



Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

BE READY

“And then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in the clouds’ with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.” (Mk 13:26-27)

In many regions, the bright colors of autumn leaves begin to give way to the muted hues of early winter in November. The liturgical colors change as well, from the green of Ordinary Time to the violet of Advent, with the red of the Feast of Our Lord, Christ the King as a transition, the end of one liturgical year to the beginning of another. These shifts in color remind us that change is constant, an integral part of life. While we may resist change in our lives, preferring the comfort of the familiar to the risk of the unknown, disciples are to be ready for change, for ongoing conversion in Christ. In the gospels this month, Jesus calls us to be awake and ready, to listen to him, embrace the truth of the Gospel, and live purposefully as his followers, so that we may be prepared for the glory of the kingdom of God.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

“You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” (Jn 18:36-37)

When we listen to the voice of Jesus, we grow in willingness to accept the truth of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. When we belong to Jesus as his disciples, we must listen with our hearts and our heads – through prayer, pondering Sacred Scripture, learning the fullness of the faith, being formed and nourished through the Eucharist – and, having heard, accept the truth and apply it in our daily lives. It’s risky to do so. As in Jesus’ time on this earth, it is not always easy to fully live Christ’s love in the world. Yet growing as disciples leads us to a point in life in which we must do so if we are to be true to Christ and to ourselves. Disciples grow to understand Christ’s great purpose, which calls us to transform the world through humility, service, mercy, forgiveness, and love and long for the time when we will know the fullness of God’s love for eternity.

TRUST COMPLETELY

“Calling the disciples to himself, he said to them, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.” (Mk 12:43-44)

In contrast to those with wealth who gave from their excess, the poor widow gave all she had. Remember that widows were among the most vulnerable in Jesus’ time. Just before this scene in the gospel, Jesus called out the religious leaders who use temple resources for their own gain at the expense of widows. And yet, this widow gave to the temple treasury. We do not know any more of her story, but surely this was a purposeful contribution, one that had to have been made through much prayer and contemplation, a sign of her trust in God. Let us learn from the poor widow, grow in complete and humble trust in our Lord. May our trust give us strength to give without counting the cost, boldly, sacrificially, as did our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

LIVE PURPOSEFULLY

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap...Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Lk 21:34-36)

Jesus urges us to live purposefully with the assurance that those who follow him will be welcomed when he returns in glory. He tells his disciples that we are to avoid behaviors that dull our senses and distract us from living as his own in the world. It is easy to get into a routine in life, with our days and weeks following a predictable rhythm of activities. Sometimes, our routines are not harmful, they’re simply non-reflective, not purposeful. At other times, however, we may let stress wear us down or lead us to self-destructive behaviors. As we approach the end of the year, it is a good time for us to acknowledge and address any selfish or harmful habits so that we will more readily live with Christ’s purposes as our own.

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IMPACT THIS MONTH

Take time to make a list of all the gifts and blessings for which you have to be thankful. If the year has been especially difficult, be mindful of the blessing of faith and assurance of God's providential love.

Place your list in a place where you will see it often. Add to it as you recognize small daily blessings; reflect on the ways you may be called to share your gifts with others so they may know Christ's care through you.

Invite family and friends to join you in this exercise of gratitude and sharing.

Share your lists in person, on a video call, or through an email thread. Offer a simple prayer of gratitude together.

A FEAST OF GRATITUDE

At first glance, our Thanksgiving gatherings may seem to be about being together and enjoying a meal with each other. While in the past we may have done so with appreciation for time with family and friends, we may have a heightened sense of thankfulness this year, perhaps gathering with people we have not been with in the past two years. We may remember those who have died and give thanks for those who serve our communities. This Thanksgiving, we may see anew how abundantly blessed we are, even in challenging circumstances. Our Thanksgiving meal is a true celebration of the gifts of life, relationships, and faith that fill our lives, minds, and hearts with grace and goodness. It is a feast of gratitude.

On the surface, the Mass is a ritual comprised of a series of songs, prayers, and gestures. We stand, sing, make the sign of the cross, sit, listen, kneel, and pray. Reflect more deeply, however, and we grasp the greater meaning and impact of the Eucharist. Christ is truly present with and among us; we are fed by word and sacrament, and are drawn into union with Christ and one another. It is about joining together with grateful hearts and resolving to share Christ's life, love, and mercy with others. The very meaning of the word "eucharist" is "thanksgiving." It is a feast of gratitude.

Gather around the table, at home and at the celebration of the Eucharist. Grow in gratitude. Let your life be changed. Share with others, especially those who are in need. Sacrifice. Celebrate thanksgiving.



I am grateful for

Father all-powerful, your gifts of love are countless and your goodness infinite; as we come before you on Thanksgiving Day with gratitude for your kindness, open our hearts to have concern for every man, woman, and child, so that we may share your gifts in loving service. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.

- Collect prayer, Thanksgiving Day