

Daily Prayer

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A,
The Year of Matthew 2026
and Jubilee Year of Saint Francis



Readings: Zephaniah 2: 3; 3: 12–13; Psalm 145: 7–10; 1 Corinthians 1: 26–31; Matthew 5: 1–12.

The Year of Matthew and Jubilee Year of Saint Francis

On January 10, 2026, Pope Leo XIV inaugurated the special Jubilee Year of Saint Francis. This special Jubilee Year commemorates the 800th anniversary of Saint Francis of Assisi's death. (Refer to the [Vatican News](#) link for further details.)

You may like to share Sister Rita's, first [MacKa Moment video](#) for 2026 on The Year of Saint Francis Assisi with your teachers, leaders, students and families.

Sister Rita is a [Sister of Saint Joseph](#), who supports our schools and parishes with the [Mary Mackillop Heritage Centre](#) in East Melbourne.

Further, locally, the theme for Catholic Education Week 2026 is [Christ beside me: Walking in the footsteps of Saint Patrick](#). For further details about the theme, please refer to page 2 our [Liturgical Calendar](#).

The Gospel readings for this Year A are taken from the Gospel of Matthew, and the Church is currently celebrating the Season of Ordinary Time.

The Sunday Gospel for this week is the Sermon on the Mount, with Jesus' teaching about a set of Blessings called the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are a framework for Christian living and excellent guidelines for establishing ways of being and doing in our school and parish communities.

Every day of the week, Daily Prayer will invite those gathered to participate in prayer rituals and respond respectfully in a prayerful context. This week is about setting up for success in a way that those gathered will become comfortable with the structure, the responses, the gestures, the prayers and the symbols. Daily Prayer will be a time when all feel welcomed and valued.

Preparations for Daily Prayer

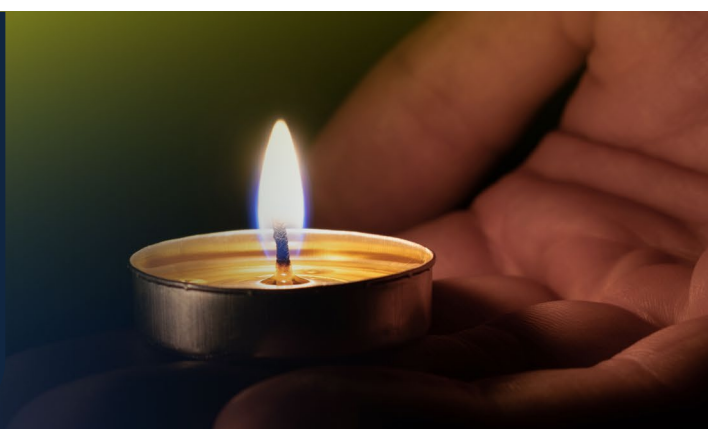
The following daily prayers can be used in their entirety or adapted to meet the needs of the audience. The prayers draw on the Sunday readings, so you may use any of the prayers on any day, although special focus will be given to Feast days, Solemnities, and days of special cultural significance. Feel free to adapt the prayers for special occasions or specific intentions of your own class and school.

The prayers will introduce students to traditional prayer and liturgical practices and responses, as well as a variety of Christian spiritual experiences. Take the opportunity to create a **Sacred (protected) Space** for prayer as you might do in creating a protected garden. This may include a prayer cloth or placemat, a bible, a crucifix, a candle, and flowers. Additional resources (apps, websites, music, videos) will be suggested for those wanting to enrich the prayers or to understand the readings at a deeper level.



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Overview of the Week

Day and Liturgical Colour	Daily Prayer	Links to Liturgy, Traditional Prayers, and Forms of Prayer
Monday – White	The Presentation of the Lord <i>Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.</i>	Ritual of blessing, lighting and extinguishing of prayer candle, Prayers of Intercession.
Tuesday – Green	<i>Rejoice and be glad!</i>	Prayer for the beginning of the school year, Gospel, Sign of the Cross, Sign of Peace.
Wednesday – Green	<i>Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!</i>	Praying modified version of the Gospel, the Responsorial Psalm.
Thursday – Green	<i>Jesus began to speak, and this is what he taught them ...</i>	Gospel, <i>Lectio Divina</i> (Divine Reading), Sign of Peace.
Friday – Green	<i>A peaceful heart.</i>	Gospel, Praying a three-minute retreat.

Note that scripture quotations are from the Lectionary (*Jerusalem Bible*) or NRSV.

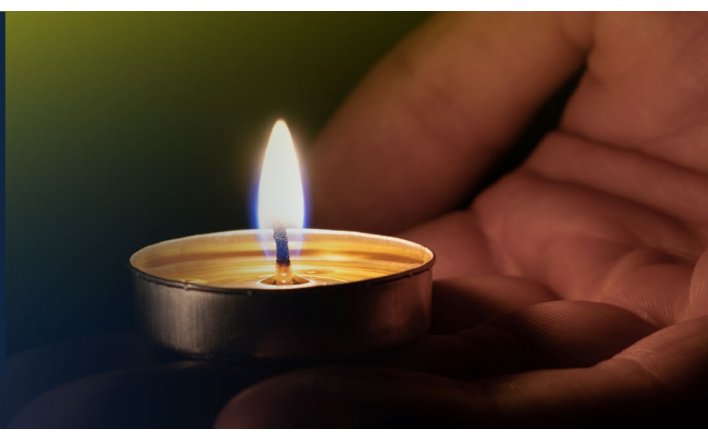
Suggested Teacher Background for the Readings

- Liturgy Help: [Commentaries and Homilies & Reflections](#)
- Loyola Press: [Sunday Connection](#)
- The Emmaus Series: [Sunday Reflections](#) .



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Monday

Today's Daily Prayer – The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord & Blessing of Candles.

Preparation: Today the Catholic Church remembers and celebrates the story of the Presentation of the Lord. It is also known as Candlemas Day and is a day for the blessing of candles. The prayer today will invite those gathered to connect with the symbolism of lighting prayer candles. It is also an opportunity for class or school candles to be decorated and blessed. You will need candles, a candle stand.

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of God present in the Word, in each other and in ourselves. Take a few slow, deep breaths to help us focus on this moment. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer.

Leader: As we gather in God's presence and in the presence of each other, let us prepare to engage our minds, hearts and hands in prayer.

We begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Light candle and pause.

Leader: Today the Catholic Church remembers and celebrates the story of the Presentation of the Lord.

Background to the Gospel

Today's Gospel for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is only found in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2: 22–40). Here we read an account of the time that Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem. As very new parents and faithful Jews, they came for the rite of presentation and purification. They presented their first-born son to the Lord and he was consecrated as was required by the Law of Moses. Two wisdom figures, Simeon and Anna, welcomed them and praised God for this child. They both recognised that this child was special and Mary and Joseph were amazed by their response and actions.



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Listen

If possible, the scripture passage is to be read from a Lectionary or a Bible, which could be put in an honoured place. Readers are to read slowly and clearly when proclaiming the Word of God and treat the text with reverence.

Leader: Let us prepare to listen attentively to the sacred words of Scripture.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God, and he said:

'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace,

just as you promised;

because my eyes have seen the salvation

which you have prepared for all the nations to see,

a light to enlighten the pagans

and the glory of your people Israel.'

Pause for silence.

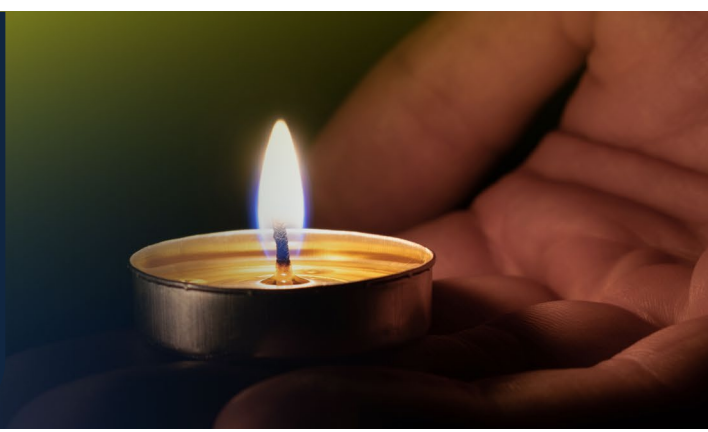
Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



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Respond

Leader: Today is also the day set aside for the blessing of candles. Within the Catholic tradition, candles are lit during times of prayer and in the celebration of liturgies and sacraments. Votive candles are often available in Churches to be lit as prayers of petition, intercession or thanksgiving are prayed.

Blessing of Candle (if a priest or a deacon is present)

Reader: Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

Help us to follow you and to let our light shine for others to see and follow.

Bless this candle, and may it always be a reminder to us that you are our light in times of darkness.

All: Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

Lighting of Candle

Leader: Let us watch as the candle is lit. We are invited to watch the flame flicker and grow. Let us do this in silence. *(Pause)*

Reader: We pray for all leaders, teachers and staff, students and families in our Catholic parish school communities.

May they be people of wisdom and courage. May they speak words of truth and love. May they be valued and respected. We pray ...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray for all students in our schools. May they be people of peace and love. May they feel welcomed and included. May they be valued and respected. We pray ...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray for all parents in our community. May they be people of hope and compassion. May they nurture and support their children in their faith journey. May they be valued and respected. We pray ...

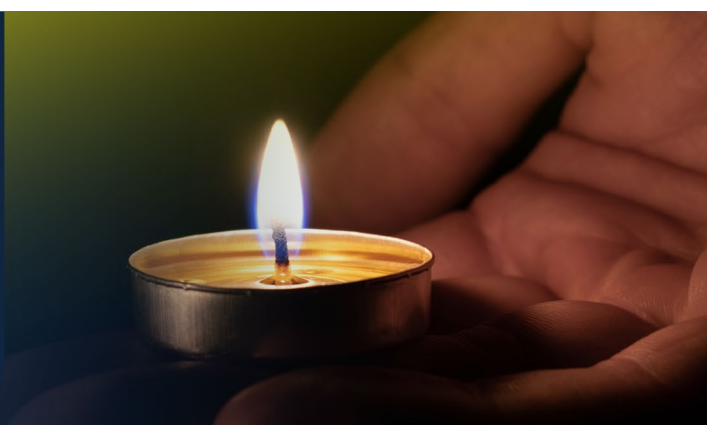
All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all these prayers and for those that are deep within our hearts, we pray:



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Time for silent prayer

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Go Forth

Leader: May our God of Wisdom protect and strengthen us.

All: Amen.

Reader: May Jesus, the light of the world, lead us and show us the way.

All: Amen.

Reader: May the Spirit of Truth enlighten and guide us.

All: Amen.

Leader: With Christ beside me, are lives are formed in faith hope and love.

Saint Patrick, patron saint of our local Church in Melbourne.

All: Pray for us

Leader: In this special Jubilee Year of Saint Francis, Saint Francis of Assisi.

All: Pray for us

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Extinguish candles and pause.

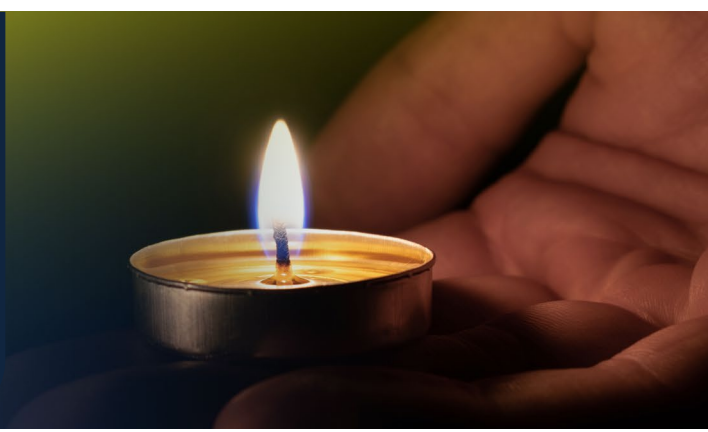
Suggested Additional Resources

Website: [Light a Candle](#) online as a daily practice, for a particular reason or simply in thanks.



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Readings: Zephaniah 2: 3; 3: 12–13; Psalm 145: 7–10; 1 Corinthians 1: 26–31; Matthew 5: 1–12.

Tuesday

Today's Daily Prayer – Rejoice and be glad!

Preparation: Choose a reader, provide copies of the responses and someone to light the candle.

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of their breath. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered want to include in today's prayer.

Leader: As we gather in God's presence and in the presence of each other, let us prepare to engage our minds, hearts and hands in prayer.
We begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Light candle and pause.

Leader: As we begin this school year, let us pray ...
Open our minds to know, think and understand.

All: Open our minds, Lord.

Leader: Open our hearts to love, appreciate and belong.

All: Open our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Open our hands to serve, create and lead.

All: Open our hands, Lord.

Leader: We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, our friend and teacher.

All: Amen.

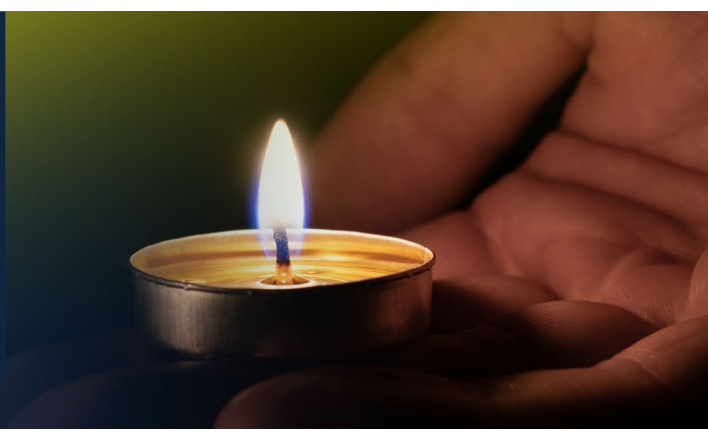
Background to Sunday's Gospel

The Beatitudes are among the best known verses of the Gospel of Matthew and are Jesus' positive response to the living out of the Commandments. They offer an assurance of God's care for those who mourn or suffer persecution. They also contain promises that God will bless the merciful, the pure of heart, the gentle, the peacemakers and those who work for justice. Jesus is talking about a deep happiness that comes out of choosing to live a life based on Christian values. This is not a happiness that one can buy.



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Listen

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew. (Matthew 5: 1–12)

All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Mindfully trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead, the lips and the heart.

Reader: Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:
'How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons and daughters of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of evil falsely against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

Pause for silence.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Respond

Leader: The Beatitudes are a framework for Christian living and excellent guidelines for establishing ways of **being** and **doing** in our homes, our classrooms and our school community.

As we begin this new year, let us reflect on ways that we can be happy and bring true happiness to others this year by the way we treat them. (*Pause*)



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Name in your heart simple things that you know you can do to bring others happiness, e.g. listen, invite others to join in conversations or games, include those who are feeling left out; ask people how they are going. *(Pause)*

Choose one action that you will do that will bring some happiness to yourself, others or the world.

Ask God to help you to respond to the invitation to bring forth the Kingdom that Jesus talks about.

Time for silent prayer

Go Forth

Leader: As we go into this day we pray:

Reader: May we know you are with us in all we do.

All: **Amen.**

Reader: May we be peacemakers in our school community.

All: **Amen.**

Reader: May we reach out to all with gentleness and mercy.

All: **Amen.**

Reader: May our gracious and gentle God bless each one of us in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: Let us turn to the person beside us and offer them the sign of peace. Let us say their name with the greeting, e.g. *Peace be with you, Thomas*. If you do not know the name of the person, ask them and introduce yourself.

Time for the Sign of Peace to be exchanged

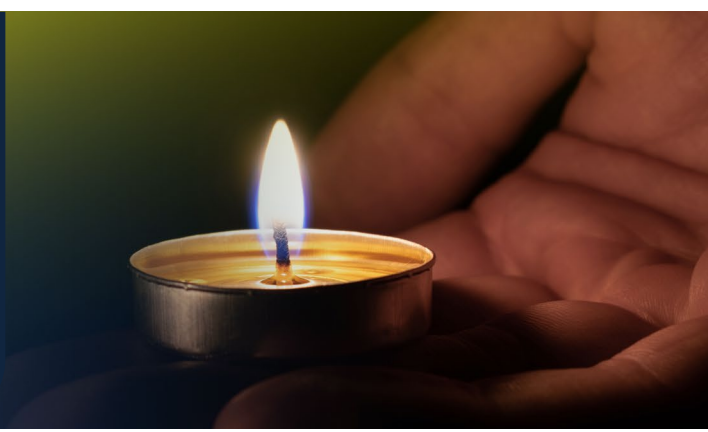
All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Extinguish candles and pause.



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Readings: Zephaniah 2: 3; 3: 12–13; Psalm 145: 7–10; 1 Corinthians 1: 26–31; Matthew 5: 1–12.

Wednesday

Today's Daily Prayer – Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

Preparation: Today we will pray the Responsorial Psalm as a response to the reading. There will be two readers for the Gospel, provide copies of the responses.

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of God present in the word, in each other and in ourselves. Take a few slow, deep breaths to help us focus on this moment. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer.

Leader: As we gather in God's presence and in the presence of each other, let us prepare to engage our minds, hearts and hands in prayer.

Let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Light candle and pause.

Listen

Background to the Sunday Gospel

Leader: The Beatitudes are among the best-known verses of the Gospel of Matthew and are Jesus' positive response to the living out of the Commandments. They offer an assurance of God's care for those who mourn or suffer persecution. They also contain promises that God will bless the merciful, the pure of heart, the gentle, the peacemakers and those who work for justice. Jesus is talking about a deep happiness that comes out of choosing to live a life based on Christian values. This is not a happiness that one can buy.

If possible, the Scripture passage is to be read from a lectionary or a bible, which could be put in an honoured place. Readers are to read slowly and clearly when proclaiming the Word of God and treat the text with reverence.

Reader 1: These words are adapted from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Reader 2: Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'Happy are the poor in spirit:

All: For the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.



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Reader 1: Happy are the gentle:

All: **For they shall inherit the earth.**

Reader 2: Happy are those who mourn:

All: **For they will find comfort.**

Reader 1: Happy are those who hunger and thirst for justice:

All: **For they will find their dreams will be fulfilled.**

Reader 2: Happy are those who show mercy:

All: **For they will receive mercy.**

Reader 1: Happy are those whose hearts are pure or true:

All: **For they will see the face of God.**

Reader 2: Happy are the peacemakers:

All: **For they will be called God's children.**

Reader 1: Happy are those who suffer for the sake of justice:

All: **For the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.**

Reader 2: Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak lies about you because of me:

Reader 1: Rejoice and be glad!

All: **Rejoice and be glad!**

Reader 2: Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven.

All: **Rejoice and be glad!**

Pause for silence.

Readers

1 and 2: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Respond

Leader: Let us respond to this reading by praying the Psalm. The psalms are ancient prayers of God's people as given to us in the Old Testament. In this psalm the most needy and vulnerable are named; these are the ones who are also named in the Sermon on the Mount.

Reader: Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

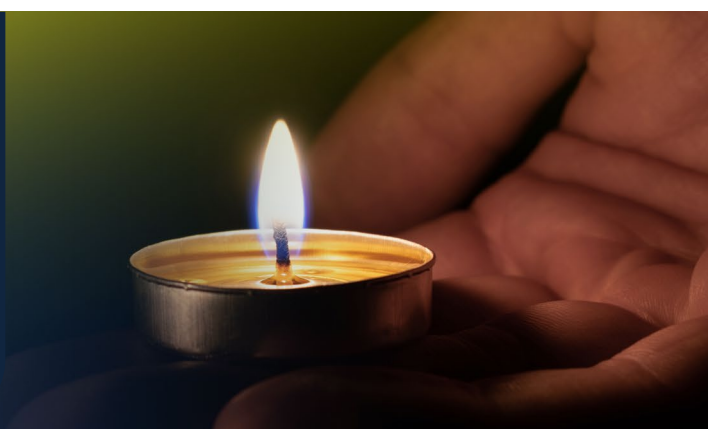
All: **Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!**

Reader: It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.



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All: **Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!**

Reader: It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down,
the Lord, who protects the stranger
and upholds the widow and orphan.

All: **Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!**

Leader: Let us spend one minute in silent prayer asking God to be with those who are marginalised
and suffering.

One minute of silence

Go Forth

Leader: With Christ beside me, are lives are formed in faith hope and love.

Saint Patrick, patron saint of our local Church in Melbourne.

All: **Pray for us**

Leader: In this special Jubilee Year of Saint Francis, Saint Francis of Assisi.

All: **Pray for us**

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Extinguish candles and pause.



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Readings: Zephaniah 2: 3; 3: 12–13; Psalm 145: 7–10; 1 Corinthians 1: 26–31; Matthew 5: 1–12.

Thursday

Today's Daily Prayer – Jesus began to speak, and this is what he taught them!

Preparation: The Sunday Gospel for this week is the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus teaches about a set of Blessings called the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are a framework for Christian living and excellent guidelines for establishing ways of **being** and **doing** in our school and parish communities.

Provide post-it notes or coloured card and coloured pens, provide copies of the responses, and a poster or wall to create a Wall of Words.

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of God present in the Word, in each other and in ourselves. Take a few slow, deep breaths to help us focus on this moment. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer.

Leader: As we gather in God's presence and in the presence of each other, let us prepare to engage our minds, hearts and hands in prayer.
We begin by making the Sign of the Cross reverently and mindfully.

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Leader: Let us pray; Open our minds to know and hear your call to service.

All: **Open our minds, Lord.**

Leader: Open our hearts to the gift of your incredible love and mercy.

All: **Open our hearts, Lord.**

Leader: Open our hands to receive your grace and do your work.

All: **Open our hands, Lord.**

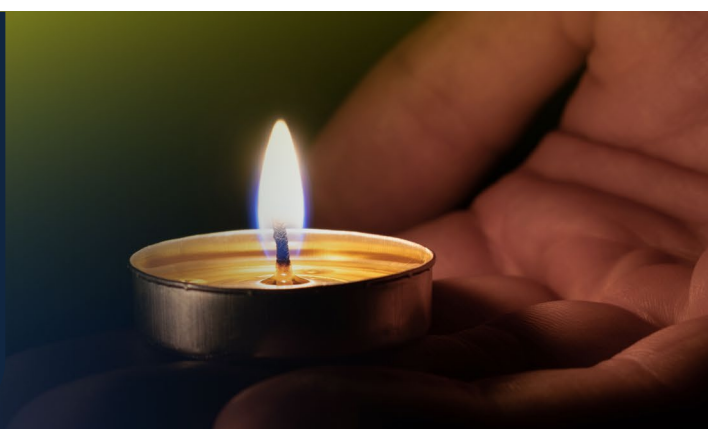
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Listen

If possible, the scripture passage is to be read from a Lectionary or a Bible, which could be put in an honoured place. Readers are to read slowly and clearly when proclaiming the Word of God and treat the text with reverence.

Leader: Let us prepare to listen attentively to the sacred words of Scripture.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

‘How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

‘Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

‘Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

‘Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

‘Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

‘Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons and daughters of God.

‘Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of evil falsely against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.’

Pause for silence.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Respond

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

Leader: In ancient times people would go to the Desert Mothers and Fathers and ask for a word.

They would take this word with them and spend time reflecting on that word as something to nourish them or challenge them.

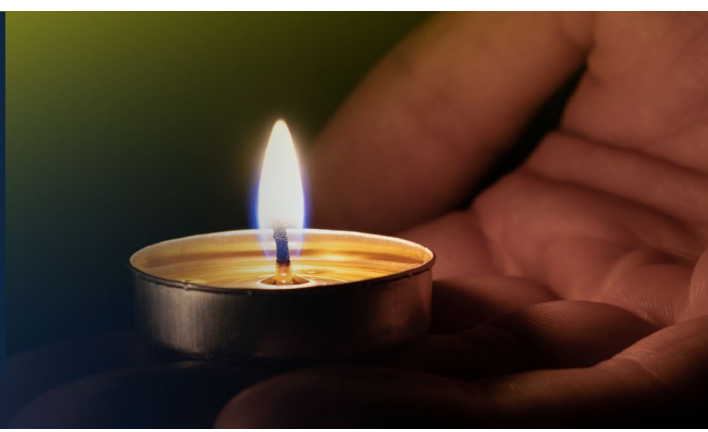
Spend a few moments with the word or phrase that you chose from the Gospel reading.

Write it slowly and mindfully on the Post-it Note or coloured card. *(Pause)*



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What memories, feelings or thoughts does this word evoke in you? *(Pause)*
Breathe your word. Breathe *in* and hold ... Breathe *out* and rest ... *(Pause)*
What is God inviting you to 'be' through this word? *(Pause)*
What is your prayer response? *(Time for silent prayer)*
Let your word rest in your heart. *(Time for quiet reflection)*

Go Forth

Leader: Let us now raise our hands in blessing of the person on our left and repeat these words.

May you be a peacemaker.

All: **May you be a peacemaker.**

Leader: May you be gentle and merciful.

All: **May you be gentle and merciful.**

Leader: May you rejoice and be glad and know that God is with you always.

All: **May you rejoice and be glad and know that God is with you always.**

Leader: Let us now end this time of prayer by sharing with each other a sign of peace and friendship in Christ.

Time for Sign of Peace to be exchanged

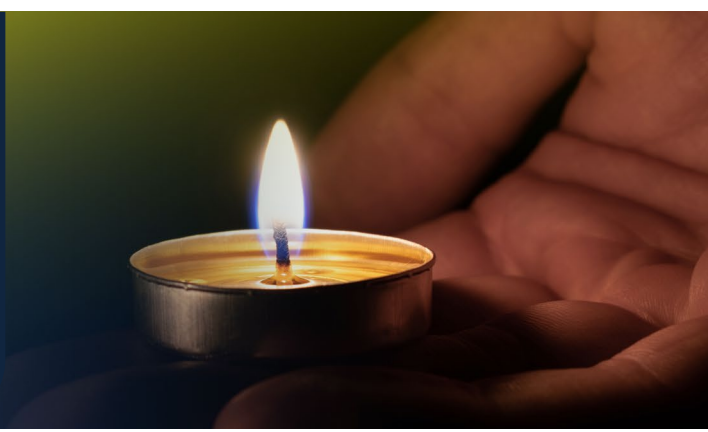
All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Extinguish candles and pause.



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Readings: Zephaniah 2: 3; 3: 12–13; Psalm 145: 7–10; 1 Corinthians 1: 26–31; Matthew 5: 1–12.

Friday

Today's Daily Prayer – A peaceful heart.

Preparation: Today's prayer will focus on the Beatitude that refers to being a peacemaker. It will invite those gathered to participate in an online three-minute retreat called [A Peaceful Heart](#). View the three-minute retreat before using it for prayer, ensuring you can play the video for all.

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of their breath. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer.

Leader: As we gather in God's presence and in the presence of each other, let us prepare to engage our minds, hearts and hands in prayer.

We begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Light candle and pause.

Listen

Reader: One of the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount was about living in peace and with peaceful hearts. Jesus said: 'Happy are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

Pause for silence.

Respond

Three-minute Retreat

Leader: Our response will be to participate in a three-minute retreat which will lead us to respond more deeply to this particular Beatitude.

[A Peaceful Heart](#).

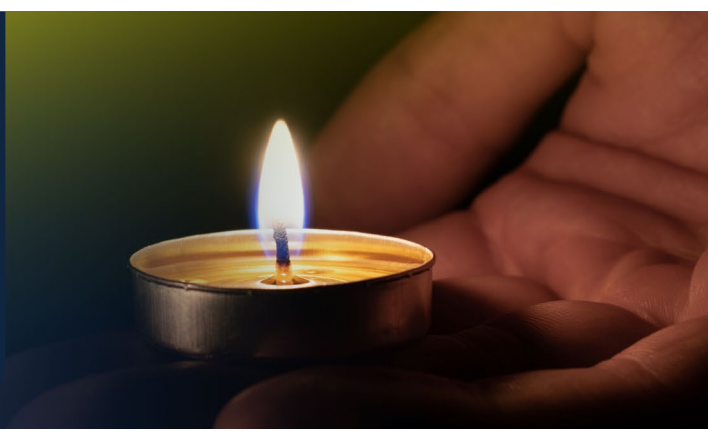
Let us think about how we can be a peacemaker in our homes, our school community, our workplace and our world.

Time for quiet reflection



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Go Forth

Song

[*Glory \(Let There Be Peace\)*](#) by Matt Maher

Leader: Let there be peace

All: Let there be peace

Leader: Let peace start in me

All: Let peace start in me.

Leader: With Christ beside me, are lives are formed in faith hope and love.

Saint Patrick, patron saint of our local Church in Melbourne.

All: Pray for us

Leader: In this special Jubilee Year of Saint Francis, Saint Francis of Assisi.

All: Pray for us

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Extinguish candles and pause.

