Pondering the Word...

The Anawim Way

Daily Liturgical Meditations

Twenty-Ninth to Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

October 18 to November 28, 2026
Cycle A - Year 2

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ENDORSEMENT

"A good homily should have, at least, these two important qualities: it should be faithful to the Gospel proclaimed, and it should speak to people in the context of their respective life-situations.

In all my years of preaching to the people of all ages and social backgrounds, I have found **"Pondering the Word"** published by the Anawim Community, a great help. Not only does it represent the Word of God in its simplicity and richness, it likewise offers points for prayer, meditation and sharing which speak to the hearts of modern men and women as they move about in our fast-paced world.

Excerpt from an Endorsement Letter of Bp. Jesse Mercado, DD
Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Parañaque

What is the Anawim Spirituality?

Our spirituality has three essential characteristics:

Liturgical

The Liturgy is the source of our formation. Daily, we draw inspiration from the readings and prayers of the Liturgy, which we understand to be the ponderings of Mary's heart. For this reason, we honor Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Liturgical Life.

Eucharistic

Jesus in the Eucharist is the center of our spirituality. By faithful participation in Holy Mass and frequent Eucharistic Adoration, we are empowered by the Presence of Jesus to go forth to serve the people of God in all the circumstances of life.

Marian

We entrust ourselves to Mary, the mother and model of every Christian. She continually forms us in her spirit of humility, compassion, and reconciling love, transforming us into the likeness of Jesus. She shares with us her spiritual motherhood as we are called to bring forth the life of Jesus in others.

If you would like to explore the Anawim Community further, we invite you to contact us.

Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

"… repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

Matthew 22:21

Theme for the Week

All authority comes from God. Civil authority comes from him and it serves his purpose, so we are called to respect it, but our ultimate obedience is to God rather than to men. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let us all joyfully "give to God what belongs to God."

Never Become a Slave to Earthly Power Since You Belong to the Lord

A Spiritual Reflection by Pope Francis

The Gospel of today's Liturgy tells us about some Pharisees who join with the Herodians to set a trap for Jesus. They were always trying to set traps for him. They go to him and ask: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (*Mt* 22:17). It is a ruse: if Jesus legitimises the tax, he places himself on the side of a political power that is ill-supported by the people, whereas if he says not to pay it, he can be accused of rebellion against the empire. A real trap. However, he escapes this snare. He asks them to show him a coin, which bears the image of Caesar, and says to them: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (v. 21). What does this mean?

These words of Jesus have become commonplace, but at times they have been used incorrectly — or at least reductively — to talk about relations between Church and State, between Christians and politics; they are often interpreted as if Jesus wanted to separate "Caesar" from "God," that is, earthly from spiritual reality. At times we too think in this way: faith with its practices is one thing, and daily life is another. And this will not do. No. This is a form of "schizophrenia," as if faith had nothing to do with real life, with the challenges of society, with social justice, with politics and so forth.

In reality, Jesus wants to help us place "Caesar" and "God" each in their proper place. The care for earthly order belongs to Caesar — that is, to politics, to civil institutions, to social and economic processes, and we who are immersed in this reality must give back to society what it offers us, through our contribution as responsible citizens, taking care of what is entrusted to us, promoting law and justice in the world of work, paying our taxes honestly, committing ourselves to the common good, and so on. At the same time however, Jesus affirms the fundamental reality: that man belongs to God: *all of man* and *every human being*. And this means that we do not belong to any earthly reality, to any "Caesar." We are the Lord's, and we must not be slaves to any earthly power. On the coin, then, there is the image of the emperor, but Jesus reminds us that our lives are imprinted with the

image of God, which nothing and no one can obscure. The things of this world belong to Caesar, but man and the world itself belong to God. Let us not forget this!

We understand, then, that Jesus is restoring each one of us to our own identity: on the coin of this world there is the image of Caesar, but you, me — each one of us — which image do you carry within yourself? Let us ask ourselves this question: what image do I carry inside myself? You — whose is the image of your life? Do we remember that we belong to the Lord, or do we let ourselves be shaped by the logic of the world and make work, politics and money our idols to be worshipped?

May the Holy Virgin help us to recognize and honour our dignity and that of every human being.

Pope Francis, Angelus Message, October 22, 2023
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October 18, 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
World Mission Sunday

*Today is **World Mission Sunday**. Together with the whole Church, let us pray and work for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every heart, nation and people.*



First Reading: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, Cyrus,
whose right hand I grasp,
subduing nations before him,
and making kings run in his service,
opening doors before him
and leaving the gates unbarred:
For the sake of Jacob, my servant,
of Israel, my chosen one,
I have called you by your name,
giving you a title, though you knew me not.
I am the LORD and there is no other,
there is no God besides me.
It is I who arm you, though you know me not,
so that toward the rising and the setting of the sun
people may know that there is none besides me.
I am the LORD, there is no other.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10
Give the Lord glory and honor.

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all you lands.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.
R. Give the Lord glory and honor.
For great is the LORD and highly to be praised;
awesome is he, beyond all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are things of nought,
but the LORD made the heavens.
R. Give the Lord glory and honor.
Give to the LORD, you families of nations,
give to the LORD glory and praise;
give to the LORD the glory due his name!
Bring gifts, and enter his courts.
R. Give the Lord glory and honor.

Worship the LORD, in holy attire;
tremble before him, all the earth;
say among the nations: The LORD is king,
he governs the peoples with equity.
R. Give the Lord glory and honor.



Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father, knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

Gospel Acclamation: Philippians 2:15d, 16a

Alleluia, alleluia. Shine like lights in the world as you hold on to the word of life. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone's opinion, for you do not regard a person's status. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" Knowing their malice, Jesus said, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax." Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" They replied, "Caesar's." At that he said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."



Meditation:

The Word of God helps us to know the deepest meaning of our existence and so find our true identity. What is the purpose of our life? Today's Responsorial Psalm gives us an answer: we are to "give the Lord glory and honor." We are created to give glory to God and to participate in his glory for all eternity. We give the Lord glory and honor

because, as the psalms tell us, "to the LORD belong the earth and all that it contains, the world and all who live there" (Ps 24:1).

The fact that the world and all who live in it belong to the Lord gives us a starting point for pondering this Sunday's readings. In fact, Jesus uses the question that was intended to entrap him as an occasion to explain this very fact. The Pharisees ask him, "Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" Instead of replying with a simple "yes" or "no," he says to them, "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

This answer is profound! On one hand, Jesus acknowledges the legitimate authority of the civil government (represented by "Caesar") and shows that Christians are to fulfill their duties as citizens. Obedience to civil authorities and laws for the common good is part of giving glory and honor to God, as today's Psalm urges us to do. St. Paul gives an instruction on this point in his Letter to the Romans: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement" (Rm 13:1-2).

Jesus teaches that in addition to the legitimate authority of Caesar, and indeed above it, is the authority of God. We are to repay to God what belongs to God – and all of us, including Caesar and all civil authorities, belong to God. We are all to use whatever authority or power we have in the service of God. Just as coins are minted with an image and inscription determined by the government, so each human person is "minted" as a precious image of God, bearing a spiritual inscription: "I belong to God." It is proper to give money to the government in payment of taxes, to "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" for the good of the society, and it is proper for every person to give his or her service to God. Civil authorities in particular have a special responsibility to "repay to God" – that is, to carry out their duties for the glory of God. Government officials, who receive their authority from God, are at the service of God. Their governance is accountable to him.

This does not mean that all government rulers know the Lord or know that they are serving him. Today's first reading points us to the example of the Persian King Cyrus, who treated the Jews with clemency.

Though he did not know God, God was the one who raised him up and used him as an instrument for his own divine purposes. God says to King Cyrus through the prophet Isaiah: "for the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Israel, my chosen one, I have called you by your name, giving you a title, though you knew me not…. It is I who arm you, though you know me not, so that toward the rising and the setting of the sun people may know that there is none besides me." By God's design, the pagan king serves to give him glory and honor.

We know what Cyrus and many other governors do not know, that "to the Lord belong the earth and all that it contains." Thus, we know that all the rulers of the earth belong to the Lord and are to give him glory and honor by their upright and just exercise of earthly power. When earthly rulers demand what is unjust, we must resist them, as part of our witness to the authority of God. The *Catechism* explains: "Man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not 'the Lord'" (CCC 450). Whether we live under good or bad governments, our call is always to "shine like lights in the world as we hold on to the word of life" (Gospel Acclamation).

Just as our obedience is to God rather than to man, so also the power to live this obedience comes from God not from man. St. Paul reminds us in today's second reading that our "work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope" come from the Lord who has chosen us. We have received the ability to live our faith "in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction," so that as we journey through time as citizens of this world, we keep our hearts fixed on our true homeland where we will share eternal glory with the Lord.

What is the purpose of my life? How do I put into practice the statement of Jesus, "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God"? What must I surrender to keep my heart anchored in my true, eternal homeland?

Mary, in all that I do, may my light shine in the world as I profess that God is Lord of all.

October 19, Monday, 29th Week in Ordinary Time
Saints John de Brebeuf and Isaac Jogues, Priests and Companions, Martyrs (USA)
Saint Paul of the Cross, Priest (Philippines)



First Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Brothers and sisters: You were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh, following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 100:1b-2, 3, 4ab, 4c- 5
The Lord made us, we belong to him.

Sing joyfully to the LORD all you lands;
serve the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful song.
R. The Lord made us, we belong to him.
Know that the LORD is God;
he made us, his we are;
his people, the flock he tends.
R. The Lord made us, we belong to him.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
his courts with praise.
R. The Lord made us, we belong to him.
Give thanks to him; bless his name, for he is good:
the LORD, whose kindness endures forever,
and his faithfulness, to all generations.
R. The Lord made us, we belong to him.

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 5:3
Alleluia, alleluia. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Luke 12:13-21
Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?" Then he said to the crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!"' But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."



Meditation:
Today's readings, continuing the theme of yesterday, highlight a central truth of who we are, namely, that we are made for God. Fittingly, today's Responsorial Psalm states it very clearly: "The Lord made us, we belong to him." With this in mind, we remember what Jesus said in yesterday's Gospel: "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." All human beings, including Caesar and all of us, have been made by God and we belong to God. In this same vein, St. Paul tells us in today's first reading: "for we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them." Our life, then, is to be dedicated to God. It is in living for God that we find our true identity and true destiny.

St. Paul reminds us that sin has the terrible effect of making us lose our way; we forget our identity as people who belong to God, and we no longer pursue our destiny, the glory of God. This is what happens when we live according to "the wishes of the flesh and the impulses." Sin, which promises lasting happiness, turns out to leave us spiritually

dead: "you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you once lived." God, however, does not allow sin to have the last word. He offers us a way back to life in and through Jesus Christ. "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ, raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

With such splendor as our destiny, and with such a merciful Redeemer acting on our behalf, to lose our way again would be a most serious tragedy. Compared to the gift of salvation, all the riches of this world are of no value. Therefore, in today's Gospel, Jesus warns us to "take care against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions." And, to illustrate the danger – and the foolishness – of putting our hopes for happiness in the possession of earthly treasures, he gives us the parable of the rich fool.

The rich man is a fool because he does nothing to give honor and glory to God. He does not use his riches for the good of others; he gives no thought to the most fundamental duties of human life: love of God and love of neighbor. In other words, he has fixed his attention on what is less important and failed to consider what is really important. Jesus does not want us to end up like the rich fool! He wants us to reign with him in Heaven, not to hoard more possessions on earth. The moment of judgment is disastrous "for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."

The readings, then, set two kinds of riches before us: the riches of this world and "the immeasurable riches" of God's grace. It is clear that the way of wisdom is to follow and serve and love the Lord. "Give thanks to him; bless his name, for he is good: the LORD, whose kindness endures forever, and his faithfulness, to all generations." The Psalm response gives us an anchor of truth to which we can cling in every circumstance throughout our life, right up to the moment when 'our life is demanded of us': "The Lord made us, we belong to him."

What must I let go of to live as God's handiwork? In what ways do my daily routines show that I am hoarding earthly treasures instead of growing rich in what matters to God? How can I better surrender my life to Jesus, who mercifully raised me from spiritual death?

Mary, inspire me to use the gifts that I have for the glory of God and the needs of others.

Sts. John Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, and Companions, pray for us.

St. Paul of the Cross, pray for us.

Today we honor eight French Jesuit missionaries who were martyred in North America between 1642 and 1649. Their holiness is reflected in their extraordinary courage in enduring torture from the native tribes they were trying to evangelize. **John de Brébeuf**, born in 1593, was mocked by being "baptized" with boiling water, severely mutilated, and scalped. **Isaac Jogues**, born in 1607, faced similar tortures, including having his fingers chewed off. When he escaped and returned to France, he received papal permission to say Mass with mutilated hands. In his zeal for souls, he returned to the missions. He was captured again and cruelly tortured. Before his death he said, "These tortures are great, but God is greater." All eight martyrs are honored at two shrines: one in Ontario, Canada, and one in New York. The martyrs were canonized in 1930 and they are the patron saints of North America.

Paul of the Cross was born in 1694 in northern Italy. Son of a wealthy merchant, he experienced a conversion to a life of prayer at age 19. His reading of the *Treatise on the Love of God* by St. Francis de Sales and direction from priests of the Capuchin Order taught him the primacy of love and the need to go beyond our own images of God. It became St. Paul's lifelong conviction that God is most easily found in the Passion of Jesus Christ, being the most overwhelming sign of God's love for us. His life was devoted to bringing this message to all and founding a community in 1720 (the Passionists) whose members would do the same. He died on October18, 1775 and was canonized on June 29, 1867 by Pope Pius IX. In 1869, his feast day was inserted in the General Roman Calendar.



First Reading: Ephesians 2:12-22

Brothers and sisters: You were at that time without Christ, alienated from the community of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the Blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, he made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his Flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile both with God, in one Body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85:9ab-10, 11-12, 13-14
The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD–for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.
R. The Lord speaks of peace to his people.
Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.
R. The Lord speaks of peace to his people.
The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and salvation, along the way of his steps.
R. The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

Gospel Acclamation: Luke 21:36
Alleluia, alleluia. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you may have the strength to stand before the Son of Man. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Luke 12:35-38
Jesus said to his disciples: "Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants."



Meditation:
God made us for himself. He made us to be truly happy forever. He does everything possible to ensure that we attain the eternal happiness for which he made us. St. Paul explains to us in today's first reading that Christ shed his Blood on the Cross to bring us peace, which is, in deepest sense, complete and lasting reconciliation with God. Through Christ, through his death on the Cross, we have already become "fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God."

The virtue by which we can look forward to the future with confidence in the goodness of God is the virtue of *hope*. Jesus tells us in the Gospel that we are to live with a constant readiness for a great event which is sure to come, his return as our Master. His directive, using images from the culture of his times, is that we should "gird our loins," and "light our lamps." These images convey the need for readiness and vigilance. We are to be fully dressed and ready to respond, prepared even in the darkest moments of night to welcome the Lord. We can think of the Lord's coming both in the sense of his return at the end of time and in the sense of his breaking into our lives at any time of any day. Indeed, he is coming to us *right now* as we ponder his words.

Jesus tells us that if we are vigilant when he arrives, we can look forward to being treated with amazing kindness and humility: the Master will serve the servant! "He will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them." It is hard to imagine such treatment. It may even make us uncomfortable to think of Jesus lowering himself to serve us when we have done no more for him than

stay awake. We recall the reaction of Peter when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus' promise to serve his servants is not intended to humiliate us but to reveal the self-emptying love of God. There is no limit to God's willingness to humble himself for our sake. Waiting on us at table or washing our feet is simply a sign of his ultimate gift, the laying down of his life for us. Our hope is based on this amazing revelation of divine love. We do not have to live in fear of condemnation because God is on our side.

St. Paul's words to the Ephesians invite us to reflect on what life is like when we are *not* vigilant, when we are not "awake" to the love of God, when we are living without him. The Ephesians, who were for the most part Gentiles, could look back to the time when they were "without Christ, alienated from the community of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise." Paul says that they were "without hope and without God in the world." Whenever we are without God, we are also without hope. What sort of future is in store for us if there is no one trustworthy awaiting us?

Now that the love of God has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ, we are no longer in the dark, no longer "without hope." We are "no longer strangers and sojourners"; we are "members of the household of God." Even when we are suffering along our journey in this valley of tears, we can rejoice. Present sufferings cannot extinguish our hope for a glorious future. In faith we know that the future has already begun. Even now we are being built into a holy temple in the Lord, to become "a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." As we await like faithful servants the coming of our Master, we rejoice to know that he is already with us, preparing us for the fullness of life in his presence. "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival."

How alive is the virtue of hope in my life? What is hindering me from a ready response to welcome the Lord whenever he comes? Where in my life have I grown spiritually drowsy or indifferent?

Mary, guide me to be more "vigilant" and "awake" for the Lord's coming.

St. Paul of the Cross, pray for us.

Paul of the Cross (see October 19)

October 21, Wednesday, 29th Week in Ordinary Time
Feast of Saint Pedro Calungsod, martyr (Philippines)

Readings for the Feast of St. Pedro Calungsod: *See Lectionary: Comm of Martyrs*



First Reading: Ephesians 3:2-12

Brothers and sisters: You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly earlier. When you read this you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same Body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

Of this I became a minister by the gift of God's grace that was granted me in accord with the exercise of his power. To me, the very least of all the holy ones, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for all what is the plan of the mystery hidden from ages past in God who created all things, so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and authorities in the heavens. This was according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness of speech and confidence of access through faith in him.



Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6
You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

God indeed is my savior;
I am confident and unafraid.
My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.
With joy you will draw water
at the fountain of salvation.

R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

Give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name;
among the nations make known his deeds,
proclaim how exalted is his name.

R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

Sing praise to the LORD for his glorious achievement;
let this be known throughout all the earth.

Shout with exultation, O city of Zion,
for great in your midst
is the Holy One of Israel!
R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 24:42a, 44
Alleluia, alleluia. Stay awake! For you do not know when the Son of Man will come. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Luke 12:39-48
Jesus said to his disciples: "Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

Then Peter said, "Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?" And the Lord replied, "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish the servant severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful. That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."



Meditation:
In today's first reading, St. Paul beautifully explains to the Ephesians his call to serve as a minister of "the mystery of Christ." In popular culture, a "mystery" often refers to a tale of an unsolved murder or some other crime, but Paul is speaking about the magnificent plan and gift of God, which was unknown to anyone until the time of Christ. Now it has been "revealed to his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit." This mystery, now revealed, is that eternal salvation has been won for us by Jesus Christ, by his humanity, suffering, dying on the Cross and his Resurrection. Paul goes on to

explain that this gift is offered not only to the Chosen People, but also to a new group of heirs, the Gentiles: "the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same Body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." And this is what Paul has been commissioned to proclaim.

None of us has the right to be an heir to God's riches and grace; we are all sinners. Paul marvels that, of all people, he, a persecutor of Christ and his Church, was chosen to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. "To me, the very least of all the holy ones, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ." Since he is obviously unworthy, his mission is clearly pure gift. In this way, Paul stands as an example of how grace works for us all. Though we are all obviously unworthy, God has chosen to offer us all a share in his abundant mercy.

Paul, as a minister of this mystery, knows that his role is as a servant, not a master. He knows that he has been "entrusted with much" so much will be required of him. The revelation given to him is to be shared, not merely as facts to know but as a life to live – the life of union with Christ Jesus, a life shared by all believers as one Body. In reading the psalms, Paul may have rejoiced in the verse we read today: "God indeed is my savior; am confident and unafraid. My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior."

In the Gospel reading for today, Jesus shows us that we are all servants, not masters. We are privileged to be called to the service of the Lord's household. A "faithful and prudent steward" is one who remains vigilant, ready for the coming of the Lord. This attitude of vigilance means we must temper our desire to be in control. Our lives belong not to us but to him. Each of us has received gifts from God. He expects us to make good use of these gifts. "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much." Part of "giving to God what belongs to God," which we pondered on Sunday, is to be prudent and diligent in the use of the gifts he has given us. We are not to put off until tomorrow what he expects of us today.

The parable of the faithful and unfaithful stewards refers both to the Lord's Second Coming and to his presence in our lives today. Yes, Jesus is coming at the end of time, but he also comes to us daily. As we reflect on the situations of our daily life, we discover that Jesus comes to us unexpectedly through persons and events. We often find it difficult to recognize this coming of Jesus because we are too busy doing what we want to do. Our eyes and hearts are not open to recognize him in his

disguise. It is important to be always attentive, doing his will even when we cannot sense his presence, so that we will not be caught off guard. Jesus is asking us to be awake, alert and ready every day.

We do not know when the Lord will come, only that he will come, for he promised he would come, and he always keeps his word. We, however, do not always keep our word. The parable shows that some servants are "faithful and prudent," while others are unfaithful and shortsighted, selfishly serving only themselves and taking advantage of others. Will we serve the Lord as his faithful stewards or give into selfishness? All of human history reflects the tension between these two options. In the beginning our first parents were made the stewards of the rest of creation. God entrusts to each member of the human family a part of the unfolding of his plan. It is not that he needs us, but he honors us by giving us freedom and inviting us to share in his work. Because we are free, we are also accountable for our stewardship. Let us, following the example of St. Paul, rejoice that we have been "entrusted with much," and dedicate ourselves to wholehearted and grateful service to the Lord who cannot be outdone in generosity.

How do I respond to the truth that God chose me in his abundant mercy despite my unworthiness? When have I failed to be a "faithful and prudent steward"? Why do I tend to procrastinate?

Mary, open my eyes and heart to be always ready for the Lord. St. Pedro Calungsod, pray for us.

Pedro Calungsod was born in the Visayas region of the Philippines in 1654. He was one of the young catechists who went with some Spanish Jesuit missionaries from the Philippines to evangelize the Chamorros in Guam in 1668. Life was hard for the missionaries, but the mission was blessed with many conversions. A Chinese exile named Choco, envious of the prestige that the missionaries were gaining among the Chamorros, started to spread rumors that the baptismal water of the missionaries was poisonous. Since some infants died after they were baptized, some of the natives believed him and apostatized. The father of one infant was enraged that Blessed Fr. Diego Luis de San Vitores, assisted by Pedro, had baptized his child. When he hurled spears at them, Pedro would have been able to escape, but did not want to abandon Padre Diego. The priest and the young catechist were hacked to death and their bodies were thrown into the sea on April 2, 1672. Both were beatified by John Paul II on March 5, 2000; Pedro was canonized by Benedict XVI on October 21, 2012. In September of 2024, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines moved his memorial from April 2 to October 21 and elevated it to the rank of a Feast.

October 22, Thursday, 29th Week in Ordinary Time
Saint John Paul II, Pope



First Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

Brothers and sisters: I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 11-12, 18-19
The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.
Give thanks to the LORD on the harp;
with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.
R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
For upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.
R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
But the plan of the LORD stands forever;
the design of his heart, through all generations.
Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.
R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
But see, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.
R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: Philippians 3:8-9
Alleluia, alleluia. I consider all things so much rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in him. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Luke 12:49-53
Jesus said to his disciples: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."



Meditation:
I have come to set the earth on fire! God's word is a fire. It cannot be confined to the printed page or limited to the realm of ideas. It is a living word that pierces the heart. The word of God in today's readings calls us beyond our human understanding, directing us beyond the usual meaning of "family" and into the family that God establishes in Spirit and in truth, the family of the Church.

St. Paul, still reflecting on the wonder of his call to spread the Gospel, offers a profound prayer to the Father, "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." He asks the Father to reveal to the Ephesians the fullness of what it means to belong to the family of God. As we ponder Paul's words, we make his prayer our own, asking that we "may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge," so that we may "be filled with all the fullness of God." We are to be "rooted and grounded in love," like a tree rooted in good soil. Only then can we begin to comprehend the love of God, whose love for us helps us to reach our full potential.

This divine love is the foundation of every family – and of all reality itself. Our daily experience of family life tends to be limited to what we know by our natural relationships – husbands, wives, parents and children. But there is much more to God's plan than this. He wants

us to be "filled with all the fullness of God." He wants us to be united with one another and with him in a communion that is beyond our human understanding, a communion that reflects the inner life that the Father shares with the Son in the Holy Spirit. This is the "fullness of God."

How can we dare to pray that we will experience this love which surpasses all knowledge? If Jesus had not revealed it, we would not dare to call God our Father, nor would we even imagine that there could be such a connection between divine life and human life. Yet, as Paul says, the power of God is now at work within us, so that we can be so bold as to consider ourselves children of God. We are not spiritual orphans; God is our Father. All of us are part of his family. This is an essential part of our identity as Christians, in an even deeper way than our earthly family forms a large part of our identity. We do not make ourselves part of God's family; God does this by the free gift we receive in Baptism. It is his power at work in us which "is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine." Paul, overflowing with awe at this mystery, bursts into a brief acclamation of praise to God: "to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen!"

In the Gospel Jesus also talks about family, but in a very different way than we would expect. He says that he came for division! This is most contradictory. The "Prince of Peace," who came to reconcile us to the Father and to one another, came for division? The peace Jesus came to give is not that of simply getting along with everyone. His peace comes with fire; it is the fruit of truth in love. Jesus "came for division" so that we can find the deeper way to unity, based on the purity of the truth and love. The truth in itself does not divide, but it is often the catalyst for exposing the divisions that exist among us. We are not fully united if we are simply tolerating each other in a superficial "peaceful co-existence."

This Gospel is a very challenging one. When we truly love, we risk offending. Jesus himself offended many people as he proclaimed the Gospel to them. We can think, for example, of the Pharisees. In his love for them, Jesus spoke the truth. He risked offending them in order to reach them. This is what we find so difficult. In our flesh, we would much rather have peaceful co-existence than a truthful life. But the fire

of love urges us beyond the shallow comforts of the flesh. Called to be ministers of the Gospel, we too have a mission to "set the earth on fire." What anguish we feel when the Gospel is blocked by the weakness of our own love.

Jesus wants to burn away the impurities of our hearts, leading us beyond our selfishness so that we can love as he loves. There will always be moments when we will be tempted to compromise the truth of the Gospel so as to preserve our human relationships. We fear alienating our loved ones. In these moments, we beg the Father to fill us with his Spirit, so that we can love with the purity and fire of his love, a love that perseveres in times of division and bears the fruit of eternal life.

Where am I compromising the truth of the Gospel just to maintain a superficial, comfortable peace in my relationships? How deeply am I allowing the fire of Christ's love to burn away my selfishness and root me in his family? When God's word pierces my heart and demands a difficult change, what specific areas of my life am I most hesitant to surrender to him?

Mary, ignite my heart with the fire of divine love.
St. John Paul II, pray for us.

Born Karol Józef Wojtyła on May 18, 1920, in Wadowice, Poland, **Pope John Paul II's** early life was marked by the loss of his mother when he was nine years old and his older brother and father by age twenty-one. He studied philology in Kraków's Jagiellonian University and was active in theater groups. The Nazi occupation of Poland closed the university in 1939, and Karol had to work in a quarry to earn a living. In 1942, he entered the clandestine seminary of Kraków where he was ordained in 1946. Karol was appointed bishop and then archbishop of Kraków and was considered one of the Church's leading thinkers and contributors to Vatican II. He was made cardinal in 1967 by Pope Paul VI. On October 16, 1978, Karol was elected the 264th pope, becoming the first non-Italian pope in more than 400 years. His inauguration was on October 22, which is now the date of his feast day. As Pope, John Paul II demonstrated his deep love for the young, the poor, the sick, the marginalized, and those persecuted for their faith, through many and tireless journeys throughout the world. His deep love and dedication to prayer and to Our Blessed Mother was clearly evident in his journeys. Pope John Paul II died on the evening of Saturday, April 2, 2005, the vigil of the Feast of Divine Mercy. He was canonized on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27, 2014, by Pope Francis.

October 23, Friday, 29th Week in Ordinary Time
Saint John of Capistrano, Priest



First Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

Brothers and sisters: I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace; one Body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.
R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.
Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?
He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.
R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.
He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.
Such is the race that seeks for him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.
R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia. Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the Kingdom. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Luke 12:54-59

Jesus said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain – and so it does; and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot – and so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

"Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate, make an effort to settle the matter on the way; otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."



Meditation:

This week we have been reflecting on the different aspects of living according to Jesus' teaching that we should "give to God what belongs to God." This principle is always valid, but how we put it into practice takes wisdom and humility. The wisdom is given to us by the Holy Spirit; humility is our readiness to accept what God reveals and to respond in faith.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that interpreting the particular demands of discipleship is something like interpreting the signs of change in the weather. The weather is always changing, and we learn to adjust our behavior accordingly. When we anticipate the coming of rain, we close our windows and carry an umbrella. When we can tell it will be hot, we dress lightly and look for places that will provide shade from the sun. All of life is full of a similar variety. We have bad days and good days. So Jesus tells us to be wise about "interpreting the present time." Certainly, this process includes our being aware of how the world is sinking into materialism and moral confusion. The erosion of clear moral standards is one of the "signs of the times." For example, people are no longer sure that having children is good and that homosexual behavior is evil.

One of the signs Jesus points out is that we are too hesitant to judge for ourselves what is right and too slow to reconcile with our opponents. These weaknesses leave us subject to the judgments of the world, which does not know the way of mercy. We should not have to take one another to court over differences that arise in the Christian community, much less in our families. St. Paul made a similar complaint about the Corinthians. He told them it was a scandal and a shame that they were suing each other before the pagan judges of the Roman courts (cf. 1 Cor 6:1-11). How can we attract others to the Gospel if we are not bearing witness to it among

ourselves? Our work for peace and justice, and for the conversion of the world, begins with the establishment of Christ's peace in our own lives, with the conversion of our own hearts.

St. Paul, writing as "a prisoner for the Lord," is aware that the work of evangelization cannot be separated from the work of bearing witness to Christ by the way we live from day to day. In today's reading he urges the Ephesians to 'walk the talk'; they know the truth of the Gospel, and now it is their duty to put it into practice. The greatness of our call should move us to act as mature men and women in the faith.

Paul tells us: "live in a manner worthy of the call you have received." He emphasizes some of the essential building blocks of unity: "humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love." If we are striving for unity with these attitudes, we will not be so quick to condemn others or drag them into court. In fact, we will make haste to reconcile. Now is the time to settle our difficulties quickly and make sure our relationships are in order. It is time to change our behavior and ways of thinking, for we do not know the day of our judgment.

When we welcome the reign of the Lord in our midst, we strive always to remain united in him, in one Body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one Baptism. Our relationships with one another are where this unity is put to the test and where it must shine out, giving light to the world. We cannot shine if we are wasting our time getting even with one another. As members of the Body of Christ, we have a most noble and beautiful call: to radiate the unity and love of the Trinity.

Where am I delaying personal conversion and reconciliation with others while facing the reality of my upcoming judgment? In what ways am I ignoring the moral "signs of the times" and conforming to the confusion of the world? As a mature Christian, how do I "walk the talk"?

Mary, help me daily to change my behavior and my way of thinking so I can radiate the unity and love of the Trinity.

St. John of Capistrano, pray for us.

John of Capistrano was born on June 28, 1386 in Italy. In 1412, he became magistrate of Perugia and later was imprisoned for trying to bring peace to two warring factions. During his imprisonment, he discerned that his life's journey would be devoted to God. He entered the Franciscans in 1416 and became a very great preacher of missions, fostering devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus throughout Europe. John worked to end the great schism between East and West. He also promoted resistance against the Turks at the battle of Belgrade and is now the patron of military chaplains. He died on October 23, 1456 and was canonized on October 16, 1690 by Pope Alexander VIII.

Notes

October 24, Saturday, 29th Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Anthony Mary Claret, Bishop



First Reading: Ephesians 4:7-16

Brothers and sisters: Grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says:

He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men. What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

And he gave some as Apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole Body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the Body's growth and builds itself up in love.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5
Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
"We will go up to the house of the LORD."
And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.
Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.
To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.
R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.
According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.
R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: Ezekiel 33:11
Alleluia, alleluia. I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, says the Lord, but rather in his conversion that he may live. ***Alleluia, alleluia.***



Gospel: Luke 13:1-9
Some people told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!"

And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"



Meditation:
We are wasting our time and our life. The Lord calls us to repentance before we find ourselves "cut down." The parable reveals that God is very patient with our failure to produce fruit. He gives us "another year," Today's readings call us to maturity. Jesus uses the image of a fig tree that has not produced any fruit for three years. The "mission" of a mature fig tree is to produce figs; if it does not, it is simply exhausting the soil. If it does not grow up it will be cut down. Our mission is to love as God loves us; if we do not, we are immature. hoping that we will grow up. He gives us every opportunity to take responsibility for our lives.

Jesus mentions the need for repentance, using the news of two fatal disasters as a reminder of how precarious our earthly life is. We are not to equate calamities with divine punishment but to learn from them that since death and judgment are imminent, we need to be ready through true repentance. These catastrophes are nothing compared to the catastrophe that awaits those who reject the grace of divine mercy. Now, the present moment, is the time that our merciful Father is giving us to take inventory of our lives.

Since last Sunday's Gospel addressed the issue of paying taxes, we can ponder this extra time of mercy in light of our obligations in the kingdom of this world and in the Kingdom of God. If we do not pay our taxes, we will not be jailed immediately. There is usually a "grace period" offered to those who miss the deadline. After that the government issues a series of warnings, and perhaps some increasingly severe fines. If none of these incentives achieves the result, the "mercy" of the government will eventually run out. We will be stripped of our belongings and our freedom and thrown into prison. The mercy of God is infinitely greater than that of any human government. Yet God does not allow us to remain unfruitful forever because it is not good for us. He is determined to do what is best for us, and if we stubbornly resist, the only solution is to make us bear the consequences. While we are in this life, there is always hope that we will repent and seek God's mercy. Repentance is the first sign that we may bear fruit for the Kingdom after all.

St. Paul gives us further wisdom on our call to maturity in the Christian life. In yesterday's reading, he emphasizes the unity of all the members of the Body of Christ. Today he speaks of unity in diversity. We are all one in Christ Jesus, one in respect to our relationship with the Father as his children and as heirs to eternal life. But we are not all identical. God gives us an amazing variety of gifts, different talents and abilities to serve him by serving the Church. The gifts are all different, but they fit together just like a puzzle. When we finish putting together a puzzle, we have a beautiful picture.

Before speaking about what fruit we are to produce, what we are to give, Paul speaks about how much we have received. "Grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." The gifts we have received are meant "for building up the Body of Christ," with the goal that we all become fully mature, growing "in every way into him who is the head, Christ." This goal obviously goes beyond all our natural expectations and abilities. It is God's amazing plan for us. We are called to "unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood to the extent of the full stature of Christ."

With this lofty vision before us, we can see that it is vital for us to mature in our Christian life, so that we can do what the Lord calls us to do. Next, Paul explains clearly the difference between spiritual immaturity and maturity. He urges us to "no longer be infants." If we remain infants, we will not be able to bear fruit. Rather we will be "tossed

by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming." This is a very accurate description of the way the world is developing in our time. The world is growing better and better at technology and communications, not for the spread of truth and love, but for proposing error in the disguise of truth. The media are full of clever "experts" who look wise but are actually being blown about by the winds of human and demonic trickery.

What does a mature Christian life look like? Paul tells us that it involves "living the truth in love." We mature when we do what Christ does, when we love in truth. When we love, we are built up and we build each other up, growing in ever greater likeness to Jesus Christ. This call for the Body of Christ to "build itself up in love" also prepares the way for the theme of tomorrow's Gospel, which will renew our call to live by the two "greatest commandments," of love for God and for our neighbor.

How am I exhausting the spiritual soil of my life rather than bearing the mature fruit of truth and love? In what ways am I dangerously presuming upon God's patient "grace period" instead of repenting of my current immaturity? How easily am I swept along by worldly trends and clever experts instead of grounding my mind in Christ?

Mary, help me to use my unique gifts to build up Christ's Body. St. Anthony Mary Claret, pray for us.

Anthony Mary Claret was born in Spain on December 23, 1807, the son of a weaver. He desired to be a Jesuit, but his ill health prevented him. At age 28 he was ordained a diocesan priest and became known as a gifted preacher. He spent ten years preaching missions throughout Spain, focusing especially on the Eucharist and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On July 16, 1849, he founded the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, popularly known as the Claretians. Anthony was consecrated Bishop of Santiago, Cuba on October 6, 1850, where he suffered opposition from those attached to their immoral lives and from the advocates of slavery. In 1857, he was called back to Spain to become the chaplain of Queen Isabella. In this position he was able to work toward the recognition of religious orders in Spain, and to exert some influence in the naming of bishops. He followed Queen Isabella II of Spain into exile to France during the Spanish Revolution in 1968, died in a Cistercian monastery on October 24, 1870. Pope Pius XII canonized him on May 7, 1950.
