

Some Christians tend to think that our faith is simply a system of beliefs that are not connected to reality. However, we live in a world with global economic vulnerability, growing inequality, environmental degradation, violence and hatred among us. All the problems that we have in the world are actually Gospel issues. The gospel is very down to earth with ramifications for every aspect of our lives - including politics and the way we handle money. It is wrong to believe that the Gospel has nothing to say about how we order our society and how we run it economically. Faith is a lifestyle that we embrace to follow Jesus. It is a way of behaving and engaging in the world - in terms of loving the poor, stretching our hearts to include people who are not from our country or group, loving and respecting all the living creatures of this planet, and protecting our natural environment. (Adapted from Richard Rohr posting from UNITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS, August 6, 2010).

In today's Gospel the Lord calls us to be vigilant servants. Jesus' response to people with these challenges is always active and pastoral, involving concrete gestures of social justice, inclusivity, hospitality, blessing, healing and spiritual support. If Jesus calls us to be vigilant servants, He is commissioning us to pay attention to the signs of the times, and strive for a just economy, for policies of compassion and inclusion, for a deeper concern and commitment to the vulnerable, and for the protection of the environment.

This contemporary world, with all its scientific and technological developments, is still broken by sins caused by ignorance and lack of righteousness. Sins like racism and hate, violence and injustice, political and religious bigotry, indifference towards the vulnerable, and a very aggressive and destructive economic global order. It is in the midst of these terrible sins that the Church has to be a living sign of God's inclusive, healing and unconditional love. Our faith demands, not simply to believe, but especially to act like Christ, to love like Christ, and to give ourselves to others like Jesus Christ did for us. When we reduce our faith to a system of beliefs and practices, when we ignore its essence, we remain in a comfortable bubble, and our Christianity does not lead us to get involved in the transformation that God wants to implement in this world.

Dear brothers and sisters,

in today's Gospel, Jesus describes his return using the analogy of a thief who comes at an unexpected hour to break into a house. **Jesus is the Divine Thief:** If we are vigilant servants, we will actually allow Jesus to break into our world and steal our hearts from the realities of this passing world. The Gospel today calls us to be people of hope, to be people of joy and tender love, to be people always willing to do something to bless our lives and to bless the lives of those around us with tender kindness and generous charity. In the midst of hate and violence, we are to love and promote reconciliation. In the midst of poverty and injustice, we are to be generous because our generosity can provide some justice to the needy. In the midst of so much destruction, we can be agents willing to edify loving communities, willing to restore the goodness of creation and the lives of those broken by war, poverty, violence and chaos. We are called to be the Lord's vigilant servants. Vigilant, as we pay attention to the needs of our brothers and sisters; servants as we serve each other with loving and generous charity.

Today we are challenged to understand in a deeper way what Christian faith is about. The Gospel compels us to pay attention to what is going in the world, and act as Jesus would act. Like Jesus, we are to always be vigilant servants, "And should he come and find His servants doing what He commanded them to do, blessed are those servants."

The Universal Prayer
Sunday 10th August 2025
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, as we mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War this week we pray for peace in every land and for every person.

1. May the appeals for peace by Pope Leo be heard by the leaders of our world, so that dialogue will replace weapons, and our shared humanity will overcome divided politics.
We pray to the Lord.
2. May the end of the Second World War urge us to pray for world peace with sincerity and hope, and show that those who were enemies can become neighbors and friends in a new time.
We pray to the Lord.
3. May the growing intensity of the war between Ukraine and Russia, the oppression of the people of Palestine, and the plight of the Israeli hostages and the thousands of prisoners of war, come to an end, so that peace and human dignity prevail.
We pray to the Lord.
4. May the blessings for which we hope in this Holy Year, be granted to all who seek faith, courage, healing and forgiveness.
We pray to the Lord.
5. May young married couples who long for a child be granted that gift, as were Abraham and Sarah, who living by faith, were given the gift of Isaac.
We pray to the Lord.
6. May more generous hearts in our community get involved in increasing the offertory, so our parish can continue proclaiming the Gospel of Love.
We pray to the Lord.
7. May the millions who died in World War II be released from sin and fear and find eternal peace in God.
We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Almighty God, in all the circumstances of our lives may we hope in your love, be rescued from sin, receive our daily bread, and be shielded from all harm.

Through Christ our Lord.