse movements of renewal: the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Zealots. They also were seeking a new way to live in community and they had their own missionaries (cf. Mt 23: 15). But when they went on mission, they were advised: to carry a staff, and a haversack to put in it their food. They did not trust the food which was literally not “pure.” Contrary to the other missionaries, the disciples of Jesus received diverse recommendations which help us to understand the fundamental points of the mission, to announce the Good News:

a) They should take nothing (Lk 9: 3; 10: 4). That means that Jesus obliges them to trust in the hospitality; because one who goes with nothing, goes because He trusts in the people and thinks that He will be welcomed, received. With this attitude they criticize the laws of exclusion taught by the official religion and they show, by means of a new practice, that they had other criteria in the community.

b) They should remain in the first house where they enter, until they leave the place (Lk 9: 4; 10: 7). That is, they should live together in a stable way and not go from one house to another. They should work with all and live from what they receive in exchange “because the laborer deserves his wages” (Lk 10: 7). In other words, they should participate in the life and work of the people, and the people will receive them in their community and will share with them house and food. That means that they have to trust in sharing. This explains the severity of the criticism against those who reject the message: shake off the dust from the feet, as a protest against them (Lk 10: 10-12), because they are not rejecting anything new but rather their past.

c) They should cure the sick and drive out the devils (Lk 9: 1; 10: 9; Mt 10: 8). That is, they should carry out the function of “defenders” (*goêl*) and accept in the clan, in the community, the excluded. With this attitude they criticize the situation of disintegration of community life of the clan and they indicate concrete openings. The expulsion of the devils is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God (Lk 11: 20).

d) They should eat what the people give them (Lk 10: 8). They could not live separated having their own food, but they should accept the communion with others, eat with others. That means that in the contact with the people, they should not be afraid of losing the purity as it had been taught to them. With this attitude they criticize the laws of purity which were in force and indicate, by means of the new practice, that they possess another access to purity, that is, intimacy with God.

These were the four fundamental points of community living which should characterize the attitude of the missionaries who announce the Good News in the name of Jesus: hospitality, sharing, communion and acceptance of the excluded defender, (*goêl*). If there is a response to these four requirements, then it is possible to cry out all over to the four corners of the world: "The Kingdom has arrived!" (cf. Lk 10: 1-12; 9: 1-6; Mk 6: 7-13; Mt 10: 6-16). And the Kingdom of God which Jesus has revealed to us is not a doctrine, nor a catechism, nor a law. The Kingdom of God comes and becomes present when persons, motivated by their faith in Jesus, decide to live together in community to give witness and to reveal, in this way, to all, that God is Father and Mother and that we, the human beings, are brothers and sisters. Jesus wanted the local community to be a new expression of the Covenant of the Kingdom, of the love of God the Father, who makes us all brothers and sisters.

## Personal Questions

- Has participation in the community helped you to accept and to trust persons, especially the simpler and poorer?
- Which is the point of the mission of the Apostles which for us today has greater importance? Why?

## Concluding Prayer

Lord, set me free from taunts and contempt since I observe Your instructions. Though princes sit plotting against me, Your servant keeps pondering Your will. (Ps 119: 22-23)

# Thursday, September 25, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
guide us, as you guide creation according to your law of love.

May we love one another and come to perfection  
in the eternal life prepared for us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 9: 7-9

Herod the tetrarch had heard about all that was going on; and he was puzzled, because some people were saying that John had risen from the dead, others that Elijah had reappeared, still others that one of the ancient prophets had come back to life.

But Herod said, 'John? I beheaded him. So who is this I hear such reports about?' And he was anxious to see him.

## Reflection

Today's Gospel presents a reaction from Herod listening to the preaching of Jesus. Herod does not know how to place himself before Jesus He had killed John the Baptist and now he wants to see Jesus close to him. It is always threatening.

- Luke 9: 7-8: Who is Jesus? The text begins with the exposition of the opinion of the people and of Herod on Jesus. Some associated Jesus to John the Baptist and to Elijah. Others identified him with a Prophet, that is, with a person who speaks in the name of God, who has the courage to denounce injustices of those in power and who knows how to give hope to the little ones. He is the Prophet announced in the Old Testament like a new Moses (Dt 18: 15). These are the same opinions that Jesus received from the disciples when he asked them: "Who do people say I am?" (Lk 9: 18). Persons tried to understand Jesus starting from things that they knew, thought and expected. They tried to set him against the background of the familiar criteria of the Old Testament with its prophecies and hopes, and of the Tradition of the Ancients with their laws. But these were insufficient criteria; Jesus could not enter into them, he was much bigger!
- Luke 9: 9: Herod wants to see Jesus. But Herod said: "John, I beheaded him; so who is this of whom I hear such things?" "And he was anxious to see him." Herod, a superstitious man without scruples, recognizes that he was the murderer of John the Baptist. Now, he wants to see Jesus. Luke suggests thus that the threats begin to appear on the horizon of the preaching of Jesus. Herod had no fear to kill John. He will not be afraid to kill Jesus. On the other side, Jesus does no fear Herod. When they tell him that Herod wanted to take him to kill him, he sent someone to tell him: "You may go and give that fox this message: Look, today and tomorrow I drive out devils and heal, and on the third day I attain my end." (Lk 13: 32). Herod has no power over Jesus. When at the hour of the passion, Pilate sends Jesus to be judged by Herod, Jesus does not respond anything (Lk 23: 9). Herod does not deserve a response.
- From father to son. Sometimes the three Herods, who lived during that time are confused, then the three appear in the New Testament with the same name: a) Herod, called the Great, governed over the whole of Palestine from 37 before Christ. He appears at the birth of Jesus (Mt 2: 1). He kills the newborn babies of Bethlehem (Mt 2: 16). b) Herod, called Antipas, governed in Galilee from the year 4 to 39 after Christ. He appears at the death of Jesus (Lk 23: 7). He killed John the Baptist (Mk 6: 14-29). c) Herod, called Agrippa, governed all over Palestine from the year 41 to 44 after Christ. He appears in the Acts of the Apostles (Ac 12: 1, 20). He killed the Apostle James (Ac 12: 2).
- When Jesus was about four years old, King Herod, the one who killed the newborn babies of Bethlehem died (Mt 2: 16). His territory was divided among his sons, Archelaus, would govern Judea. He was less intelligent than his father, but more violent. When he assumed the power, approximately 3000 persons were massacred on the square of the Temple! The Gospel of Matthew says that Mary and Joseph, when they learnt that Archelaus had taken over the government of Galilee, were afraid and returned on the road and went to

Nazareth, in Galilee, which was governed by another son of Herod, called Herod Antipas (Lk 3: 1). This Antipas governed over 40 years. During the thirty-three years of Jesus there was no change of government in Galilee.

- Herod, the Great, the father of Herod Antipas, had constructed the city of Caesarea Maritime, inaugurated in the year 15 before Christ. It was the new port to get out the products of the region. They had to compete with the large port of Tyron in the North and, thus, help to develop trade and business in Samaria and in Galilee. Because of this, from the time of Herod the Great, the agricultural production in Galilee began to orientate itself no longer according to the needs of the families, as before, but according to the demands of the market. This process of change in the economy continued during all the time of the government of Herod Antipas, another forty years, and found in him an efficient organizer. All these governors were 'servants of power'. In fact, the one who commanded in Palestine, from the year 63 before Christ, was Rome, the Empire.

## Personal Questions

- It is well always to ask ourselves: Who is Jesus for me?
- Herod wants to see Jesus. His was a superstitious and morbid curiosity. Others want to see Jesus because they seek a sense for their life. And I, what motivation do I have which moves me to see and encounter Jesus?

## Concluding Prayer

Each morning fill us with your faithful love, we shall sing and be happy all our days;

let our joy be as long as the time that you afflicted us, the years when we experienced disaster. (Ps 90: 14-15)

## Friday, September 26, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
guide us, as you guide creation according to your law of love.

May we love one another and come to perfection  
in the eternal life prepared for us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 9: 18-22

Now it happened that Jesus was praying alone, and his disciples came to him and he put this question to them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?'

And they answered, 'Some say John the Baptist; others Elijah; others again one of the ancient prophets come back to life.'

'But you,' he said to them, 'who do you say I am?' It was Peter who spoke up. 'The Christ of God,' he said.

But he gave them strict orders and charged them not to say this to anyone. He said, 'The Son of man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.'

## Reflection

The Gospel today follows the same theme as that of Yesterday: the opinion of the people on Jesus. Yesterday, beginning with Herod, today it is Jesus who asks what do people think, the public opinion and the Apostles respond giving the same opinion which was given yesterday. Immediately follows the first announcement of the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

- Luke 9: 18: The question of Jesus after his prayer. "One day, while Jesus was praying alone, his disciples came to him and he put this question to them: "Who do the crowds say I am?" In Luke's Gospel, on several important and decisive occasions, Jesus is presented in prayer: in his Baptism when he assumes his mission (Lk 3: 21); in the 40 days in the desert, when, he overcame the temptations presented by the devil Lk 4: 1-13); the night before choosing the twelve apostles (Lk 6: 12); in the Transfiguration, when, with Moses and Elijah he spoke about his passion in Jerusalem (Lc 9: 29); in the Garden when he suffers his agony (Lk 22: 39-46); on the Cross, when he asks pardon for the soldier (Lk 23: 34) and when he commits his spirit to God (Lk 23: 46).
- Luke 9: 19: The opinion of the people on Jesus. "They answered: "For some John the Baptist; others Elijah, but others think that you are one of the ancient prophets who has risen from the dead." Like Herod, many thought that John the Baptist had risen in Jesus. It was a common belief that the prophet Elijah had to return (Mt 17: 10-13; Mk 9: 11-12; Ml 3: 23-24; Eclo 48: 10). And all nourished the hope of the coming of the Prophet promised by Moses (Dt 18: 15). This was an insufficient response.
- Luke 9: 20: The question of Jesus to the disciples. After having heard the opinion of others, Jesus asks: "And you, who do you say I am?" Peter answers: "The Messiah of God!" Peter recognizes that Jesus is the one whom the people are waiting for and that he comes to fulfil the promise. Luke omits the reaction of Peter who tries to dissuade Jesus to follow the way of the cross and omits also the harsh criticism of Jesus to Peter (Mk 8: 32-33; Mt 16: 22-23).
- Luke 9: 21: The prohibition to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah of God. "Then Jesus gave them strict orders and charged them not to say this to anyone." It was forbidden to them to reveal to the people that Jesus is the Messiah of God. Why does Jesus prohibit this? At that time, as we have already seen, everybody was expecting the coming of the Messiah, but each one in his own way: some expected a king, others a priest, others a doctor, a warrior, a judge or a prophet! Nobody seemed to expect the Messiah Servant, announced by Isaiah (Is 42: 1-9). Anyone who insists in maintaining Peter's idea, that is, of a

glorious Messiah, without the cross, understands nothing and will never be able to assume the attitude of a true disciple. He will continue to be blind, exchanging people for trees (cf. Mk 8: 24). Because without the cross it is impossible to understand who Jesus is and what it means to follow Jesus. Because of this, Jesus insists again on the Cross and makes the second announcement of his passion, death and resurrection.

- Luke 9: 22: The second announcement of the Passion. And Jesus adds: “The Son of Man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and Scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.” The full understanding of the following of Jesus is not obtained through theoretical instruction, but through practical commitment, walking together with him along the road of service, from Galilee up to Jerusalem. The road of the following is the road of the gift of self, of abandonment, of service, of availability, of acceptance of conflict, knowing that there will be a resurrection. The cross is not an accident on the way; it forms part of our way. This because in the organized world starting from egoism, love and service can exist only if they are crucified! Anyone who makes of his life a service to others disturbs those who live attached to privileges, and suffers.

## Personal Questions

- We all believe in Jesus. But there are some who understand him in one way and others in another way. Today, which is the more common Jesus in the way of thinking of people?
- How does propaganda interfere in my way of seeing Jesus? What do I do so as not to allow myself to be drawn by the propaganda? What prevents us today from recognizing and assuming the project of Jesus?

## Concluding Prayer

Blessed be Yahweh, my rock,  
who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle, my faithful love, my  
bastion, my citadel, my Savior; I shelter behind him. (Ps 144: 1-2)

## Saturday, September 27, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
guide us, as you guide creation according to your law of love.  
May we love one another and come to perfection  
in the eternal life prepared for us.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 9: 43b-45

Everyone was awestruck by the greatness of God. But while everyone was full of admiration for all he did, he said to his disciples, 'For your part, you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.'

But they did not understand what he said; it was hidden from them so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

## Reflection

The Gospel today presents the second announcement of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The disciples do not understand the words about the cross, because they are neither capable to understand a Messiah who becomes the servant of his brothers. They continue to dream about a glorious Messiah.

- Luke 9: 43b-44: The contrast. "Everyone was full of admiration for all he did." Jesus said to his disciples "For your part you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the power of men." The contrast is very big. On one side, the vibration and admiration of the people for everything that Jesus said and did. Jesus seems to correspond to all that people dream, believe and expect. On the other side, the affirmation of Jesus that he will be put to death and delivered in the hands of men, that is, the opinion of the authority on Jesus is totally contrary to the opinion of the people.
- Luke 9: 45: The announcement of the Cross. "But they did not understand what he said; for them it was so mysterious, that they did not understand the sense and were afraid to ask questions concerning this argument." The disciples listened to him but they did not understand the words about the cross. But even in this way, they do not ask for any clarification. They are afraid to show their ignorance!
- The title Son of Man. This name appears quite frequently in the Gospels: 12 times in John, 13 in Mark, 28 in Luke, 30 in Matthew. In all, it appears 83 times in the four Gospels. This is the name which pleased Jesus the most. This title comes from the Old Testament. In the Book of Ezekiel, is indicated the very human condition of the prophet (Ez 3: 1, 4, 10, 17; 4: 1 etc.). In the Book of Daniel, the same title appears in the apocalyptic vision (Dn 7: 1-28), in which Daniel describes the empires of the Babylonians, of the Medes, of the Persians and of the Greeks. In the vision of the prophet, these four empires have the appearance of "monstrous animals" (cf. Dn 7: 3-8). They are animal empires which are brutal, inhuman, which persecute, dehumanize and kill (Dn 7: 21, 25). In the vision of the prophet, after the anti-human kingdoms, the Kingdom of God appears which has the appearance, not of an animal, but rather of a human person, Son of Man. That is, a Kingdom with the appearance of people, a human kingdom, which promotes life, it humanizes (Dn 7: 13-14). In the prophecy of Daniel the Son of Man represents, not an individual, but rather, as he himself says, the "people of the Saints of the Most High" (Dn 7: 27; cf. Dn 7: 18). It is the People of God who do not allow themselves to be dehumanized

nor deceived or manipulated by the dominating ideology of the animal empires. The Mission of the Son of Man, that is, of the People of God, consists in realizing the Kingdom of God like a human kingdom. That is, a Kingdom which promotes life, which humanizes persons.

- Presenting himself as Son of Man to the disciples, Jesus makes his own this mission which is the mission of all the People of God. It is as if he would say to them and to all of us: “Come with me! This mission is not only mine, but it belongs to all of us! Let us go together to carry out the mission which God has entrusted to us, and thus realize the human and humanizing Kingdom which he dreamt!” And he did this during all his life, especially during the last three years. Pope Leo the Great said: “Jesus was so human, but so human, like only God can be human.” The more human he was, the more divine he was. The more he is “Son of Man” the more he is “Son of God!” Everything which dehumanizes persons draws away from God. That was condemned by God, who has placed the good of the human person above all the laws, above the Sabbath or Saturday (Mk 2: 27). At the moment when he was condemned to death by the religious tribunal of the Synedrium, Jesus assumes this title. When he was asked if he was “the Son of God” (Mk 14: 61), he answered that he is the “Son of Man”: “I am. And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty” (Mk 14: 62). Because of this affirmation he was declared, by the authority, guilty deserving death. He himself knew it because he had said: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10: 45).

## Personal Questions

- How do you combine in your life, suffering and faith in God?
- In the time of Jesus there was contrast: people thought and expected or hoped in a certain way; the religious authority thought and expected or hoped in a different way. Today, this same contrast exists.

## Concluding Prayer

Forever, Yahweh,  
your word is planted firm in heaven. Your constancy endures from age to age;  
you established the earth and it stands firm. (Ps 119: 89-90)

## Sunday, September 28, 2025

*Twenty-sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, send your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that you read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, you helped them to discover the presence of God in

the disturbing events of your sentence and death. Thus, the cross that seemed to be the end of all hope became for them the source of life and of resurrection. Create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples from Emmaus, may experience the force of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace. We ask this of you, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed to us the Father and sent us your Spirit. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 16: 19-31

### **A Key to the Reading:**

In this 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Liturgy places before us the parable of the poor Lazarus, sitting before the door of the rich man. This parable is a faithful mirror, in which is mirrored not only the situation of the society at the time of Jesus, but also our society of the XXI century. The parable is a strong and radical denunciation of this situation because it clearly indicates that God thinks contrary to that. In the parable there are three persons: the poor man, the rich man and Father Abraham. The poor man has a name but does not speak. He hardly exists. His only friends are the little dogs which lick his wounds. The rich man does not have a name but speaks always and insists. He wants to be right, but he does not succeed. Father Abraham is the father of both of them, and loves both, and he calls the rich man who is in hell, but he does not succeed in obtaining that the rich man changes opinion and converts himself. During the reading try to be very attentive to the conversation of the rich man with Father Abraham, to the arguments of the rich man and to the arguments of Father Abraham.

### **A Division of the Text to Help in the Reading:**

- Luke 16: 19-21: The situation of both in this life
- Luke 16: 22: The situation of both in the other life
- Luke 16: 23-26: The first conversation between the rich man and Abraham
- Luke 16: 27-29: The second conversation between the rich man and Abraham
- Luke 16: 30-31: The third conversation between the rich man and Abraham

### **Text:**

19 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. 20 And at his gate there used to lie a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to fill himself with what fell from the rich man's table. Even dogs came and licked his sores. 22 Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into Abraham's embrace. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his embrace. 24 So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames." 25 Abraham said, "My son, remember that during your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. 26

But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to prevent those who want to cross from our side to yours or from your side to ours." 27 'So he said, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too." 29 Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them." 30 The rich man replied, "Ah no, father Abraham, but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." 31 Then Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead."

## A Moment of Prayerful Silence

*so that the Word of God may penetrate and enlighten our life.*

## Some Questions

*to help us in our personal reflection.*

- Which point of the text pleased you most and what struck you most? Why?
- Compare the situation of the poor man and of the rich man before and after death. Which is their situation before death? What changes in the situation of the poor man and of the rich man after death?
- What separates the poor man from the rich man before death? What separates the rich man from the poor man after death?
- In the conversation between the rich man and Father Abraham, what does the rich man ask and what is the response of Abraham?
- In this parable, the situation changes only after death. Would it be that Jesus wants to tell us that during life the poor have to bear everything in order to be able then, to merit Heaven? What do you think?
- There are some persons who, like the rich man of the parable, expect miracles in order to be able to believe in God. But God asks to believe in Moses and in the Prophets. And I, toward which side does my heart tend: toward the miracle or toward the Word of God?
- How do I treat the poor? For me, do they have a name?

## To Deepen the Theme

### **Context:**

In the Gospel of Luke, from Chapter 9 (Lk 9: 51), we are accompanying Jesus on his journey toward Jerusalem. Here in chapters 15 and 16, as to say, we reach the summit, the center of the journey, from where it is possible to see the road that has already been covered and that which still has to be covered. Or, that is, that on the summit of the hill, or in the center of the Gospel, we perceive with greater clarity the two principal themes which go through the Gospel of Luke, from one end to the other. In chapter 15, the parable of the father with his two sons reveals to us the tenderness and the mercy of God who accepts all. Now

chapter 16 presents to us the parable of the poor Lazarus to reveal the attitude that we should have before the problem of poverty and of social injustice. Every time that Jesus has something important to communicate, he narrates or tells a parable, he creates a story which mirrors the reality of the people. Thus, during the reflection on visible reality, he leads those who listen to discover the invisible appeals of God, present in life. A parable is made to make people think and reflect. This is why it is important to be attentive even to small details. In the parable on which we are meditating, there are three persons. Lazarus, the poor man, the only one who does not speak. The rich man without a name, who speaks to ask. Father Abraham, who, in the parable, represents the thought of God- The rich man without a name represents the dominating ideology of the government of the time. Lazarus represents the excruciating cry of the poor at the time of Jesus, of the time of Luke and of all times.

### **Commentary on the Text:**

- Luke 16: 19-21 - The situation of the rich man and of the poor man.

Here we have the two extremes of society. On the one hand, the aggressive richness. On the other the poor without any resources, without any rights, covered with ulcers and wounds, impure, with nobody to accept him to receive him, except the little dogs which lick his wounds. What separates both of them is only a door: the closed door of the house of the rich man. On his part there is no acceptance, no pity for the problem of the poor man who is before his door. But in the parable, the poor man has a name, while the rich man does not. The name of the poor man is Lazarus, which means God helps.

Through the poor God helps the rich and the rich man could have his name written in the Book of Life. But the rich man does not accept to be helped by the poor man, because he continues to keep the door closed. This beginning of the parable which describes the situation, is a faithful mirror of what happens in the time of Jesus and of Luke. and it is also the mirror of what happens today!

- Luke 16: 22 - The change revealed by the truth which was hidden

“Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into Abraham’s embrace. The rich man also died and was buried.” In the parable, the poor man dies before the rich man. This is a warning for the rich. Up to the time when the poor man was before the door, alive, it is still possible for the rich man to be saved. But after the poor man dies, the only instrument of salvation for the rich man, also dies. Today, millions of poor people die, victims of the geopolitics of the rich countries.

The poor man dies and is carried away by the angels into Abraham’s embrace. The embrace of Abraham is the source of life, from where is born the People of God. Lazarus, the poor man, belongs to the People of God, forms part of the People of Abraham , from which he is excluded because he was at the door of the rich man. The rich man who thinks that he is a son of Abraham, he also dies and is buried. But he does not go toward the embrace of Abraham, because he is not a son of Abraham!

The introduction of the parable ends here. Now begins the revelation of its meaning, through three conversations between the rich man and Father Abraham.

- Luke 16: 23-26 - The first conversation between the rich man without a name and Father Abraham

The parable is like a window which Jesus opens for us on the other side of life, the side of God. It is not a question of Heaven. It is a question of the true side of life discovered only by faith and that the rich man, without faith does not perceive. The dominating ideology prevents him from discovering it. And it is only in the light of death that the ideology disintegrates itself in the mind of the rich man, and that the true value of life appears to him. On God's part, without the ideology and the deceiving propaganda of the government, their licks will be changed: The rich man suffers, the poor man is happy. The rich man, in seeing Lazarus in Abraham's embrace asks that Lazarus gives some relief to his suffering. In the light of death, the rich man discovers that Lazarus is his only possible benefactor. But now it is too late! The rich man without a name is a Jew (or Christian) "pious," knows Abraham and calls him Father. Abraham responds and calls him son. That means that, in reality, this word of Abraham is addressed to the rich who are alive. In so far as being alive, they also have the possibility of becoming sons of Abraham, if they open the door to Lazarus, to the poor man, to the only one who in God's name can help them. For the rich man, closed up in his suffering, salvation consisted in a drop of water which Lazarus could give him. In reality, for the rich man, salvation does not consist in that Lazarus gives him a drop of water to refresh his tongue, but rather, that he himself, the rich man, opens the closed door of his house and enters into contact with the poor man. It is only in this way that it will be possible to overcome the great abyss which separates him.

In Abraham's response, the truth of the four curses appears before the rich man: (Lk 6: 24-26). But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now. Alas for you who have plenty to eat now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who are laughing now: you shall mourn and weep. 'Alas for you when everyone speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.

- Luke 16: 27-29: The second conversation between the rich man and Abraham

The rich man insists: "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers!" The rich man does not want his brothers to suffer the same torment. "Send Lazarus!" Lazarus, the poor man, is the only true intermediary between God and the rich. But the rich man, during his life was not concerned for the poor Lazarus. He is concerned about himself and of his brothers. He was never concerned about the poor! It is like the older son of the "Parable of the Father with two sons" (Lk 15: 25-30). The older one wanted to have a feast with his friends, and not with his brother who had been lost. Abraham's response is clear: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them!" They have the Bible! The rich man had the Bible. He knew it even by heart. But he never became aware that the Bible had something to do with the poor who were at his door. The key to understand

the sense of the Bible and of salvation is the poor Lazarus, sitting at the door of the rich man!

### **Extending the information:**

Because of the unjust social context at the time of Jesus:

In the year 64 B.C. the Romans invaded Palestine and imposed upon the people a very heavy tax. The scholars estimate that more or less half of the family income was destined to pay the taxes, the taxes of the Roman Government. Besides, Rome made a geopolitical reorganization in the region. Before the Roman invasion, the whole region, from Tyre to Sidon up to the frontier with Egypt, was governed by the Asmonei, the prolongation of the Maccabees. After the invasion, only three regions remained under the government of the Jews: Judea, Pereira and Galilee. In order to be able to maintain the control on dominated peoples with a minimum of sacrifice and at their own expense, the Romans were the Saducees, the elders, some publicans and part of the priests. Thus, all this change brought about by the Roman invasion caused almost all the Jews who were living in the other territories of that region to migrate toward Judea and Galilee. The consequence of this: the population was doubled in Judea and in Galilee and the family income diminished by half. The result: on the one hand, progressive impoverishment, unemployment, begging, extreme poverty. On the other, exaggerated enrichment of the local population, supported by the Romans. The faithful picture of this situation is expressed in the parable of the poor Lazarus and of the rich man who had no pity.

### **Final Reflection around the parable**

The rich man who has everything and who closes himself up in himself, loses God, loses the richness, loses life, loses himself, loses his name, loses everything. The poor man who has nothing, has God, gains life, has a name, gains everything. The poor man is Lazarus, he is "God helps." God comes to us in the person of the poor man sitting at our door, to help us overcome the insurmountable abyss created by the rich who have no heart. Lazarus is also Jesus, the poor Messiah and servant, who was not accepted, but whose death radically changed all things. And in the light of the death of the poor man, everything changes. The place of torment is the situation of the persons without God. Even if the rich man thinks that he has a religion and faith, he does not know how to be with God because he does not open the door to the poor man, as Zacchaeus did (Lk 19: 1-10).

## Prayer of a Psalm

### **Psalm 15 (14): Yahweh, who can find a home in your tent?**

Yahweh, who can find a home in your tent, who can dwell on your holy mountain?

Whoever lives blamelessly, who acts uprightly,  
who speaks the truth from the heart, who keeps the tongue under control, who does not wrong a comrade,  
who casts no discredit on a neighbor, who looks with scorn on the vile,

but honours those who fear Yahweh, who stands by an oath at any cost, who asks no interest on loans, who takes no bribe to harm the innocent. No one who so acts can ever be shaken.

## Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice that which your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, your mother, not only listen to but also practice the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

## Monday, September 29, 2025

*Feast of Sts Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, archangels*

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
you show your almighty power in your mercy and forgiveness.  
Continue to fill us with your gifts of love.  
Help us to hurry towards the eternal life your promise and come to share in the joys of your kingdom.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - John 1: 47-51

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.'  
Nathanael asked, 'How do you know me?' Jesus replied, 'Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree.'  
Nathanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.'  
Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see greater things than that.' And then he added, 'In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.'

## Reflection

Today's Gospel presents the dialogue between Jesus and Nathanael in which the following phrase appears: "In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man." This phrase helps to clarify something concerning the archangels.

- John 1: 47-49: The conversation between Jesus and Nathanael.

Philip took Nathanael to Jesus (Jn 1: 45-46). Nathanael had exclaimed: "Can

anything good come from Nazareth?” Nathanael was from Cana, which was close to Nazareth. Seeing Nathanael, Jesus said: “There, truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deception!” And he affirms that he knew him already when he was under the fig tree. How could Nathanael be an “authentic Israelite,” if he did not accept Jesus as Messiah? Nathanael “was under the fig tree.” The fig tree was the symbol of Israel (cf. Mq 4: 4; Zc 3: 10; 1K 5: 5). “To be under the fig tree” was the same as being faithful to the project of the God of Israel. The authentic Israelite is the one who knows how to detach himself from his own ideas when he perceives that these are not in agreement with God’s project. The Israelite who is not ready to converse is neither authentic nor honest. Nathanael is authentic. He expected the Messiah according to the official teaching of that time, according to which the Messiah came from Bethlehem in Judea. The Messiah could not come from Nazareth in Galilee (Jn 7: 41-42, 52). This is why Nathanael resists himself to accept Jesus as Messiah. But the encounter with Jesus helps him to become aware that God’s project is not always as persons imagine it or desire that it be. Nathanael recognizes his own deception, he changes idea, accepts Jesus as Messiah and confesses: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!”

- The diversity of the call.

The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke present the call of the first disciples in quite a brief way: Jesus walks along the seashore, and he calls Peter and Andrew. Then he calls John and James (Mk 1: 16-20). The Gospel of John has a different way of describing the beginning of the first community which was formed around Jesus. John does it by narrating very concrete stories. One is struck by the variety of the calls and of the encounters of persons among themselves and with Jesus. Thus, John teaches what is necessary to do to begin a community. It is by means of contacts and personal invitations, and it is like that even today! Jesus calls some directly (Jn 1: 43). Others indirectly (Jn 1: 41-42). One day he called two disciples of John the Baptist (Jn 1: 39). The following day he called Philip who, in turn, called Nathanael (Jn 1: 45). No call is repeated because every person is diverse. People will never forget the important calls which have marked their life. One even remembers the hour and the day (Jn 1: 39).

- John 1: 50-51: The angels of God who descend and ascend on the Son of Man.

The confession of Nathanael is only at the beginning. Anyone who is faithful, will see heaven open and the angels who go up and descend on the Son of Man. They will experience that Jesus is the new bond of union between God and us, human beings. It is the realization of the dream of Jacob (Gn 28: 10-22).

- The angels who go up and descend the ladder.

The three Archangels: Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael. Gabriel explained to Prophet Daniel the meaning of the vision (Dn 8: 16; 9: 21). The angel Gabriel also took God’s message to Elizabeth (Lk 1: 19) and to Mary, the Mother of Jesus (Lk 1: 26). His name means “God is strong.” Raphael appears in the Book of Tobit. He accompanies Tobias, the son of Tobit and of Anna, throughout the

trip and protects him from all danger. He helps Tobias to liberate Sara from the evil spirit and to cure Tobit, his father, from his blindness. His name means "God heals." Michael helped the Prophet Daniel in his struggles and difficulties (Dn 10: 13, 21; 12: 1). The letter of Jude says that Michael disputed with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 1: 9). It was Michael who obtained victory over Satan, throwing him out of Heaven and throwing him into hell (RV 12: 7). His name means: "Who is like God!" The word 'angel' means messenger. He takes a message from God. In the Bible, the entire nature could be the messenger of God himself, when it turns its face on us and reveals God's love for us (Ps 104: 4). The angel can be God himself, when he turns his face on us and reveals his loving presence to us.

## Personal Questions

- Have you already had some encounter which has marked your whole life? How have you discovered there the call of God?
- Have you been interested, sometimes, like Philip, to call another person to participate in the community?

## Concluding Prayer

I thank you, Yahweh, with all my heart, for you have listened to the cry I uttered.  
In the presence of angels I sing to you,  
I bow down before your holy Temple. (Ps 138: 1-2)

## Tuesday, September 30, 2025

*Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Father,  
you show your almighty power in your mercy and forgiveness.  
Continue to fill us with your gifts of love.  
Help us to hurry towards the eternal life your promise and come to share in the joys of your kingdom.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 9: 51-56

It happened that as the time drew near for him to be taken up, he resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out, and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem.

Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?' But he turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village.

## Reflection

The Gospel today narrates and tells us how Jesus decides to go to Jerusalem. It also describes the first difficulties which he finds along this road. He presents us the beginning of the long and hard way of the periphery toward the capital city. Jesus leaves Galilee and goes toward Jerusalem. Not all can understand him. Many abandon him, because the demands are enormous. Today, the same thing happens. Along the way of our community there are misunderstandings and abandonment.

- "Jesus decides to go to Jerusalem."

This decision marks the hard and long way of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, from the periphery to the capital city. This journey occupies more than one third part of the Gospel of Luke (Lk 9: 51 to 19: 28). This is a sign that the voyage to Jerusalem was of great importance in the life of Jesus. The long walk is the symbol, at the same time, of the journey that the community is making. They seek to go through a difficult passage from the Jewish world toward the world of the Greek culture. This also symbolized the tension between the New and the Ancient which was closing more and more in itself. It also symbolizes the conversion which each one of us has to carry out, trying to follow Jesus. During the journey, the disciples try to follow Jesus, without returning; but they do not always succeed. Jesus dedicates much time to instruct those who follow him closely. We have a concrete example of this instruction in today's Gospel. At the beginning of the journey, Jesus leaves Galilee and takes with him the disciples to the territory of the Samaritans. He tries to form them in order that they may be ready to understand the openness to the New, toward the other, toward what is different.

- Luke 9: 51: *Jesus decides to go to Jerusalem.*

The Greek text says literally: "Now it happened that as the time drew near for him to be taken up, he resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem." The expression assumption or being snatched recalls the Prophet Elijah snatched to heaven (2 K 2: 9-11). The expression turned his face recalls the Servant of Yahweh who said: "I have set my face like flint and I know I shall not be put to shame" (Is 50: 7). It also recalls an order which the Prophet Ezekiel received from God: "Turn your face toward Jerusalem!" (Ez 21: 7). In using these expressions Luke suggests that while they were walking toward Jerusalem, the most open opposition of Jesus began against the project of the official ideology of the Temple of Jerusalem. The ideology of the Temple wanted a glorious and nationalistic Messiah. Jesus wants to be a Messiah Servant. During the long journey, this opposition will increase and finally, it will end in the getting hold of Jesus. The snatching of Jesus is his death on the Cross, followed by his Resurrection.

- Luke 9: 52-53: *The mission in Samaria failed.*

During the journey, the horizon of the mission is extended. After the beginning, Jesus goes beyond the frontiers of the territory and of the race. He sends his disciples to go and prepare his arrival in a town of Samaria. But the mission together with the Samaritans fails. Luke says that the Samaritans did not receive Jesus because he was going to Jerusalem. But if the disciples would have said to the Samaritans: "Jesus is going to Jerusalem to criticize the project of the Temple and to demand a greater openness," Jesus would have been accepted, because the Samaritans were of the same opinion. The failure of the mission is, probably, due to the disciples. They did not understand why Jesus "turned the face toward Jerusalem." The official propaganda of the glorious and nationalistic Messiah prevented them from perceiving... The disciples did not understand the openness of Jesus and the mission failed!

- Luke 9: 54-55: *Jesus does not accept the request of vengeance.* James and John do not want to take home the defeat. They do not accept that someone is not in agreement with their ideas. They want to imitate Elijah and use fire to revenge (2 K 1: 10). Jesus rejects the proposal. He does not want the fire. Some Bibles add: "You do not know what spirit is moving you!" This means that the reaction of the disciples was not according to the Spirit of Jesus. When Peter suggests to Jesus not to follow the path of the Messiah Servant, Jesus turns to Peter calling him Satan (Mk 8: 33). Satan is the evil spirit who wants to change the course or route of the mission of Jesus. The Message of Luke for the communities: those who want to hinder the mission among the pagans are moved by the evil spirit!
- In the ten chapters which describe the journey up to Jerusalem (Lk 9: 51 to 19: 28), Luke constantly reminds us that Jesus is on the way toward Jerusalem (Lk 9: 51, 53, 57; 10: 1, 38; 11: 1; 13: 22, 33; 14: 25; 17: 11; 18: 31; 18: 37; 19: 1, 11, 28). He rarely says through where Jesus passed. Only at the beginning of the journey (Lk 9: 51), in the middle (Lk 17: 11), and at the end (Lk 18: 35; 19: 1), something is known concerning the place where Jesus was going by. This refers to the communities of Luke and also for all of us. The only thing that is sure is that we have to continue to walk. We cannot stop. But it is not always clear and definite the place where we have to pass by. What is sure, certain, is the objective: Jerusalem.

## Personal Questions

- Which are the problems which you have to face in your life, because of the decision which you have taken to follow Jesus?
- What can we learn from the pedagogy of Jesus with his disciples who wanted to revenge of the Samaritans?

## Concluding Prayer

All the kings of the earth give thanks to you, Yahweh, when they hear the promises you make; they sing of Yahweh's ways,  
'Great is the glory of Yahweh!' (Ps 138: 4-5)