

# Read

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Psalm 90:3-4, 5-6,  
12-13, 14, 17

Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

Luke 12:13-21

## LIVING THE WORD

### Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 3, 2025



#### REFLECTION

It can be tempting to think that if we have a lot of possessions, we don't really need God. The man in this week's parable did exactly that. He hoarded his possessions and only thought of getting more when he suddenly died. At that point, his possessions did nothing for him.

Our culture keeps telling us to get more. It says that we need the latest technology or the newest clothes to have value and worth. Never mind that these things and notions perpetuate larger social issues, like unfair working conditions, social inequality, and unnecessary waste.

Instead of focusing on what we want or "must have," Jesus invites us into a more meaningful life where our possessions do not define us. Rather than investing in things, we can spend that time and energy in giving ourselves to what matters. We can give our hearts more fully to our relationships. Rather than being greedy, we can become less attached and more generous. Lastly, we can spend our lives working towards justice and peace for all people.

The rich man became truly poor in the end. His possessions were empty. Let us become rich in God and his kingdom through love, justice, and service.



#### ACTION

Look through your closet and assess your clothing. Choose to give away the clothes you don't need and donate the ones in good condition to a clothing bank that serves those in need. As you select different articles of clothing, allow each item to be symbolic of something else you want to let go of in your heart. For instance, a piece of clothing could represent a grudge you have held on to or a particular habit you want to change. Give those negative habits or emotions to God. Then pray that each item might serve the material needs of others and that they may be blessed to know the peace of Christ.



"Lay It All Down"

—WILDER

<https://youtu.be/13UEJJ5CHPE>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Are you too attached to your material possessions?
- ❖ How can you give more of yourself to God?

# Read

Wisdom 18:6-9

Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-19,  
20-22

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19 or  
11:1-2, 8-12

Luke 12:32-48 or 12:35-40

## LIVING THE WORD

### Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 10, 2025

#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel encourages us to be ready for Christ's return, but what does it mean to be ready? The two parables that Jesus tells illustrate for us the ways our actions demonstrate our preparedness. We are reminded that we hold this world in trust, like servants in charge of the owner's household. In the end, we will each be held responsible for how we've cared for the people, places, and influence God has entrusted us with.

So what does it mean to be a good steward of God's gifts? What is our responsibility to God and God's creation? The disciples were told that their treasure was in heaven; what they have on earth they are to give for the care of others. Taken together with the two parables about stewardship, this instruction illustrates God's priorities: we are called to use the material things we have to care for the people around us, recognizing that other people are the greatest treasure—and greatest responsibility—that God has entrusted to us.

#### ACTION

Make a plan to use your gifts to serve someone else this week. If you excel at school, perhaps you can help another student who is struggling to keep up. If you are physically fit, you might offer to do some chores for an elderly or disabled neighbor. If you're not sure what you have to offer, try asking friends or family what they think your gifts are and how you can share them to help others!



"Do Something"

—Matthew West

[https://youtu.be/b\\_RjndG0IX8](https://youtu.be/b_RjndG0IX8)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What does your life say about what you value?
- ❖ How can you use the good things in your life to serve others?

# Read

Revelation 11:19a;  
12:1–6a, 10ab

Psalms 45:10, 11, 12, 16  
(10bc)

1 Corinthians 15:20–27

Luke 1:39–56

## LIVING THE WORD

# Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15, 2025



## REFLECTION

As Mary greets her cousin Elizabeth in today's Gospel, the unborn John the Baptist leaps in Elizabeth's womb, and she is filled with the Holy Spirit. The two women, who have come together for mutual support, experience a beautiful moment of recognition of God's work in their lives and shared joy in their unique callings.

Mary responds with a song now known as the Magnificat, expressing her joy at the fulfillment of God's promises. This song of praise contains themes of social justice, humility, and God's enduring faithfulness. Mary's joyful expectation stems from her trust in God and her own participation in God's plan for the redemption and transformation of the world.

The meeting of Mary and Elizabeth encourages us to reflect on the importance of a supportive community and shared joy in our journey of faith. It underscores the beauty of celebrating each other's unique callings, finding strength in shared purpose, and rejoicing in the fulfillment of God's promises.

As we navigate our own paths, may we seek out and provide to others the kind of mutual support exemplified by Mary and Elizabeth.



## ACTION

Mary and Elizabeth are able to support and celebrate each other during a pivotal moment in their lives. To foster this kind of fellowship in your life, ask a friend or family member to be your prayer partner for the next week. Check in daily to share your joys and sorrows and to pray for one another, asking for God's intercession in one another's personal struggles and offering thanksgiving for one another's blessings.



Do an image search for "the visitation, Mary meets Elizabeth." Reflect on your favorite image during your prayer time this week.



## QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Why is it important to have someone walk with you in your journey of faith?
- ❖ Reread Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55). How can we make her prayer our own?

# Read

Jeremiah 38:4–6, 8–10

Psalm 40:2, 3, 4, 18

Hebrews 12:1–4

Luke 12:49–53

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 17, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel might surprise us. Jesus speaks of setting the world on fire, then warns his followers that he will bring division, with family members set against one another. How do we reconcile that promised division with Christ's mission of love?

Fire does many things; it sheds light, it gives warmth, it can burn off impurities, it can destroy things. We know that Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12) and today's reading reminds us that it is never easy when dark things are brought to light. God's truth that we are called to seek can, like a fire, reveal hidden sins and challenge us to greater integrity and healing by removing what is not holy. His truth can also be divisive; by revealing hidden tensions and unhealed wounds some may feel the pain of division more than others. Jesus acknowledges the challenging nature of truth—embracing it may bring unity or division.

As we reflect on Luke 12:49, we confront the tension in truth, recognizing its potential to unite those who seek it and divide those who resist or reject it. The light of Christ may bring unity to those who seek it, but it can also bring division to those who resist or reject it. As Christians, we are called to navigate the divisive nature of truth with humility, grace, and a steadfast commitment to the transformative power of the fire of Christ's love.



#### ACTION

We all like to think of ourselves as brave truth-tellers, but we all have truths we resist hearing because they make us uncomfortable or challenge us to change. This week, identify and journal about one area or relationship in your life where you have resisted seeing it in the light of God's truth. How can you become more open to the fire of God's love in this area of your life?



"Speak Life"

—TobyMac

<https://youtu.be/7rK6O0YtBRY>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ When has the truth brought unity or division to your own community or relationships?
- ❖ How can we speak truth with love, even when it is difficult?

# Read

Isaiah 66:18–21

Psalm 117:1, 2

Hebrews 12:5–7, 11–13

Luke 13:22–30

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 24, 2025



#### REFLECTION

In today's Gospel, Jesus paints a challenging picture of discipleship—one that goes against societal norms and worldly standards. Following him, he asserts, won't be easy. It's not about seeking recognition, associating with the right people, or conforming to societal standards for success.

The notion that some who are first will be last introduces a paradigm shift. Notice that Jesus says "some" and not "all"! He isn't talking about simply flipping the existing order; he's warning us that God judges by an entirely different set of standards than the world. We are challenged to reconsider who we may exclude based on appearances or worldly judgments. The people we overlook or disregard might be the very ones included in God's kingdom.

In a world that is obsessed with appearances and performance, Jesus redirects our focus. The world might care about who we know and how we look, but God cares about inner transformation. Jesus invites us to embrace a different standard—one rooted in authenticity of the heart.



#### ACTION

Practice humility this week by finding ways to lift up other people, especially those who are often overlooked. This could include family members, neighbors, classmates, or anyone you encounter in your daily life. You might boost the ideas or contributions of a humble classmate, spend extra time with a shy friend, and give credit and thanks for the help you receive from a teacher, family member, or coach.



Read the blog post, "The Little Way of St. Therese of Lisieux," for inspiration to practice humility this week. <https://ltp.org/s/little>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Reflect on a time when you may have judged or excluded someone based on appearances. What can you learn from that experience in light of today's Gospel?
- ❖ How is Jesus' "narrow way" different from the way of the world?



# Read

Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29

Psalm 68:4-5, 6-7,  
10-11

Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a

Luke 14:1, 7-14

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 31, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel presents a call to humility accompanied by an exhortation to become more generous and less self-seeking. After telling a parable warning guests against entitlement and arrogance, Jesus turns and gives his host advice on how to grow in charity. Instead of inviting guests based on what they can do for him, Jesus suggests that the host should invite those who have nothing to offer in return.

These teachings prompt us to take a step back from the games that surround social status—"How will [fill in the blank] help me get ahead"—to ask instead, "What can I do for others?" This shift from self-centeredness to other-centeredness is essential to grow in humility and genuine charity.

The call to true charity goes beyond mere acts of kindness. It involves a profound understanding that Christian generosity doesn't expect direct repayment. Instead, it seeks to restore the mercy, justice, and compassion that are missing in many situations in our world today. In cultivating a spirit of true charity, we can become instruments of God's blessings, allowing us to participate in Christ's mission to uplift and heal our broken world.



#### ACTION

Practice true charity this week by doing good deeds in secret or for people who can't repay you. You could send an encouraging note to someone facing challenges, volunteer at a local charity, or donate anonymously to a cause you believe in. Consider how you can practice compassion and promote justice without expecting anything in return.

**"Do you wish to rise?  
Begin by descending. You plan  
a tower that will pierce the  
clouds? Lay first the foundation  
of humility."**

—St. Augustine



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Why is it challenging to give without expecting something in return?
- ❖ How can you encourage your friends and family members to act with an other-centered attitude in regards to acts of service and charity?

# Read

Wisdom 9:13–18b

Psalm 90:3–4, 5–6,  
12–13, 14, 17

Philemon 9–10, 12–17

Luke 14:25–33

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 7, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Wait—did Jesus just say you should hate your parents? In today's reading, Jesus employs vivid language to get his audience's attention and make a point about the cost of discipleship. In Matthew's Gospel, a similar point is made, but in gentler language: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (10:37). In both instances, Jesus is saying that we cannot follow him unless we love him more than everyone and everything in our lives, even more than our own lives.

Jesus is trying to help his disciples understand a profound truth—discipleship comes with a cost. Pursuing truth and goodness can require significant sacrifices. In the early Church, these sacrifices could extend to martyrdom, a reality still faced by Christians in some parts of the world. Even in societies where physical martyrdom is not a direct threat, being a Christian today can demand detachment from friends, family, and even employment. As followers of Christ, we are called to examine every aspect of our lives in the light of his truth and grace. Our choices will then give witness to our commitment to Christ.



#### ACTION

Make a list of the activities you are involved in and your relationships. For each item on the list, consider whether it is already something that encourages you to live out Christ's teaching. If not, how can you change the way you participate in the activity or relationship to match Jesus's teachings? This could involve acts of kindness or advocating for values that are aligned with Christ's teachings, even if they go against prevailing cultural norms. Put these changes into practice this week.



Learn about the courageous acts of Sophie and Hans Scholl, siblings who spoke against the culture of Nazi Germany.

<https://youtu.be/ZtOKRsF6Rr0>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some sacrifices that followers of Christ might have to make in today's world?
- ❖ Have you ever felt at odds with prevailing cultural norms or faced challenges because of your Christian beliefs? How did you handle it?

# Read

Numbers 21:4-9

Ps 78:1-2, 34-35,  
36-37, 38

Philippians 2:6-11

John 3:13-17

## LIVING THE WORD

### Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

September 14, 2025



#### REFLECTION

A few verses before our reading for today begins, we encounter Nicodemus. He acknowledges that Jesus is from God, and in turn, Jesus tells him that to be a part of God's kingdom, a person must be "born from above" (Jn 3:3). Nicodemus doesn't understand so Jesus explains it more to him, which we hear in today's reading. Speaking of himself, Jesus describes what will happen to the Son of Man and the purpose for which the Son came.

Jesus' mission originates in a love which is freely given and must be freely received. The eternal life he promises through his death isn't meant to "condemn the world" (Jn 3:17) but is a gift offered for the salvation of anyone who believes in him. This is what we celebrate on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross—not only that Jesus died, but that his death and resurrection is our path to eternal life.

Our world is filled with temptations that invite us to stray from this path. By remaining focused on the cross, we can avoid these sins and journey with Jesus to the Father. Christ doesn't come to offer condemnation—our own actions and failings do that. Instead, he offers us freedom from our own self-destructive choices. He offers us the freedom to follow him in this world and into life everlasting in the next.



#### ACTION

Are there parts of your life where you feel sin is moving you off of the path of Christ's cross? In prayer, ask Christ to transform your heart and guide you to freedom. If you are able, consider going to the sacrament of reconciliation this week to receive forgiveness and get a fresh start. This is a good way to celebrate today's feast, by remembering that Christ loves you and came to give you freedom and salvation from sin!



"God So Loved"  
—We The Kingdom

<https://youtu.be/iq5URsXbKXs>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What questions would you ask Jesus about what he said in today's reading?
- ❖ We might think of religion as restrictive. How does Christ's offer of freedom from sin challenge this narrative?



# Read

Amos 8:4-7

Psalm 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 21, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Jesus offers a thought-provoking perspective on wealth and stewardship in today's Gospel. The dishonest wealth Jesus mentions doesn't belong to the steward but to the master. The steward is worried when his master catches him cheating because he will be let go from his job. This fear motivates the steward to try to make those he has over-charged like him; he forgives some of their debts in the hope that they will be kind to him when he loses his position.

In his explanation of the parable, Jesus juxtaposes the dishonest wealth in this world and the lengths people will go to get it with his disciples, who should go to any length to follow him. Instead of serving money, disciples should serve God. They should make choices that reflect God's ways, not the ways of the world. This means that where we see injustices, we ought to bring justice; where we see suffering, we ought to bring the peace of God. Christ's message is clear: we cannot rely on worldly wealth or privilege, but we can use them wisely to help others and create a more just and merciful world.



#### ACTION

What are you wealthy in? Do you get an allowance? Have a job? Are especially skilled in a certain area? Have a passion for certain activities? With these things in mind, think about the different areas of your life (work, school, home, activities, and so on). Is there some injustice or lack in one of these areas that you feel called to help out with? How can you use your "wealth" to address that? Would the help you provide be monetary (even a little can go a long way!) or be a donation of your time and talents? Both? Take some concrete steps to address the issue you identified and make a plan to keep serving in that area for the next few months.



Check out this short video on how we can use our time to serve others: "What is Stewardship? How is time involved?"

<https://youtu.be/HPJzsSxKTvs>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What is your relationship with money right now? What role do you see money having in your future goals?
- ❖ How can you use your gifts wisely to serve God's kingdom?

# Read

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-31

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 28, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Today's parable presents a stark contrast between the beggar Lazarus and the unnamed rich man. In the ancient world, purple dye was a mark of excessive wealth and privilege, as was the fine linen the rich man was dressed in. Jesus paints a picture of someone who used his wealth wastefully and selfishly. In contrast, Lazarus has no home, no food, and is too weak to keep the dogs from licking at his sores. The rich man doesn't help Lazarus even though Lazarus is literally on his doorstep.

The obvious justice of the rich man's punishment only underlines the audacity of his behavior after death. Even after death and punishment, the rich man still feels entitled! He still objectifies Lazarus as someone to send to fetch water or send messages. The rich man's failure to recognize Lazarus as a person with inherent dignity challenges us to examine our own attitudes and treatment of those in need.



#### ACTION

Who is the Lazarus on your doorstep? Consider volunteering at a local shelter or food bank over the next few weeks. Take the time to talk to someone who is suffering to learn their name and their story. Alternatively, reach out to someone who might be overlooked or objectified in your family or school. Remember that God sees and loves every human being, regardless of their social status or worldly success.



Learn about the  
Catholic social teaching  
principle of the life and  
dignity of every person:

[https://youtu.be/uflywz\\_bnAs](https://youtu.be/uflywz_bnAs)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Why do you think Jesus named the poor man in the parable but left the rich man nameless?
- ❖ What are some reasons people overlook or objectify others? How does your faith help you counter those reasons?

# Read

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 5, 2025



#### REFLECTION

The reading for today begins with an astounding claim about the smallest amount of faith—it can do great things! Yet however great our acts of faith might be, they are tempered by the rest of the Gospel reading, in which Jesus cautions his disciples to have a humble attitude when it comes to living out their faith.

Jesus invites us to consider the attitude of a servant diligently working in the field. The servant does not expect special treatment or praise for merely fulfilling his duty. Instead, he continues to serve with humility, trusting that the work itself is valuable and that the master has a plan that will benefit the entire household.

The work of discipleship is not always easy. Those who work to bring about a more just and merciful world may not see the fruit of their labors for many years, if at all. It is natural for us to want recognition for the hard work that we do. But our actions of faith should not be dependent on recognition or reward because it is really God who is at work in these activities. Our faith-filled good works should be part of our natural response to God's love for us. When we live out our faith with joy and humility, we act as true followers of Jesus.



#### ACTION

Engage in an act of service this week without seeking recognition. Whether it's helping a friend, volunteering in your community, or assisting a family member, choose a task that aligns with your talents and commit to doing it without expecting praise. Then spend some time in prayer reflecting on how taking this intentional approach to service affected your experience of it and how it affects your relationship with God.



Pray with the prayer  
“Prophets of a Future  
Not Our Own” this week.

<https://ltp.org/s/future>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Are there specific areas in your life where you feel the need for greater faith?
- ❖ What is your motivation for doing good works? How might this motivation affect the outcome of your actions?

# Read

2 Kings 5:14–17

Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4

2 Timothy 2:8–13

Luke 17:11–19

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 12, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Jesus heals ten people in today's Gospel, but only one—a Samaritan—returns to him in gratitude. Samaritans and Jews had a difficult history of division and animosity over religious and cultural differences, and the two groups rarely interacted. The Samaritan's response to Jesus emphasizes that human experiences of suffering and gratitude are not bound by cultural or ethnic divisions.

All of the lepers shared a common experience of suffering, desperation, and social isolation. In light of the miraculous gift of healing, they must have been impatient to go and show the authorities that they were cured so that they could rejoin their families and communities. However, only the Samaritan took the time to recognize the immensity of the gift he'd received and express his gratitude to the one who healed him.

The Samaritan's actions serve as an unexpected example of faith and gratitude. They remind us to take time to recognize and express gratitude to Jesus for the answered prayers and gifts in our own lives.



#### ACTION

The Samaritan's actions stand out because he allowed his experience of healing to move him to gratitude. Begin a gratitude journal where you write down three things you're thankful for each day. It doesn't matter if they are big things or small things; taking time to say "Thank you" to Jesus helps us cultivate a habit of joy and gratitude that can transform our lives and the lives of those around us.

**"The secret of happiness is  
to live moment by moment  
and to thank God for all that  
he, in his goodness, sends  
to us day after day."**

—St. Gianna Beretta Molla



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can shared suffering overcome prejudice and division?
- ❖ How can shared joy and gratitude do the same?

# Read

Exodus 17:8–13

Psalm 121:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8

2 Timothy 3:14–4:2

Luke 18:1–8

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 19, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel recounts the parable of a persistent widow seeking justice from an unrighteous judge. Despite the judge's hard-heartedness, the widow is relentless in seeking justice, and he eventually grants her request owing to her persistent pleas.

Jesus uses this narrative to emphasize the importance of prayer through a deliberate contrast between the unrighteous judge and God's perfect justice. He points out that if even an unjust judge responds to persistence, then surely a just and merciful God will answer the prayers of his faithful. The parable assures us that God, who is just and compassionate, listens and responds to whatever we bring before him.

It can be hard to keep faith in God when things seem to be going wrong constantly around us and so many prayers seem to go unanswered. Today's reading encourages us to keep praying, no matter the situation. We can place our faith and trust in God's perfect love and his perfect timing.



#### ACTION

Make a list of intentions you have been praying about for a while. Then spend some time in prayer over each intention. Invite the Holy Spirit into this prayer time to open your heart to see how God has been working on these prayers in your life. Maybe they have been answered in unexpected ways. Maybe your intention is no longer what you actually want to pray for, but it has become a habit to ask for it. Maybe God is asking you to wait, that he will answer your prayer in his time. During your prayer time, be sure to include time to read Scripture—God speaks to us in many ways through his Word and you may find your answer there.



**“Don’t You Give Up  
on Me” —Brandon Lake**

<https://youtu.be/1gW1IVM3qq0>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Have you ever felt like giving up on mending a difficult situation?  
How can the widow's persistence inspire us in challenging circumstances?
- ❖ What are some ways you can encourage others to keep their faith in difficult times?



# Read

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18

Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18,  
19, 23

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Luke 18:9-14

## LIVING THE WORD

### Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 26, 2025



#### REFLECTION

The Pharisee in today's Gospel parable is an example of pride in prayer. Although his prayer appears at first to be an expression of gratitude, it reveals the Pharisee's feelings of superiority and lack of self-reflection. We are all sinners, but rather than examine his own sins and failures, the Pharisee focuses on the shortcomings of others to puff up his own self-righteousness and ego.

In contrast, the tax collector is aware of his own failings and his need for mercy. He turns to God, who is the source of all mercy. The tax collector's humility is a reflection of his open heart, ready and willing to be reconciled with God.

Honest self-reflection and self-awareness are vital to spiritual growth. As disciples, we must move beyond the tendency to judge our virtues or sins in relation to those around us and instead focus on inviting God into every aspect of our lives. When we open our heart to God, we open our lives to be transformed by his love and mercy.



#### ACTION

Over the next week, take five minutes toward the end of each day to review your day and your relationship with God. As you reflect, consider the following questions: What are you thankful for? What do you need to ask forgiveness for? What is something that you need God's help to accomplish? This brief exercise is inspired by the practice of the daily examen in Ignatian spirituality. See the link below for more information about this prayer practice that encourages us to invite God into the midst of each day.



Learn about the practice  
of the daily examen:

<https://ltp.org/s/pray-examen>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How have moments of humility and experiences of seeking forgiveness shaped your relationships with God and others?
- ❖ Do you ever compare yourself with others? What can you do instead that is more in keeping with Jesus' teachings?

# Read

Wisdom 3:1-9

Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Romans 5:5-11

Matthew 5:1-12a

## LIVING THE WORD

# The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)

November 2, 2025



## REFLECTION

On All Souls' Day, the Church remembers and prays for all those who have died using the same readings that are used at funerals throughout the year. In today's Gospel reading, we hear the Beatitudes in which Jesus assures his followers that God sees and rewards those virtues the world overlooks or finds uncomfortable—God loves the humble, the grieving, and the meek and raises them up to find peace and fullness of life in himself.

Our departed loved ones don't need to have made a big impact on the world to have earned a place of honor in our hearts or in heaven. Christ promises that the meek, gentle souls will inherit God's kingdom. Whether or not we achieve our goals in this lifetime, Christ assures us that our hunger for righteousness will be satisfied and our striving for peace makes us part of God's eternal family. Acts of mercy and kindness are met with the promise of divine mercy, and those who strive to live godly lives under persecution are promised a place in heaven.

As we remember our departed loved ones today, may we find solace in Jesus' promise of comfort for those who mourn.



## ACTION

Make a collage or word cloud that reflects your memories or family stories of loved ones who have passed away. Include elements that connect these memories with the virtues described in the Beatitudes. Make a second word cloud or collage reflecting the virtues you hope to be remembered for. This exercise can help you identify the core values you want to live by and encourage you to put them into practice.



Check out this clip from *The Chosen* in which Jesus gives the Beatitudes.

<https://youtu.be/o5OnF3sg0cY>



## QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can the Beatitudes bring comfort and hope when reflecting on the lives of departed loved ones?
- ❖ Is there a specific Beatitude that resonates with you? Why?

# Read

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17

John 2:13-22

## LIVING THE WORD

### Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

November 9, 2025



#### REFLECTION

The temple in Jerusalem was the spiritual center of Judaism; it was a place where ordinary people could go to encounter God's presence and seek a closeness with him. Many people made long journeys to visit the temple and, as we hear in today's Gospel reading, a thriving market had developed in its courtyard to sell animals for sacrifice and exchange money from pilgrims. Instead of a quiet and sacred atmosphere, Jesus found a noisy marketplace, full of buying and selling.

Christ's reaction can prompt us to ask what tables we need to overturn in the sacred space of our relationship with God—are there habits, attitudes, or priorities that distract us from spending uninterrupted time with God? Today's Gospel can be an invitation to identify and surrender the worldly distractions that compromise our inner sanctuaries. Even in times of disruption, when old habits and distractions arise again, we can be confident that God has plans for our restoration and transformation, just as Jesus rose to life after conquering death.



#### ACTION

This week, try fasting from some of the sources of noise and distraction in your life to make room for more silence and moments of contemplation or community. Consider putting your phone in another room during your prayer time to make your conversation with God more focused. You could also take a break from social media for a day. If there are many people in your home, you could take a brief walk and pray during that time. Find something that addresses your own distractions and helps you draw closer to God.

**"We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence."**

—St. Mother Teresa



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some sources of distraction in your life?
- ❖ Churches are sacred spaces where we can encounter God without many distractions. Are there other sacred spaces in your life where you feel God's presence?

# Read

Malachi 3:19–20a

Psalm 98:5–6, 7–8, 9

2 Thessalonians 3:7–12

Luke 21:5–19

## LIVING THE WORD

### Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 16, 2025



#### REFLECTION

In today's reading, Jesus speaks directly to the reality of the persecutions his followers would face. However, it also contains a profound call to trust in God's provision even in the face of opposition and adversity. Jesus doesn't promise his followers immediate rewards or an easy path through this life. On the contrary, he tells them that they will face terrifying events and even persecution for their faith in him but through it all, he will be with them.

Standing firm takes courage, especially when the world around us may be hostile to our faith. The call to endure is not a call to passive acceptance but an invitation to persist with patience and unwavering trust in God. It's a trust that transcends immediate circumstances and anchors itself in the eternal promises of God.

Persecution often evokes fear and a natural instinct to defend ourselves. Yet, Jesus redirects our focus. He invites us to surrender the need for elaborate defenses and instead trust in the Spirit's guidance. In moments of persecution, the words we need will be given to us. It's a reminder that, even under pressure, God's provision is abundant.



#### ACTION

Research and learn about the contemporary persecution of Christians worldwide. Look for reputable sources, documentaries, and articles to gain a comprehensive understanding. Consider establishing a routine of praying for persecuted Christians around the world. Create a prayer list that includes specific individuals, communities, or regions facing challenges because of their faith.



**Pope Francis' prayer intention for the month of March in 2024 was for the martyrs of our day.**

**<https://youtu.be/RJbGEOAtjLO>**



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can your faith help you to endure challenges?
- ❖ Are there specific challenges you are currently facing because of your faith?

# Read

2 Samuel 5:1-3

Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43

## LIVING THE WORD

# Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 23, 2025



## REFLECTION

Today's Gospel offers a powerful example of the redemption we are offered when we sincerely entrust ourselves to God. Hanging beside Jesus, the repentant criminal defends him, confessing at the same time his own guilt and Jesus' innocence. In the face of his imminent death, he does not ask for deliverance from pain or rescue from the cross. Instead, he asks Jesus to remember him. His plea expresses a profound trust in Jesus' ability to bring him into a kingdom that transcends the agony of the cross.

The response from Jesus is an immediate and life-changing promise of paradise, a testament to Christ's sovereignty over the whole universe. Regardless of the earthly situation in which they find themselves—in the very moment of crucifixion—Christ demonstrates both his power over all and his love for all. The criminal experiences conversion, turning from his life of sin to belief in Jesus.

Through our baptism, we are members of the kingdom of God. The story in today's Gospel inspires us to remember this identity and to return to our trust in Christ's provision and mercy when we have fallen away. He will always welcome us when we call out to him in faith.



## ACTION

This week, reflect on areas in your life where repentance and reconciliation are needed. Consider how the repentant criminal's faith can serve as a model for turning to Jesus in sincere trust. Using the words "Jesus, remember me," create a bookmark, phone background, or other reminder that will inspire you to turn to Jesus' mercy in all circumstances.



Learn how to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, a prayer that reminds us of the mercy Jesus offers to the whole world.

<https://ltp.org/s/mercy>



## QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does the repentant criminal challenge your preconceived notions of who can experience God's grace and redemption?
- ❖ What does Christ's kingdom look like? How can you help others experience that kingdom through your words and actions?



# Read

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5,  
6-7, 8-9

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:37-44

## LIVING THE WORD

### First Sunday of Advent

November 30, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Advent is a season of waiting. We may picture the gentle patience of a mother waiting for her baby to be born, or of a baker watching bread bake through the oven window. Maybe Advent brings to mind that old phrase, "Watching paint dry." Honestly, waiting can feel pretty boring.

Today's Gospel is about waiting, but it is full of urgency! Jesus tells us that no one knows the day and time when he will return in glory. It will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Although this not knowing could cause us some anxiety if we let it, Jesus' words in the Gospel are actually quite freeing. We don't have to be anxious about a certain day or time because Jesus encourages us to stay awake and alert and to be prepared at all times. He wants us to always be living as if he will arrive at any moment.

Advent is about this kind of alert, awake, and active preparation, too. If we pay attention to God's will for us, like Noah did, we will be prepared for the "flood" of glory when (and whenever) Jesus returns. In the meantime, we will be living as Jesus taught us, following in his footsteps along the path to our eternal life.



#### ACTION

While the timing may be a surprise, we do know for sure that Jesus will return, so we should prepare to meet him each and every day. How can we do this? By reminding ourselves that Jesus is already with us! This week, be intentional about the time you spend in prayer. Invite Jesus into your heart and life as you review your day, to help you notice his presence where you may have missed it, both in the busyness and in the boredom.



"Let All Mortal Flesh"

—Sarah Kroger

<https://youtu.be/CLMcamSibn4>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ If Jesus returned today, would you feel prepared to meet him?
- ❖ Do you notice and pay attention to Jesus' presence in your life each day?

# Read

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8,  
12-13, 17

Romans 15:4-9

Matthew 3:1-12

## LIVING THE WORD

### Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025



#### REFLECTION

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. We hear in today's Gospel that many people were coming to John to be baptized. But John wasn't looking for great numbers of people to simply show up. He was looking for real repentance and for evidence of the change of heart that comes when people truly turn away from sin and toward the Lord.

Amid this message of repentance, we hear some harsh words from John to the Pharisees and Sadducees: he calls them venomous snakes and asks them who told them to come to be baptized. He knows they haven't come for the right reasons because he can tell their true nature by their fruits—that is, what their words and actions produce. On the other hand, there are many who came to be baptized because they were open to conversion. They wanted to turn back to the Lord and the evidence of that conversion is present in their lives: they speak and act with joy, hope, peace, love, and a desire to share the message of salvation with others.

The contrast between the two groups of people invites us to consider our responses to the way God calls us to live a life of repentance. Are we like the Pharisees and Sadducees or do we approach living for God with a heart open to transformation?



#### ACTION

Our sacrament of baptism is the baptism of Jesus, who baptizes with fire and the Holy Spirit. It is much more powerful than John's simple symbolic washing, but we can still slip into thinking of it as an "insurance policy." To fully embrace your baptismal identity this week, spend time praying with the following questions: Which fruits of the Spirit have you harvested lately? How and when do they show up? What might God be saying about the unique gifts he's given you to share with others?



Learn about the fruits  
of the Holy Spirit from the  
*Catechism* (no. 1832).

<https://ltp.org/s/fruits>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What role does your baptism play in your life? How has it shaped you?
- ❖ In what ways do the fruits of the Spirit appear in your life?

# Read

Genesis 3:9–15, 20

Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4

Ephesians 1:3–6, 11–12

Luke 1:26–38

## LIVING THE WORD

# Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 8, 2025



## REFLECTION

Today's solemnity celebrates the conception of Mary by her mother and father (traditionally called Anne and Joachim) in the normal, natural way. It's no more miraculous, from an earthly perspective, than the everyday miracle of each new human life as it begins in the womb. But this time something unusual happened: God, who is beyond time, applied Jesus' redemption to Mary. She is persevered from the consequences of original sin, because of the work her Son would accomplish through his life, death, and resurrection. Mary's whole life, from the moment of its conception, teaches us what a difference Jesus' redemption really makes!

There is another woman who was also born free from original sin: Eve. Both women faced the challenge of trusting God, even when they didn't fully understand. For Eve, that meant obeying God's command to not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For Mary, that meant saying yes to becoming the mother of the Son of God. Both women were totally free to choose. But while Eve trusted her own judgment and chose to disobey God, Mary chose to trust God's word and say yes to his incredible plan.



## ACTION

Look up the image "Mary and Eve" by Sr. Grace Remington, ocso. This beautiful drawing shows Mary comforting Eve. Spend some time in prayer with this image this week. Notice the little details—how the women interact with one another, how the serpent interacts with the women, the arch of tree branches surrounding them, and so on. Don't forget about Jesus' presence in the image as well! Imagine yourself as Eve, being comforted as you sorrow for your sins. Then imagine yourself as Mary, lovingly giving witness to the joy of saying yes to God.



Do an image search for the artwork "Mary and Eve" by Sr. Grace Remington, ocso.



## QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ When have you chosen, like Eve, to trust your own plans instead of God's?
- ❖ How can you share with others the joy of following God, as Mary did?

# Read

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10

Psalm 146:6–7, 8–9, 9–10

James 5:7–10

Matthew 11:2–11

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Last Sunday we heard about John the Baptist's message of repentance to prepare people for the coming of Christ. This week, we hear that John is now in prison. He sends his disciples to ask if the miracles Jesus is accomplishing are the work of the Messiah he—and all of the people of God—have longed for. His question serves to clarify for himself and others who Jesus is.

Even though John had already baptized Jesus (see Mt 3:13–17), he still needs assurance that his hopes and prayers for the coming of the Messiah have been answered. Jesus sends word back to John by referencing the qualities and powers attributed to the Messiah in Scripture and connecting them to his own works of healing. He is the one John has been looking for, and he is already at work bringing about the kingdom for which John has prepared the way.

Jesus explains that there has been no prophet greater than John the Baptist. But the time has come for the messenger (John) to step out of the way of the message (Jesus). Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, has arrived, and nothing will ever be the same!



#### ACTION

When John the Baptist had doubts about Jesus being the Messiah, Jesus pointed him to Scripture. John, and many of those listening, would have known the prophetic words of the Scriptures and seen how Jesus fulfilled every word. To know Jesus better, we too should look to Scripture, especially the Gospel accounts. This week, read from Matthew 3:13 up to today's Gospel passage to get a better sense of Jesus' ministry after his baptism by John.



**"Make a Way"**

**—The Porter's Gate, feat.**

**Liz Vice and Paul Zach**

<https://youtu.be/IXbPMVg3mUU>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How would you describe Jesus to someone who might be searching for God?
- ❖ How can you share the Good News in a way that clearly points to Jesus, the message, rather than to yourself, the messenger?

# Read

Isaiah 7:10–14

Psalm 24:1–2, 3–4, 5–6

Romans 1:1–7

Matthew 1:18–24

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025



#### REFLECTION

When we hear of an angel appearing to a human being in Scripture, its first words are usually “Don’t be afraid!” When this angel comes to Joseph in a dream, though, the typical fear of a powerful angel is overshadowed by Joseph’s fear of what will happen if he stays with Mary. The angel’s command to “be not afraid” specifically refers to what the angel is asking Joseph to do: to risk his reputation in order to care for Mary and her unborn child.

Joseph wasn’t a cruel man. He had a plan that would preserve his dignity and create the least amount of obvious drama for Mary; basically, he would sweep his betrothed’s pregnancy under the rug and quietly move on with his life.

But the angel’s visit changes everything. God’s message moves Joseph to stop simply being an earthly “problem solver.” Like many of the women and men in Jesus’ family tree (Mt 1:1–17 is fascinating!), Joseph faces a choice: blend in with social norms or step out in faith even when it doesn’t make a lot of sense. Thank you, St. Joseph, for choosing the harder path!



#### ACTION

Notice that Joseph encounters God’s messenger (the angel) while he is asleep. Rest is good and holy, and it prepares us to be present and attentive to the Lord’s commands. As more and more Christmas gatherings get added to our calendars and vacations begin, be sure to still go to sleep at a reasonable hour, so you can wake refreshed and ready to be truly present with the people in your family and community. Before bed each night, spend ten minutes reading the Bible so that you can be strengthened by God’s Word to show his love to others.



Read about Pope Francis’ devotion to an image of St. Joseph sleeping:  
<https://ltp.org/s/asleep>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Why do you think God chose to send a messenger to Joseph while he was asleep?
- ❖ Is God asking you to step out in faith like Joseph, despite what people might think?



# Read

Isaiah 62:1–5

Psalm 89:4–5, 16–17,  
27, 29

Acts 13:16–17, 22–25

Matthew 1:1–25 or 1:18–25

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

December 24 and 25, 2025



#### REFLECTION

Matthew begins his Gospel account by firmly situating the miraculous incarnation of Jesus within the historical context of his list of ancestors. Like all biblical genealogies, this list is patrilineal—that is, it lists the ancestors of the father, in this case Joseph, who was considered Jesus’ father in a real, legal sense. This assured Matthew’s mostly Jewish-Christian audience that Jesus bears an important attribute of the Messiah: being a descendant of David and of Abraham.

But if you look closely at the list, you’ll notice something peculiar. Matthew’s genealogy includes four people who ordinarily wouldn’t be included: women.

The stories of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) are a bit scandalous, but without their faith and courage, the chain of ancestors of Jesus would have been broken. These women move salvation history forward!

So when Mary’s conception of Jesus is a bit out of the ordinary—to say the least—Matthew’s genealogy shows us that we shouldn’t be surprised when God uses unusual circumstances to accomplish his work in the world.



#### ACTION

Consider reading the biblical accounts of Tamar (Genesis 38:1–30), Rahab (Joshua 2:1–24; 6:1–25), Ruth (Ruth 1:1–4:22), and the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1–12:25). Be forewarned: You might be surprised at how dramatic and sometimes even traumatic these stories may be. Reflect on where God is in these stories. Then reflect on where God is in the stories of women you know who have taken courageous risks to do what is right, or who have brought forth goodness despite great suffering.



“Christ”

—Poor Bishop Hooper

<https://youtu.be/SXyrGGGIZSM>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do you believe that God works in unexpected ways and through unexpected people?
- ❖ Does the simple, radical reality of Christmas change how you think about miracles?

# Read

Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14

Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5

Colossians 3:12–21 or  
3:12–17

Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23

## LIVING THE WORD

### Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

December 28, 2025



#### REFLECTION

A priest friend told me about a recent wedding he attended where the couple honored the Holy Family with flowers. While guests gathered, my friend overheard someone ask, “What’s the Holy Family? Does the church designate a family they think is especially holy and they get to be the Holy Family for a while?”

It can be easy to miss something really important about the incarnation: *Jesus was born into a family!*

The Holy Family doesn’t fit the mold of what most people (in Jesus’ time and ours) would consider especially holy: Mary was pregnant before marriage, and not by her fiancé. They’re poor, and they’re fleeing to Egypt as refugees. Jesus is an only child in a culture that valued having many children (even today, some people joke about “big” families being the most “Catholic,” which is untrue and hurtful to families with one child or no children).

What makes the Holy Family holy isn’t how well they fit the so-called ideal. Rather, it is their manner of life that gives rise to the description “holy.” As individuals and as a family unity, they follow God’s will. They always choose to honor one other and the Lord. They embody the love of God and neighbor.



#### ACTION

Think about your own family, just as it is (big or small, living in one household or multiple, whether or not you share genes, or even the same faith). Do you consider your family holy, as modeled by the Holy Family? Does your family love God and your neighbors—especially your closest neighbors: one another? What can you do this week to bring more love of God and neighbor into your family?



Do an image search for the sculpture “A Quiet Moment” by Timothy P. Schmalz. Reflect on this image throughout the week.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do I judge my family by society’s definition of holiness, or by the standard of the Holy Family?
- ❖ How can my small, daily choices lead me to a life of holiness?

# Read

Numbers 6:22–27

Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8

Galatians 4:4–7

Luke 2:16–21

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

January 1, 2026



#### REFLECTION

“Wait, is Mary older than God?”

My five-year-old sprang this question on me at bedtime. Even though I have a lot of theological education, I wasn’t sure at first how to answer. Of course, Mary isn’t older than God, but my son had a point: Whenever we meet someone’s mother, they’re older than their child. So how could Mary be the mother of God?

The teaching that Mary is the mother of God, not just the mother of the “human Jesus,” is one that the early Church struggled to discern. But they finally concluded that Mary *has to be* the mother of *the whole Jesus*, or else it would be like breaking Jesus into two parts, denying who Jesus is.

The Church teaches that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. The Son has always existed, along with the Father and Holy Spirit. That’s the nature of God. But in the incarnation, God, in the Person of the Son, embraces humanity. And, well, humans have moms.

Mary pondered a lot of things in her heart. Perhaps this is one of the things she pondered: How can I, a simple human being, possibly bring the God of the universe into the world he created?



#### ACTION

Mary *did* know quite a lot about Jesus, because Gabriel (Lk 1:26–38), Elizabeth (1:39–45), and Simeon and Anna (Lk 2:22–38) told her. Nevertheless, the popular song “Mary, Did You Know?” is probably a good list of the sorts of things Mary pondered in her heart. This week, spend time pondering with Mary: How can I help to bring Jesus into the world? How wonderful it is to know that I am part of God’s glorious story too!



“Mary, Did You Know?”

—The Hound + The Fox

[https://youtu.be/kzQO4L\\_OKQA](https://youtu.be/kzQO4L_OKQA)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Am I willing to say yes to carrying Jesus with me, as Mary did?
- ❖ Am I willing to say yes to sharing Jesus with the world, as Mary did?

# Read

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8,  
10-11, 12-13

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

January 4, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Lots of attention is given to how the Magi arrive at the place where they find Jesus. They seek the newborn king of the Jews, despite being “from the east” and therefore not Jewish themselves, but likely worshippers of some other religious variety. When they find him, they offer Jesus their famous gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which hint at Jesus’ destiny to rule as king of the universe (gold), serve as high priest forever (frankincense), and be anointed for his saving death (myrrh). Their homage is a beautiful testimony that Jesus did not come just for the Jewish people from which he descends, but for all humankind.

But now let us consider how the way the Magi returned home could be more important than how they arrived. They returned home “by another way.” Instead of reporting back to King Herod, whom they clearly respected enough to consult when they arrived, the Magi pay attention to a warning given to them in a dream and go home by a different route. Their encounter with Jesus has transformed them, and though they return home, they will never be the same.



#### ACTION

Many nativity scenes include figures of the Magi; sometimes these figures are moved closer to the Holy Family as we draw near to today’s feast, to represent their journey from afar. Just as the Magi came from an unexpected location, so too does God’s message of salvation spread to unexpected places. This week, look up images of nativity scenes from around the world. As you reflect on these pictures, consider how they demonstrate the way God’s message is for people of all ages and in all cultures. Our faith is truly catholic (which means “universal”)!



Learn some tips for  
sharing God’s message of  
salvation with others:  
“10 Ways to Evangelize.”

<https://ltp.org/s/evangelize>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Have you ever had an epiphany, one where you recognized Jesus as the one you were looking for all along?
- ❖ How have your encounters with Jesus transformed you?

# Read

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 9-10

Acts 10:34-38

Matthew 3:13-17

## LIVING THE WORD

### Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

January 11, 2026



#### REFLECTION

On the Second Sunday of Advent, we read that people had different motivations for seeking to be baptized by John (Mt 3:1-12). The ones who were motivated by the right reasons truly repented and wanted to turn back to God; John's baptism was a way to mark their repentance. But while Jesus was tempted, he never sinned—what business did he have being baptized? Jesus had no sins to repent of!

When the Son became incarnate and entered into humanity, he did so in part because we needed a model to follow. Jesus often did things in such a way that it was obvious to those watching him what he was doing: praying out loud to the Father, narrating what was happening during a healing, asking the disciples to collect leftover scraps as he prepared to multiply the loaves and fishes.

Jesus' baptism by John works this same way. He is showing us that repentance is a key practice for those who desire closeness with God. He also humbles himself to be served by John, who in turn recognizes his own inadequacy but serves anyway because it is what Jesus asks of him.



#### ACTION

Did you know that you can (and should!) repent of your own sins, but that you can *also* pray and offer up suffering in reparation for the sins of others? Our example and prayer affect more than our own relationship with God! People hear us say we are Christian, but if our actions don't match our words, then they might have doubts about their own faith. Be intentional about your actions this week. At the end of each day, spend time in prayer reflecting on how your choices did or did not give witness to your faith. Ask God to give you the grace to share his love with others.



Learn about redemptive suffering by watching this short video, "Why Do We Offer Up Suffering?"

<https://youtu.be/vMzi6KA-M54>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Does your conduct faithfully show others how a Catholic disciple of Jesus should act?
- ❖ Are you willing to humbly serve and be served, like John and Jesus?



# Read

Isaiah 49:3, 5–6

Psalm 40:2, 4, 7–8,  
8–9, 10

1 Corinthians 1:1–3

John 1:29–34

## LIVING THE WORD

### Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 18, 2026



#### REFLECTION

The title “Lamb of God” refers to the paschal lamb that was offered as a sacrifice at Passover. This practice finds its origins in the Exodus (Exodus 12). Lambs were also sacrificed in the daily temple offering as an atonement for sins. John’s use of the title “Lamb of God” for Jesus transforms these traditions, unveiling Jesus as the Lamb who once and for all brings about redemption. His sacrifice promises a restoration of the sacred bond between humanity and the divine through the freedom gained by the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus, and his way of life, defies our expectations of power. Jesus, as the Lamb, chooses a path of self-sacrifice for humanity’s redemption. This challenges our conventional understanding of strength, revealing a divine love that triumphs not through force but through profound humility—a love that reshapes the very fabric of our existence. May we follow in the path of this Lamb, humbly offering ourselves to God and offering ourselves for others.



#### ACTION

What are the sins in your life right now that you need to bring to the Lamb of God? This week, spend some time in prayer making an examination of conscience to prepare yourself to go to the sacrament of reconciliation. There are many resources and videos online that can help with this (like the one suggested below). Be sure to also reflect on the specific people in your life that you need to forgive or that you need to seek forgiveness from. It might help to journal about these things—you can even bring your notes with you to the sacrament if you would like. If you aren’t able to go to reconciliation this week, be sure to plan to go soon.



Read and reflect with  
“What Must I Do? The  
Sacrament of Reconciliation  
and Young Adults.”

<https://ltp.org/s/examination>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does the imagery of Jesus as the Lamb of God deepen your understanding of the way Jesus forgives your sins?
- ❖ What are some areas of your life that need renewal and restoration?

# Read

Isaiah 8:23–9:3

Psalms 27:1, 4, 13–14

1 Corinthians 1:10–13, 17

Matthew 4:12–23 or 4:12–17

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 25, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel reading marks the radiant beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah of the light dawning in darkness. Jesus is characterized as the radiant presence stepping into the shadows, dispelling their darkness with the brilliance of God's truth.

Throughout today's reading, we see that Jesus begins his ministry by calling for repentance. This repentance and obedience to Jesus' word leads to transformation and, eventually, entrance into the radiant reality of God's kingdom, where sins find forgiveness, and lives are renewed.

Each of us has dark corners of our lives that crave the cleansing illumination of Christ's light. Repentance allows us to turn towards God's grace, letting his light heal us and dispel the shadows.

Though there is more darkness in winter as the days are shorter, we know that they are now getting a little bit longer each day. Let's embrace the imagery in today's reading and allow Jesus' presence to be the light of love that penetrates our hearts, bringing illumination to the path that leads us to God's kingdom.



#### ACTION

Explore your artistic side this week and express the theme of light conquering darkness through visual art. Think about what light means to you and how it connects with the Gospel reading and your experiences. Use whatever art form appeals to you—painting, drawing, digital art, photography, or a mix. How does engaging with the idea of transformative light affect your understanding of the imagery in today's Gospel?



"My Light"

—Colton Dixon

<https://youtu.be/xrpaQv67wic>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can you respond to Jesus' call for repentance and to follow him?
- ❖ Can you think of a time when Christ's teachings shed light on and brought clarity to a problem in your life?

# Read

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Matthew 5:1-12a

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 1, 2026



#### REFLECTION

The Beatitudes in Matthew's Gospel offer a profound challenge to worldly standards of success by highlighting qualities like humility, meekness, and mercy as pathways to God's kingdom. In a world often obsessed with material wealth and self-interest, the Beatitudes call us to embrace simplicity, hunger for righteousness, and work for peace.

Instead of emphasizing just one virtue, Jesus chose to address the crowds by giving them a list of qualities that might sometimes seem to contradict one another (for example, consider the possible tension between those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and those who are meek and are peacemakers). The diversity of the Beatitudes affirms that holiness may look different in different people and in different situations. There are many paths to a virtuous life.

These teachings are not just moral ideals; they're also an invitation to prioritize spiritual virtues, align our hearts with God's character, and actively seek justice and humility in our lives.

Let us internalize these words and embody the spirit of the Beatitudes, finding true blessing in selfless service, humility, and a deep connection with God. May we become bearers of God's blessing in a world in need of grace and transformation.



#### ACTION

Pick one of the Beatitudes and resolve to put it into action this week. Or, you could challenge yourself to put into practice a different Beatitude each day. For example, you can be a peacemaker by seeking common ground with someone you have been in conflict with. You could practice mercy by forgiving someone who has wronged you. At the end of each day, spend time in prayer reflecting on how it felt to live out that Beatitude.



Watch "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" (2019) for some inspiration on living a humble life.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do the Beatitudes challenge the world's understanding of happiness and success?
- ❖ Which Beatitude challenges you the most? How might you work toward embodying it in your life?

# Read

Isaiah 58:7-10

Psalm 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Matthew 5:13-16

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 8, 2026



#### REFLECTION

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compares his followers to salt and light. He says we are like salt, meant to preserve goodness and bring flavor to life. However, just as salt can lose its flavor, we lose our ability to improve the world when we water down our values or grow tired of doing good.

Jesus also calls us the light of the world, emphasizing our role in being examples of truth and righteousness in our daily lives. We're like a city on a hill, meant to stand out and be visible. Our faith shouldn't be hidden but should be clearly expressed in our words and actions so that others might come to see God at work in the world.

The message is clear: live authentically, be a positive influence, and let your actions glorify God. Using our unique gifts and talents, we take up Christ's call to be his witnesses in the world.



#### ACTION

Grab some colorful sticky notes and write uplifting messages on them. Stick these words of kindness, inspiration, and gratitude anonymously around your school and at home. Include notes of thanks to those who you see as sources of salt and light in your community.

**"All the darkness in the world  
cannot extinguish the light of  
a single candle."**

—St. Francis of Assisi



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Reflect on the past week: How were you salt? How were you light?
- ❖ How can we shine our light without seeking attention for ourselves?

# Read



Sirach 15:15–20  
Psalm 119:1–2, 4–5,  
17–18

1 Corinthians 2:6–10  
Matthew 5:17–37 or  
5:20–22a, 27–28,  
33–34a, 37

## LIVING THE WORD

### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time February 15, 2026



#### REFLECTION

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus challenges us to move beyond external compliance with God's rules to integrate virtue into every aspect of ourselves. True righteousness, he asserts, involves aligning our hearts with God's intentions, not just avoiding external actions out of shame or fear of punishment.

Modern neuroscience tells us that our brains build patterns based on our habits—the repeated things we do and think about. Christ's call to deeper transformation is a call to rebuild our patterns of thought and action to be centered around peace, forgiveness, honesty, and fidelity to one another. When our lives are transformed in these ways by God's grace, we are better able to follow God's will.

Let us invite Jesus into our every choice of thought and deed. Let us welcome him into our hearts so that he might transform us into his image. Let us be open to the Holy Spirit guiding us in a life of mercy, kindness, and faithfulness so that our habits reflect God's love to others.



#### ACTION

The media we surround ourselves with can influence our emotions and reactions, contributing to habitual thought patterns. This week, create a playlist of songs that promote peace, forgiveness, honesty, and fidelity. Pay attention to how listening to your playlist influences your mood and reactions.



**"Holy Spirit Living  
Breath of God"**

**—Keith & Kristyn Getty**

**<https://youtu.be/kDYjn-YdnD4>**



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Can you think of examples where external actions might not reflect the true state of someone's heart or character?
- ❖ What are some of the voices and influences that have shaped your mental habits? Can changing some of those external voices help you shift your mental script?



# Read

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7  
Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6,  
12-13, 17

Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12,  
17-19

Matthew 4:1-11

## LIVING THE WORD

### First Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Before beginning his public ministry, Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray for forty days. There, he experienced temptations. These temptations foreshadow some of the challenges, opposition, and misunderstandings Jesus would later face in his ministry. They also demonstrate the power of Jesus over Satan and his lies.

In one of these temptations, Satan tempts Jesus to test God's protection. Jesus' refusal emphasizes the difference between authentic faith and presumption. Rather than seeking to control or manipulate the Father's intervention, Jesus models for us a faith that trusts without imposing conditions. This encourages us to embrace humility and patience in our journey of faith.

As Christ emerged from the wilderness and this time of testing, he went forth with a clarified sense of purpose, setting the tone for a ministry marked by humility, compassion, and unwavering dedication to the kingdom of God. As we head into the forty days of Lent, let's embrace a deepened reliance on God's guidance so that we may be prepared for God's unique call and mission for each of us.



#### ACTION

In these temptations, Christ resisted worldly goods and powers. Identify one area in your life where you find it difficult to prioritize spiritual goods and nourishment over immediate gratification. Set a specific, achievable goal to practice delaying gratification this Lent.

**"Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins."**

—St. John Chrysostom



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Reflect on a time when you had to trust in God's plan despite not fully understanding it. How did that experience shape your faith?
- ❖ How can you lean on your faith to overcome temptation this Lent?

# Read

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19,  
20, 22

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Matthew 17:1-9

## LIVING THE WORD

### Second Sunday of Lent

March 1, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel reading reveals a tension between the extraordinary mountaintop experience of the transfiguration and the demanding, everyday work awaiting the disciples below. Our yearning for perpetual mountaintop moments makes us sympathetic to Peter's desire to build shelters and remain on the mountain.

God's voice redirects our focus to Jesus, whose mission for us is not on the mountaintop but in the world. On descending from the mountain, Jesus and the disciples must confront the complexities of human existence with all its joys and sorrows. The contrast underscores that our faith isn't an escape but a source of strength amid life's challenges.

Today's Gospel encourages us to find God not only in the extraordinary but also in the mundane. Our spiritual journey involves both transformative mountaintop encounters and the day-to-day work in the valleys. It's a call to embrace the ordinary, recognizing God's presence and work in all aspects of life.



#### ACTION

We can't live on a mountaintop, metaphorically speaking, but we can make space for extraordinary encounters with God to happen in the midst of our ordinary lives. Plan to take a five-to-fifteen-minute mini retreat every day this week. This could look like starting your day with five minutes of meditation, stopping by a church for a quick chat with God, or going for a walk, being mindful of God's creation all around you.



**"Mountaintop"**  
—The City Harmonic

<https://youtu.be/OUYAqH2yRqQ>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do you think their mountaintop experience helped Peter and the others when they later faced hardships and persecution?
- ❖ Think of some of the peaks and valleys in your life. How have both types of moments shaped your life?

# Read

Exodus 17:3–7

Psalms 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9

Romans 5:1–2, 5–8

John 4:5–42 or John 4:5–15,  
19b–26, 39a, 40–42

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Today's long Gospel reading is a powerful story about the transformation that can occur in our lives when we encounter Jesus. As Jesus engages the Samaritan woman in conversation, he reveals the depth of his knowledge about her. This divine transparency is an act of grace, a declaration that no aspect of her life is hidden from the one who offers living water, and that no aspect of her life changes the fullness of his offer.

The Samaritan woman's story reminds us that Jesus knows everything about us, and yet he offers us living water—cleansing and refreshing grace that transforms our past into a testimony of his redeeming love. The woman's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah sparks a chain reaction, transforming her life into a testimony that brings her community to Christ.

Today's Gospel prompts us to reflect on our own relationship with Jesus. Do we attempt to hide parts of our lives from him? We are encouraged to embrace openness, trusting in the transformative power of Christ's love. As we bring everything we have done and all that we are before him, we experience the salvation of his life-giving water, quenching the deepest thirst of our souls.



#### ACTION

Challenge yourself to be intentionally open with a trusted friend or mentor about a specific area of your life. Share your struggles, joys, and hopes, allowing them to provide support. If you find this exercise fruitful, consider asking them to become your accountability partner, meeting regularly to share things you are struggling with and moments when you deeply feel the presence of Christ with you.



“Woman at the Well”

—Olivia Lane

<https://youtu.be/-Dzx9uNU0JY>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ When Jesus reveals the Samaritan woman's past, it opens an avenue for grace. Can you think of a time that an uncovered truth enriched your life or relationships?
- ❖ How can we cultivate openness in our relationships with Christ and one another?

# Read

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7,  
10-13a

Psalms 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9,  
13-17, 34-38

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2026



#### REFLECTION

The blind man's testimony in this week's Gospel unfolds as a powerful narrative of transformation. Blind from birth, he is the recipient of Jesus' miraculous healing. His journey from this point onward reflects our own progression from spiritual blindness to clarity.

It is interesting to note that the blind man does not seek Jesus out for healing, but instead, Jesus, like in last week's Gospel, offers his gift freely. The blind man then becomes actively involved in the story, driving the narrative forward as he comes to discover who Jesus is. After initially referring to Jesus as "the man called Jesus" (Jn 9:11), the blind man's testimony evolves. As the Pharisees press for details, he becomes increasingly assertive, eventually declaring, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see" (Jn 9:25).

In his journey from darkness to light, the blind man not only gains physical sight but also spiritual insight. When Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man, the blind man's response is one of worship. His testimony, therefore, transcends the physical miracle, culminating in a profound encounter with the Son of God. As we reflect on our own journey to deeper spiritual insights, we pray that we may be witnesses to others so they may see the light of Christ.



#### ACTION

The blind man's testimony deepens as he comes to understand the source of his healing. Take time to reflect on your own spiritual journey. Are there points where you hesitated to ask God for healing? Are there other turning points that you now recognize as evidence of God's transformative hand? Write a personal testimony, highlighting moments of transformation and encounters with Jesus. Share this testimony with a trusted friend, mentor, or family member.



**Read the daily readings  
each day this week to come  
to a deeper understanding of  
who Jesus is.**

<https://bible.usccb.org/>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can you express gratitude to God for all the gifts he has given to you?
- ❖ How has your understanding of Jesus evolved over time?

# Read

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4,  
5-6, 7-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45 or 11:3-7, 17,  
20-27, 33b-45

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2026



#### REFLECTION

The story of Lazarus' death and Jesus' raising of him from the dead reveals to us the depth of Jesus' empathy and divine love. When Jesus learns of Lazarus' illness, he doesn't rush to intervene, allowing the sorrow to unfold for the greater glory of God. Arriving at the scene, he expresses his grief and shares in that time of mourning with those who are gathered.

This pivotal moment at Lazarus' tomb challenges the notion some people have of a God who is distant and shields himself from the suffering and pain we experience. Jesus, despite having the power to overcome death, engages deeply with the pain and loss experienced by his friends. His tears affirm his understanding of our human experience of mourning.

At the same time, his response to the situation—raising Lazarus from the dead—shows us that he can move us beyond suffering and loss. This passage encourages us to bring our grief to Jesus, trusting that, like Lazarus, our moments of despair can be transformed into displays of God's life-restoring grace. In facing loss with Jesus, we find solace in a savior who not only empathizes but triumphs over the very source of our sorrow.



#### ACTION

Christ's grief at the death of Lazarus shows us that pain and sorrow are an important part of the whole human experience, one that Jesus didn't try to avoid. Take time to write a letter to Jesus, expressing any grief, pain, or loss you may be carrying. Share your emotions openly, trusting that Jesus understands your grief and wants to bring new life from your pain.



**"By Your Side"**  
**—Tenth Avenue North**  
<https://youtu.be/f6fr2vJZAVM>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Jesus wept when he heard about Lazarus. Why is it important that Jesus understands our sadness?
- ❖ How do you feel when you experience loss or sadness? Are you comfortable expressing those feelings with others?



# Read

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18,  
19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66 or  
27:11-54

## LIVING THE WORD

### Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

March 29, 2026



#### REFLECTION

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus grapples with the weight of the impending crucifixion. His prayer—“[N]ot as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39)—is an expression of profound trust in the divine plan despite personal agony.

Judas’ betrayal, the disciples’ desertion, and Peter’s denial pile abandonment on abandonment. Yet, within this apparent loss, we find the profound trust of Jesus in his Father’s plan. Even as the events of the passion unfold, leading to the crucifixion, Jesus’ perseverance in obeying God’s will to the end bears witness to the depth of love God has for his creation and all of humanity: Jesus redeems us by his blood.

Palm Sunday challenges us to reflect on our own journey of trust when everything seems lost. In moments of betrayal, uncertainty, or loss, can we echo Jesus’ prayer, submitting our will to the divine plan? Can we find solace in the trust Jesus placed in his Father, even when faced with the most profound loss?



#### ACTION

During his agony in the garden, Jesus expressed his fear but also affirmed his trust in God’s plan. Create a personal statement of trust that you can recite during difficult moments. You can pick a verse from Scripture to memorize or craft your own short affirmation of trust in God’s purposes. To remind you to turn to God in times of trial or loss, write your affirmation on a small card and place it in your prayer space at home.

“Trust the past to the  
mercy of God, the present  
to his love, and the future to  
his providence.”

—St. Augustine



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Think of a time when you felt betrayed. How did you handle it, and did it affect your trust in others or in God?
- ❖ How can trust in God’s plan bring comfort in difficult times?

# Read

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17,  
22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1

Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9

## LIVING THE WORD

### Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

April 5, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Is there anything or anyone that you would drop everything for and physically run toward if you knew it or they were close by? Today's Gospel is filled with a sense of urgency as we see the reactions of Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John to the news that Jesus' tomb is empty. Mary Magdalene runs to tell the apostles this news. When Peter and John hear it, they run to the tomb to see for themselves. John even breaks out a little faster than Peter to make it to the tomb first.

In 2016, future Irish Olympian Phil Healy didn't yet know that she could surpass some of the fastest runners during an Irish University Athletics Association game and that she would eventually go on to participate in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (held in 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic). The video of her coming back from behind during a race in April 2016 went viral and is evidence of how belief can inspire action. The apostles may have wanted to give up on their faith after witnessing the crucifixion on Good Friday. But like Healy saw that glimmer of possibility during her race, the apostles took the opening of hope on Easter Sunday morning and literally ran with it.



#### ACTION

The apostles were afraid for their lives after seeing what was done to Jesus on Good Friday, but hope and possibility freed them to act and run toward the empty tomb on Easter morning. Take some time this week in prayer envisioning yourself as either Mary Magdalene, Peter, or John in today's Gospel passage. What would you be feeling or thinking during this moment? How can you apply these thoughts and feelings to your daily pursuit of faithful discipleship?



Watch Phil Healy's  
comeback run:

<https://youtu.be/HRa7mQg73Eg>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are you running toward? What things are you passionate about in your life that inspire you to take action?
- ❖ What are your motivations for your goals? What might be holding you back from attaining them?

# Read

Acts 2:42–47

Psalm 118:2–4, 13–15,  
22–24

1 Peter 1:3–9

John 20:19–31

## LIVING THE WORD

### Second Sunday of Easter / Sunday of Divine Mercy

April 12, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Although we are very familiar now with the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection, imagine how it must have been for his disciples. Nothing like what Jesus did had ever happened before (nor has it happened since). In this Sunday's Gospel, we hear of the apostles' first encounter with the risen Lord. Jesus appears to his apostles, breathes on them, and shows them his wounds from his crucifixion. Thomas famously was not there for this event and claimed that he would not believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead until he saw Jesus in person, just like the other apostles got to. Jesus appears again and Thomas believes. Jesus' words reach out to us today when he commends those of us who were not present at his resurrection, but still believe in him.

The reading goes on with further comments for future believers (us!). John, the Gospel's author, notes that he wrote this account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection so that all who read it will come to believe that Jesus truly is the Messiah. We are left to make our own choice based on what we have read: Do we believe?



#### ACTION

When Catholics gather on Sunday for Mass, we recite together the Nicene Creed (though the Apostles' Creed is sometimes recited instead). The Nicene Creed was formulated in AD 325 and further refined in 381. It articulates some of the main tenets of our faith. Read through the creed this week (<https://www.usccb.org/prayers/nicene-creed>) and take some time to reflect on the beliefs that guide your life. Would you include some of the same proclamations that we make in the Nicene Creed? Create your own personal creed of statements which you believe to be true and that shape your life.



Learn more about  
the Nicene Creed and what  
it means:

<https://youtu.be/aBaiMWrX9v4>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some fundamental principles that you believe in and live your life by?
- ❖ Do you consider yourself to be someone who believes things easily?  
Why or why not?

# Read

Acts 2:14, 22–33

Psalm 16:1–2, 5, 7–8,  
9–10

1 Peter 1:17–21

Luke 24:13–35

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Christ appears to the two disciples who are walking to Emmaus, but they do not recognize him at first. Perhaps this is because they are so downhearted and stuck in their disbelief that it prevents them from seeing what is truly in front of them. But when they open themselves to Jesus' words, their outlook changes. Jesus helps them to make sense of what they are feeling and put together the pieces of his teachings to see the truth of who he is.

When we are feeling disillusioned about something, talking to a friend can help us feel better. In a TEDx Talk, a woman named Jackie Burns shares her own story of disillusionment. At the end of high school, Jackie had spinal surgery owing to a rare disease. She faced many obstacles in recovery, not just physically but also emotionally and spiritually as her plan for her life changed. Yet from this experience, she is now able to encourage others to enter into a place of vulnerability as a way to move forward. By talking with and being present to the two disciples, Jesus helped the two disciples move past their pain to see him as he truly is. With his help, and the support of friends and family, may we also move past those things that are keeping us from seeing Jesus present in our lives.



#### ACTION

When we make the effort to take care of our minds, bodies, and spiritual lives, we can feel more whole and see things more clearly. This week, go for a walk with a friend and see what conversations come from your time together. If you aren't able to go with a friend, take a walk alone and talk with God. Be open to hearing him speak to your heart. After your walk, reflect on the conversation that you had with your friend or with God. How has this time transformed your outlook on life? What positive takeaways do you have that you can apply to your life?



Listen to Jackie Burns's  
TEDx Talk entitled

"The Untold Path of Recovery."

[https://youtu.be/HzEI\\_BDegII](https://youtu.be/HzEI_BDegII)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do you have a trusted person or friend that you talk with? Are you able to be that person for someone else?
- ❖ How can being vulnerable with someone make us feel better in mind, body, and spirit?

# Read

Acts 2:14a, 36–41

Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4,  
5, 6

1 Peter 2:20b–25

John 10:1–10

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Jesus gives us two different images of himself in today's Gospel, both relating to sheep. He first describes himself as the shepherd who knows the sheep and is known by the sheep. Then he calls himself the gate for the sheep. Both of these images highlight the care and protection given to us by Jesus. He not only guides us to safety, but the way to safety is through him.

These can be very reassuring images for us when we are facing difficult moments. At those times, we want to know that we are seen, that our cries are heard, and that everything will be okay. As the shepherd, Jesus knows where we are and what is happening to us. He knows our names and calls us to himself. He will guide us, but we also need to respond to him, to go where he is leading us. He leads us to himself where we enter into Christ's abundant peace.



#### ACTION

There are other places in the Gospels where Jesus connects our spiritual lives to passing through a gate. Read Matthew 7:13–14. How does this image of the narrow gate relate to today's Gospel? Both speak of having to pass through something to follow Jesus. Jesus knows this can sometimes be a challenge. Take some time to reflect on moments in your life that you have had to go through something, but passing through it made your faith stronger.



**"Stronger"**

**—Mandisa**

<https://youtu.be/MrcIN54E7Kk>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Does following Jesus and listening to his voice seem difficult? Why or why not?
- ❖ What are some of the benefits of following Jesus the Good Shepherd?



# Read

Acts 6:1-7

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5,  
18-19

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926) was a Spanish architect. Most of his works can be found in Barcelona, Spain, with perhaps the most famous being a church known as La Sagrada Família. The most infamous thing about this structure is that construction began on the church in 1882, but it is not projected to be finished until 2026.

Jesus talks about going to prepare a place for us in his father's house in today's Gospel. This discourse takes place during the Last Supper when the apostles did not yet understand fully the events that were about to take place on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Jesus is telling them not to be troubled. He reassures them that they will one day go with him to this place that he has prepared, but that he must first return to the Father. These words must have been comforting to recall when the disciples were faced with the challenges of Jesus' death and their ministry in the early Church.

Like the apostles, Gaudí could not have known all the challenges that would arise with completing his project. We too will face challenges in our life as we complete the work of discipleship. Jesus' words in today's Gospel reassure us that he is with us as we take up his mission.



#### ACTION

Jesus prepares his apostles for his resurrection and ascension into heaven. What do you picture heaven to be like? Take some time to draw or write about your image of heaven. You can search online for famous works of art that depict the artists' visions of heaven. The Book of Revelation also contains images of heaven, particularly in chapters 4 and 5. Read them for some additional inspiration.



Take a virtual tour of the  
Basílica de la Sagrada Família:

<https://sagradafamilia.org/en/virtual-tour>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can thinking about heaven help you in living as a disciple?
- ❖ How is Jesus' description of heaven different from how our contemporary culture might describe heaven?

# Read

Acts 8:5–8, 14–17

Psalm 66:1–3, 4–5, 6–7,  
16, 20

1 Peter 3:15–18

John 14:15–21

## LIVING THE WORD

### Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2026



#### REFLECTION

An advocate is someone who supports and gives help. Sometimes, an advocate will even speak on someone's behalf and fight for the needs and rights of that person when he or she is unable to do so for himself or herself. For example, Catholic Charities USA advocates for causes that reflect our Gospel values and the mission of Christ. It offers help to those in need such as immigrants, those facing the death penalty, and children in foster care. Catholic Charities employs social workers who will speak on behalf of those in need of support and fight for others to receive the help that they need.

In today's Gospel, which takes place at the Last Supper, Jesus mentions that he will send the Advocate to be with his disciples always. He is preparing them for his death, resurrection, and ascension and introducing them to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwells within us and helps us to know God and to remain in relationship with God by supporting us as we live out Christ's teachings. With this support and our confidence in Christ's promises, we too can become advocates for others and take up the work of the kingdom of God.



#### ACTION

This week, take some time to think about people who support you in your life. Who are they? How do they support you? Now think of people whom you advocate for. What do you do to support them? The world is full of those who are in need, and we hear some of their stories on the news. Look at a newspaper or news website to see whom you can add to your prayers this week. Consider volunteering with a local charity that advocates and supports those who have that particular need or another need that you feel called to contribute to.



Learn about the work of Catholic Charities and read the stories of those they have helped:

<https://stories.catholiccharitiesusa.org/and-they-shall-know-us-by-our-love/>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does the Holy Spirit advocate for us?
- ❖ How does being supportive of others help us carry out Christ's mission on earth?

# Read

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Ephesians 1:17-23

Matthew 28:16-20

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

May 14 or 17, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel reading includes what is typically referred to as the "Great Commission." Jesus, before he ascends to the Father, gives his disciples one final set of instructions. These instructions are a call to action, a call to take up Christ's mission and make it their own.

We too are Jesus' disciples and, by virtue of our baptism, are also called by him to go and make disciples of all peoples by leading them to the sacraments and helping them to be formed in his teachings. God's kingdom is without end and as members of the Body of Christ, we can work with one another to build up this kingdom so that more people are invited into it.

This can seem like a daunting task, to bring the Good News to the whole world and help people find their way as disciples. But Jesus' promise at the end of today's Gospel reassures us that we are not left alone in this work even if Jesus isn't physically present anymore. He is with us always! And, in a few days, we will celebrate Pentecost, reminding us that he also sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and to strengthen us for this work.



#### ACTION

After prayerfully reading through the Gospel several times, create a list of the concrete ways you can put Jesus' words into action and make a plan to do so over the next several weeks. Use the following three areas to guide your brainstorming: evangelization (sharing the Good News), liturgy and worship (inviting others to Mass and encouraging ongoing sacramental participation), and giving witness (showing others with our own actions what it means to live as Jesus commands). These areas are drawn from Jesus' words of commission and shape our lives as missionary disciples.

**"Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire."**

—St. Catherine of Siena



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Are you intimidated by sharing your faith with others? How might you overcome this?
- ❖ Where do you notice Jesus' presence in your life? In what ways is he always with you?

# Read

Acts 1:12-14

Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

## LIVING THE WORD

### Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 17, 2026



#### REFLECTION

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus is looking back on his ministry and the things that he has done for the glory of God, even as he looks toward his passion, where God will glorify him. This prayer that he makes to the Father takes place at the end of the Last Supper. His prayer is both reflective and hopeful and is an encouragement to his followers to persevere in their faith and good works.

Imminent death or persecution has a way of sharpening and bringing to light a person's most deeply held beliefs and convictions. In 1963, the Rivonia Trial began in South Africa. The trial, which lasted for approximately nine months, was brought against several anti-apartheid activists including Nelson Mandela. Mandela, who would later become president of South Africa, gave a three-hour long speech in his defense, concluding with the line, "[I]t is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." This statement summed up the conviction of the men on trial: they believed that opposing the extreme segregation and discrimination of apartheid was worth losing their lives for, if necessary. Though they were not sentenced to death, they did receive the sentence of life in prison. Eventually, some thirty years later, apartheid was abolished.

Jesus doesn't say in so many words that he is prepared to die, but he does emphasize his complete obedience to and cooperation with the Father, wherever that may lead. Jesus' prayer invites us to examine our lives to see how our beliefs lead us to accomplish the work of God in the world.



#### ACTION

Take some time to reflect on those things that you take pride in your life. What are some of your achievements? What are some goals that you still have? How can these achievements and goals lead you to God? Take these reflections to prayer, thanking God for the gifts he has given you and asking him to show you his path for your life.



Learn more about Nelson Mandela in this short video:

<https://youtu.be/PyfOrbO0xf4>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some of your core beliefs? How do these shape your actions?
- ❖ What does this prayer teach you about the relationship between Jesus and the Father?

# Read

Acts 2:1-11

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30,  
31, 34

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

John 20:19-23

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of Pentecost

May 24, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Following his resurrection, Jesus appears to his disciples who locked themselves in a room because they were afraid of being persecuted like Jesus was. In today's reading, we hear how he fulfills the promise he made to them at the Last Supper, of sending the Advocate—the Holy Spirit—to them to help them in their Christian journey. At this time, he also imparts his peace upon them and encourages them to share it with others. This peace is such an important part of his message and gift that he offers it to them twice in this short passage. For the frightened disciples, we can only imagine how it felt to receive that peace.

There are many things in our world today that leave us yearning for peace. People from all walks of life work together for causes of peace and use a variety of mediums to foster peace. For example, artist Alexandra Nechita sculpted a sixteen-foot-tall monument entitled "Let There Be Peace" that is on display in Singapore. As Christians, we are called to share Christ's peace with the world. How can we use our gifts and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to breathe peace into the world today?



#### ACTION

Imagine that you have been asked to create something to inspire peace in the world. It could be a piece of art, a song, a story, or some other creative medium. What would you produce? Would you include any religious symbols or themes in the work? Take some time this week to outline or sketch some ideas of how you would create this work. You don't need to actually create the work, but as you reflect, think about how you might inspire peace in your daily life and put those ideas into action.



Create a playlist of songs about peace and share it with your friends and family.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What images come to mind when you think about the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ How can the gifts of the Holy Spirit help us promote peace in our daily lives?



# Read

Exodus 34:4b–6, 8–9

Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55

2 Corinthians 13:11–13

John 3:16–18

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

May 31, 2026



#### REFLECTION

“For God so loved the world” (John 3:16) shows up on bumper stickers, billboards, and posters at football games. It is a good reminder of God’s love and Jesus’ sacrifice, but the three short verses we read today also tell us a lot about the Trinity.

The Father is the one who *sends*, who gives a mission. The Son is the one who *goes* into the world, taking up the mission set by the Father. Jesus saves by wrapping the broken world in love, *the eternal bond between the Father and the Son*—aka the Holy Spirit. And this mission of love costs the Father his Son, and the Son his life.

The Gospel also says that if someone does not believe in Jesus, they are “already condemned.” Ouch! But remember that God doesn’t force us to believe—God respects the free will he gave us. The condemnation mentioned here is not some kind of punishment God hands out to those who have doubts or struggle to understand; instead, it’s a natural result of choosing not to accept God’s love. Rejecting God’s love means we have separated *ourselves* from the source of all good things, in this life and the next. That’s why our mission is to humbly accept and share this saving, Trinitarian love with others.



#### ACTION

This week, consider those around you who have trouble believing that Jesus came to save, not to condemn. Ask the Lord to reveal to you moments in your life that helped you to understand that truth and believe in the Jesus we hear about in the Gospel. How might you share those moments with others?



Watch this powerful reflection from Matthew Kelly on Jesus’ sacrifice.

<https://youtu.be/EyNqhMtmVHI>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Have there been times when I have chosen to reject God’s love?
- ❖ How can I share the saving love of Jesus so that others can encounter him?

# Read

Deuteronomy 8:2–3,  
14b–16a

Psalms 147:12–13, 14–15,  
19–20

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

John 6:51–58

## LIVING THE WORD

### Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

June 7, 2026



#### REFLECTION

The Eucharist makes no sense. Seriously: How could it be logical for the God of the entire universe to be present in the form of a tiny wafer of so-called bread? It just sounds so absurd!

A lot of Jesus' followers felt the same way. Today's Gospel takes us right to the moment Jesus drops a "truth bomb": those who follow him will need to eat his flesh and drink his blood. Understandably, a lot of people are shocked! Those who don't walk away immediately are quarrelling and murmuring like their Israelite ancestors did in the desert—grumbling, complaining, and confused about God's actions.

But in the passage that follows today's Gospel (John 6:60–69), we see Peter react differently than the murmurers. Peter knows Jesus; he's spent time with him. This new development sounds like the Jesus that Peter knows, the one who humbled himself completely to come as a tiny baby, and to someday die the death of a criminal on the cross. Instead of the manna that the Israelites received in the desert or their hope for the Promised Land, Jesus is going to give them himself, in the humble, everyday form of bread and wine! And this brings us to more than the Promised Land; it brings us to our eternal life with God.



#### ACTION

This week, take some time to honestly reflect on how startling and different the Eucharist really is. Imagine you're hearing about Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—for the first time. Does it sound like something the Jesus you know would do? Write down your reflections in your journal and consider reading John 6:1–71 to get a deeper understanding of Jesus' words in today's Gospel.



"Real Presence"

—John Levi

[https://youtu.be/rF54I\\_hsV34](https://youtu.be/rF54I_hsV34)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ When it comes to the Eucharist, are you more like Peter or the quarreling followers?
- ❖ How can you introduce others to the Jesus who loves them so much he's willing to be consumed and live within them?

# Read

Exodus 19:2–6a

Psalm 100:1–2, 3, 5

Romans 5:6–11

Matthew 9:36–10:8

## LIVING THE WORD

### Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 14, 2026



#### REFLECTION

In today's Gospel, we find Jesus after a staggering run of healings. He has cast out demons. He has healed people suffering with blindness, muteness, paralysis, leprosy, fever, hemorrhages—he has even saved a little girl everyone thought was dead!

Jesus was surely tired. He could have said, "I've done enough." But still he looks with compassion on the people who approach him, likening them to sheep wandering without the guidance and care of a shepherd. They are like an abundant harvest of mercy just waiting to be gathered for the Father, and so Jesus asks the Father to send more harvesters.

As Jesus names the harvesters, the twelve disciples, he empowers each of them to do the very work he has been doing: proclaiming the kingdom, driving out demons, and healing sickness. They are to seek first the lost sheep, the ones who should be close but who have grown distant from the Lord. And they are to do it all as Jesus does it, not for fame, money, or power, but given freely, out of gratitude for the mercy the twelve have already experienced themselves.



#### ACTION

Take a moment to reflect on the power and responsibility that comes with living as a disciple of Jesus. In your own life, do you take seriously the mission to the "lost sheep"? Do you have confidence that God empowers you to do the work of Jesus today? What can you do today to reap a harvest of mercy for those in your life? Brainstorm some ideas and keep the list handy so you can act upon it when an opportune moment arises.



"Change the World"

—Ri-an, featuring  
Rachel Nemiroff

<https://youtu.be/e0DhBOvbKak>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Who are the "lost sheep" in your life? Can you see them with the eyes of Jesus, looking on them with compassion and mercy?
- ❖ Do you ever get tired of the life of a disciple? How can you find rest and refreshment in Jesus?

# Read

Jeremiah 20:10–13

Psalm 69:8–10, 14, 17,  
33–35

Romans 5:12–15

Matthew 10:26–33

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 21, 2026



#### REFLECTION

“God knows all”—this can be a comforting thought or a terrifying one. On the one hand, it feels good to know that God is aware of even what happens to a small sparrow and cares for you, his beloved, so much more than those birds! God knows us intimately, down to the number of hairs on our head. Don’t we all deeply want to be known, truly known!

On the other hand, we might squirm a bit when we remember that God knows *everything*—our secrets, the things we conceal, the things we whisper in the hopes that no one hears. Yes, even that.

But the Gospel tells us not to be afraid! If thinking of what we conceal from others makes us afraid, we should bring those things to God and examine our consciences to see whether our secrets are sinful or whether they are simply burdens that we need to seek out trustworthy people to help us unpack (perhaps including mental health professionals).



#### ACTION

Confession (the sacrament of reconciliation) reminds us that God sheds light on our secrets in order to heal, not harm. Set aside time this week to honestly reflect on the things you keep hidden. What sins do I need to bring into the light of reconciliation? Are there things I’m struggling with that aren’t sins, but are hurting me and should be revealed to someone I trust? How can I open my heart to the light of God’s love and mercy? Make a plan to go to reconciliation in the next week or two.



Check out “Making a Good Confession (Examining Your Conscience)” to explore different ways to prepare for reconciliation.

<https://youtu.be/A6vcPLn1odA>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What is your first reaction to this Gospel passage: fear or comfort?
- ❖ How does your witness of faith act as an acknowledgment of God before others?

# Read

2 Kings 4:8–11, 14–16a  
Psalm 89:2–3, 16–17,  
18–19

Romans 6:3–4, 8–11

Matthew 10:37–42

## LIVING THE WORD

### Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 28, 2026



#### REFLECTION

This passage from Matthew is really challenging! Is Jesus really saying not to love my mother and father? Isn't that against a commandment?

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, and so his statement here about loving parents can't contradict the commandment to honor your father and mother. But in order to love rightly, we have to love in the right order. We all know that it would be wrong to love, say, our shiny new car more than our parents.

God is above all things and all people. We must love God and love our neighbor as ourselves but love of God comes first. Without love of God, our attempts to love everyone and everything else get out of alignment.

Likewise, when Jesus exhorts us to lose our lives, he's not saying life isn't good. It is! It's the greatest gift we are given except the gift of God himself. But discipleship comes with a cost: we must take up our cross to follow Jesus, just as he took up his cross. We are never called to disrespect family, friends, other people, our own bodies, or the things of this world. But the cross does require sacrifice, to do things we would rather not do, for the sake of the love of God.



#### ACTION

A life of discipleship is countercultural and standing up for our beliefs is risky. Loving and honoring our family and friends doesn't mean we can't push back if they ask us to do something wrong. This week, reflect on your relationships. Are you willing to risk some healthy, loving conflict for the sake of loving and living like Jesus? Bring these relationships to God and ask him to show you how to approach them.



**"In Christ Alone"**

**—Celtic Worship ft.**

**Steph Macleod**

<https://youtu.be/8kvFtXphmMU>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Are you loving the people and things in your life in the right order, keeping God first?
- ❖ How is Jesus asking you to take up your cross today? Are you willing to make that sacrifice?



# Read

Zechariah 9:9–10

Psalm 145:1–2, 8–9,  
10–11, 13–14

Romans 8:9, 11–13

Matthew 11:25–30

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 5, 2026



#### REFLECTION

This week's Gospel says that we come to know the Father through the Son, who reveals the Father to us. Immediately after saying this, Jesus invites us to come to him.

*Come to me. You will find rest.*

*You're burdened? Come to me. I don't promise you a carefree life, but I do promise that what you will be asked to carry will not be a burden, but a blessing.*

*Come to me. Learn from me. Become truly wise: childlike, meek, and humble.*

*Trust in me. All this, who I AM, reveals who the Father is as well.*

Jesus is saying to us that it's not by struggle, might, intellectual prowess, or cleverness that we discover God's identity. By surrendering to the life Jesus calls us to live, we discover that the responsibilities and boundaries are actually a gift, not deprivation. We discover that our Father really is the loving Father we have always hoped he would be. We can rest in the confidence that we are beloved children of the Father, as we see his face reflected in the Son. When we return to the work of mission, we will find the work light—not toil, but joy!



#### ACTION

Each day this week, set aside five minutes to slow down. (If you are especially busy, you might want to set a reminder in your phone to do this.) Find a quiet spot to take a deep breath. Clear your head by letting go of all the interesting, intellectual ways you try to make sense of the mystery of God, and simply come to Jesus. Say to Jesus: "Show me the Father." Allow Jesus to welcome you into the Father's loving arms. Rest.



"Take It Easy"

—The Porter's Gate,

feat. Matt Maher and Paul Zach

[https://youtu.be/fxPhR\\_6p6w4](https://youtu.be/fxPhR_6p6w4)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What else do you know about Jesus that can help you to know God better?
- ❖ When was the last time you allowed yourself to rest in God's love?

# Read

Isaiah 55:10–11

Psalm 65:10, 11, 12–13,  
14

Romans 8:18–23

Matthew 13:1–23 or 13:1–9

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 12, 2026



#### REFLECTION

The parable of the sower is pretty famous, partly because it's one of the more obvious parables Jesus uses. The seed is the Word of God, and the various soils and planting conditions are the hearts and conditions of the hearers of the Word of God.

But the most important reality is that the seed is the same in each planting. Sometimes we get caught up in the way a certain book, podcast, ministry, or parish expresses the Word of God. But in this parable, the seed was never the problem; the soil is.

In sharing the Good News, evangelizing, our job isn't to engineer a "better seed." And it's not simply to spread as much seed as possible. Rather, we need to be attentive to the "soil" that receives the seed or our efforts will be wasted!

Whether that soil is our own hearts or the hearts of those we encounter in our lives, we have to do everything we can to prepare the soil to receive the Word. We must remove the rocks and thorns, ward off the birds, and enrich the soil so the Word can flourish and—ultimately—produce more seeds.



#### ACTION

Spend time in prayer this week reflecting on the parable. What are the rocks and thorns in the lives of the people around you? How can you deepen and water the soil of faith of those who are struggling under the heat of the sun? Whose faith is in danger of being gobbled up by birds? Whose faith is deeply rooted, and how can you lean on them to help you keep producing good seed?



"New Ground"

—Tauren Wells

[https://youtu.be/YgqFErlls\\_o](https://youtu.be/YgqFErlls_o)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What kind of soil is your own heart?
- ❖ Are you deeply rooted, or do you need help to clear out the obstacles to your faith growth?

# Read

Wisdom 12:13, 16–19  
Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10,  
15–16

Romans 8:26–27

Matthew 13:24–43 or  
13:24–30

## LIVING THE WORD

### Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 19, 2026



#### REFLECTION

This week we hear another parable about seeds but this time, one of the sowers has ill intentions. Under the cover of night, he has sown seeds that will sprout as weeds among the wheat.

In contrast to last week's parable, this time the soil is the same, but the seed and plant are what makes the difference. The deciding factor in how something grows is based on the choices of the master. He is concerned for the health of the wheat. Rather than risk harming the wheat, he allows the weeds to grow up alongside it. It is only at the end, at harvest time, that they will be separated: the wheat is carried into the barn for safekeeping and the weeds are bundled up to be burned.

It's a startling end, but the reason for the master's actions should be comforting; he protects the wheat he has sown. God refuses to "throw the baby out with the bathwater"—the wheat plants, the good seed he had sown, will not be harmed in the pursuit of justice. He won't risk uprooting us in order to eradicate evil, but instead tends to us in the midst of it. Perhaps that's why God permits (but doesn't cause) evil and suffering, because, in the midst of these weeds, his wheat—his disciples—are growing.



#### ACTION

When we encounter suffering and evil, it's natural to want God to put a stop to it. Imagine, instead, that the roots of these "weeds" are bound up in the roots that feed the "wheat." How might that change your prayer in times of trouble? This week, use this point of view to journal about some "weeds" that you encounter in your life or that you see in your community.



Learn about the causes of suffering in our world with this short video, "3 Reasons We Suffer."

[https://youtu.be/\\_-kgbEukmKg](https://youtu.be/_-kgbEukmKg)



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ When you encounter suffering and evil, do you blame God? Do you minimize his goodness, his knowledge, or his power to make sense of suffering?
- ❖ How can you shift your perspective to see reality from God's point of view?

# Read

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77,  
127-128, 129-130

Romans 8:28-30

Matthew 13:44-52 or  
13:44-46

## LIVING THE WORD

### Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 26, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Today's parables describe what the kingdom of heaven is like. We should always honor the kingdom as a treasure and something of great value. In doing so, we allow it to become our priority in life, having all our actions lead us to that kingdom.

As we value and live for the kingdom, God values and lives for us. God seeks us out and sells everything for us—that is what the whole life of Jesus is about! And, like the fishermen sorting through the fish, God knows what he is looking for: he's looking for you.

As he shares these brief parables, Jesus is repeatedly explaining why he came to earth, suffered, died, and rose. Why did he come? Why did the Father send him? Why does the Holy Spirit guide the Church even today? To show us the kingdom of heaven and to help us see how we are part of that hoped-for reality by offering us salvation. God's deep and sacrificial love for us—acted out in tangible, transformative ways—is the reality of the kingdom of heaven.



#### ACTION

This week, prayerfully place yourself in the situations of the parables. We are part of God's kingdom and by our actions, we help to build up that kingdom. *Treasure*: What is hidden within you that God planted there so you can use it further his kingdom? *Pearl*: What value do you bring to the world by being yourself, uniquely and perfectly made by God? How does your identity help shape the kingdom of God on earth? *Fish*: Do your choices reflect Christ's choices? How does the witness of your life draw others into God's kingdom?



Read this article about  
how much God loves and  
longs for us.

<https://ltp.org/s/God-loves>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do you believe Jesus is right, that you're worth saving? If not, ask him to help you believe.
- ❖ How does knowing your worth in God's eyes help you to see the kingdom more clearly?

# Read

Isaiah 55:1-3

Psalm 145:8-9, 15-16,  
17-18

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Matthew 14:13-21

## LIVING THE WORD

### Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 2, 2026



#### REFLECTION

Even for the hospitable culture Jesus lived in at the time, it would be preposterous to be prepared to feed five thousand men, plus women and children!

But Jesus dismisses the disciples' very reasonable proposal to send the crowds away. Instead, he asks the disciples to give the crowd some food. Matthew's Gospel doesn't say how or where the disciples got the food they found (see John 6:1-13 for another account of the miracle). All that matters is that they brought to Jesus what they had and then Jesus does what Jesus does: he transforms the little offering into a feast.

The gathering of leftovers is important, too. It shows the enormous scale of Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and fishes. There are more fragments left over than what they started with! There can be no denying the miraculous nature of what has occurred. But the fragments are also spiritually significant. There is nothing that goes unnoticed or thrown away in Jesus' eyes—even the smallest pieces of our lives are precious to the Lord.



#### ACTION

Sometimes we hold back because we reasonably expect that we won't make much of a difference. But when we remember what Jesus has done with a few loaves and fish, we recognize that God is capable of so much more, if we collaborate with him. What is Jesus asking you to allow him to transform? What fragments of your life does he hold sacred while you dismiss them as too small to matter? Reflect on these questions this week and make a plan to be more open to cooperating with God's will for your life.



Watch this clip from  
"The Chosen" of Jesus  
multiplying the loaves and fish.

<https://youtu.be/gxT8N0uJJs8>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What can you offer to help feed the world, both physically and spiritually?
- ❖ Do you really believe that Jesus can transform your little offerings into feasts?