

Daily Prayer

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



Readings: Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111: 4–9; 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16.

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.

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.

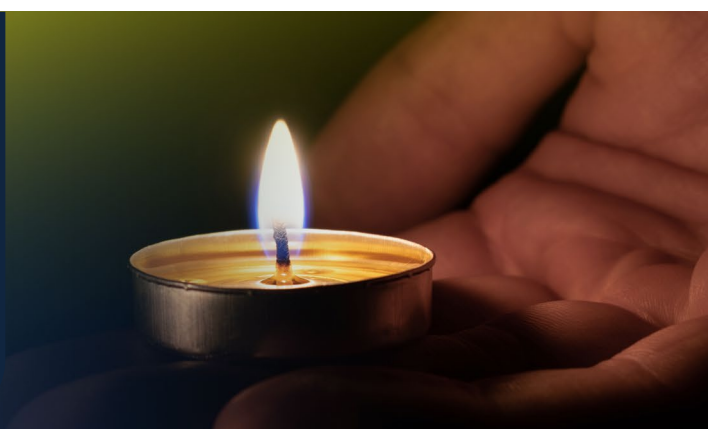
Every day of the week, Daily Prayer will invite those gathered to participate in prayer rituals and respond respectfully in a prayerful context. This week is about setting up for success in a way that those gathered will become comfortable with the structure, the responses, the gestures, the prayers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

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

This week we will celebrate being the salt and light of the world as Christians and we will pray for the world.

Day and Liturgical Colour	Daily Prayer	Links to Liturgy, Traditional Prayers, and Forms of Prayer
Monday – Green <i>International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking</i>	Peace begins with dignity: A global call to end human trafficking. <u>ACRATH</u>	Story of a Saint, Prayers of Intercession.
Tuesday – White <i>Saint Scholastica</i>	<i>You are the light of the world!</i>	Gospel, Reflection through song.
Wednesday – Green <i>World Day of Prayer for the Sick</i>	<i>'May you always find in faith, nourished by the Word and by the Sacraments, the strength needed to love God, even in the experience of illness'. Pope Francis</i>	Gospel, Prayers of Intercession, Hail Mary.
Thursday – Green	<i>Your light will shine like the dawn!</i>	First reading, Responsorial Psalm.
Friday – Green	<i>You are the salt of the earth!</i>	Gospel. Litany.

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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Readings: Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111: 4–9; 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16.


Monday

Today's Daily Prayer – Peace begins with dignity: A Global Call to End Human Trafficking

Today we will join with people all over the world to pray for Awareness against Human Trafficking. This international focus is aptly held on the memorial of Saint Josephine Bakhita. Saint Josephine is patron saint of those who have been trafficked or enslaved.

<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/world-day-of-prayer/>

Preparation: Choose a reader and someone to light the candle. You will need access to Audio Visual equipment to play the video. Provide copies of the response for all.



International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking

Peace Begins with Dignity:
A Global Call to End Human Trafficking











Pope Francis designated 8th February, the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking following a request from Talitha Kum, the worldwide Network of Consecrated Life Against Human Trafficking.

Born in 1869 in Sudan, Josephine knew the pain and sorrow of losing her freedom, when at 7 years of age she was taken by slave traders. She was bought and sold many times in the following decade. Taken to Italy by a family, who 'owned' her, she met the Canossian Daughters of Charity, became a Catholic and joined the Canossian congregation. She died in 1947 and was canonized in 2000.

ACT NOW

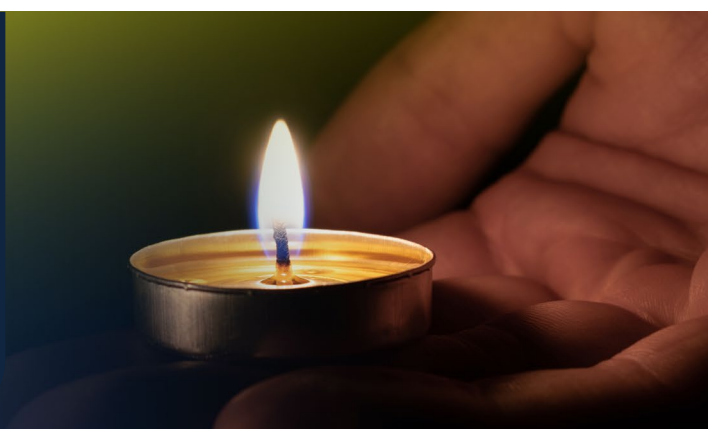
1. Learn about human trafficking and tell three others.
<https://acrath.org.au/the-issue/what-is-human-trafficking/>
2. Pray for the victim/survivors of human trafficking.
See Prayer vigil via the QR Code.
3. Purchase goods that have not been tainted by slavery within the supply chain. Look for the logos:
4. Join the live-streamed online Marathon of Prayer Friday 6th February. See details here:
<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/world-day-of-prayer/>

For all resources see:
<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/world-day-of-prayer/>
or scan the QR code



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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: Holy Spirit, come and fill our time together. Help us to be fully present here, to your Word, to one another and to the world you love.

Let us make the Sign of the Cross, being aware of the movement of our hands and the words that we are saying.

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

Light candle and pause.

Leader: Yesterday, Sunday marked the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking, fittingly observed on the memorial of Saint. Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of those trafficked or enslaved.

Listen

The Story of Saint Josephine Bakhita

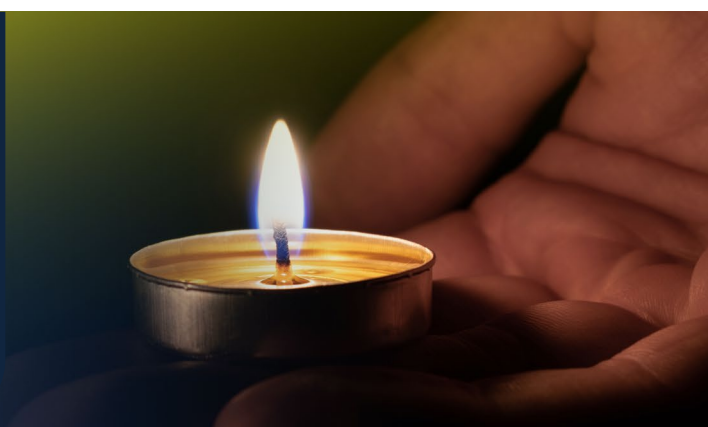
Leader: Let us watch the story of Saint Josephine Bahkita, a woman who grew up enduring horrific experiences of kidnapping and slavery. She was saved by a kind Italian Consul who took her back to Italy; she came to know God while under the care of the Canossian Sisters and eventually became a Canossian Sister. She spent at least 50 years of praying and serving God. She loved God and loved people, especially those who were victimised or marginalised. She is the patron saint of all who experience trafficking and slavery.

Video: [The story of Saint Josephine Bakhita](#) (1869–1947)



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Respond

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Let us pray,

God of Goodness and Mercy, we ask you to hear our prayers for those men, women and children who are denied their freedom and forced to suffer at the hands of powerful and ill-intentioned humans.

Reader: For those enslaved in agricultural fields, construction sites, mines and factories,

All: **may all humans be treated with respect and dignity.**

Reader: For those who are exploited for pleasure and entertainment,

All: **may all humans be treated with respect and dignity.**

Reader: For abducted children who are abused or forced to commit crimes

All: **may all humans be treated with respect and dignity.**

Reader: For those advocating to put an end to the crime of human trafficking and slavery,

All: **may all humans be treated with respect and dignity.**

Leader: We make these prayers through Christ, our Lord

All: **Amen.**

Go Forth

Leader: With Christ beside me, my life is 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**



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

Extinguish candles and pause.

Suggested Additional Resources

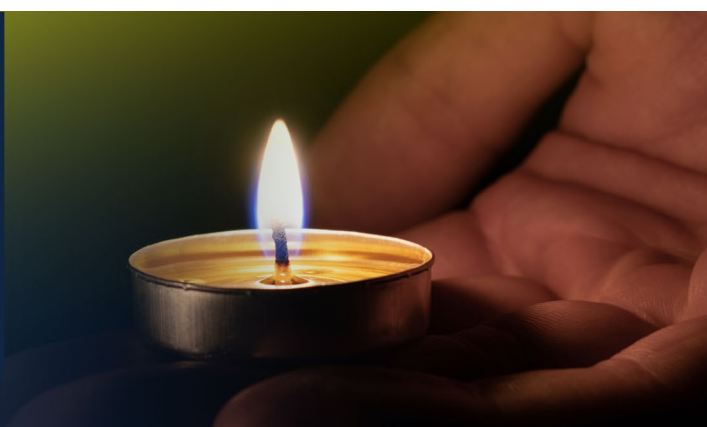
Song/Video: [Not Forgotten – For Human Trafficking Victims](#) – written by Kayla Jessop

Article: [The story of Saint Josephine Bakhita](#)



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Readings: Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111: 4–9; 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16.

Tuesday

Today's Daily Prayer – You are the light of the world!

Today's prayer will invite those gathered to reflect on how all of us are invited and called to let our light shine and **be** the light of the world.

Preparation: If possible, all gathered could have a tea light (either a real one or a battery operated one) and this could be lit or activated at the suggested time. These could then be placed in the sacred space at the end of the prayer. An alternative is to light the one large Christ candle. Choose a reader. You will need access to Audio Visual equipment to play a song.

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: Holy Spirit, come and fill our time together. Help us to be fully present here, to your Word, to one another and to the world you love.
Let us make the Sign of the Cross being aware of the movement of our hands and the words that we are saying.

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

Light candle and pause.

Leader: As our candle/candles are lit, let us recognise that the light of Christ is in our hearts and lives.

Background to the Sunday Gospel

In this Gospel reading, Jesus uses the metaphor of light to explain the principles of discipleship to his immediate followers. As Christians living in this 21st century we are called to follow Christ and to let our light shine for all to see. We do this when we say good and kind words; when we act justly and speak the truth, when we are compassionate and aware of the needs of others. The Church encourages us to be light of the world by practising the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Listen

Reader: *A reading from the Gospel of Matthew*

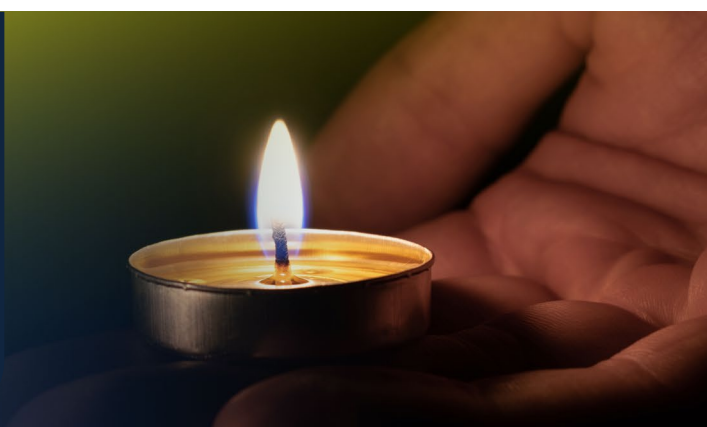
Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of all, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

Pause for silence.



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The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Respond

Song

Leader: Our response will be to reflect on the song [*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*](#) written by Kathleen Thomerson. As the song is played, you are invited to carry your lit candle and place it in the sacred space. It will symbolise your commitment to let your light shine for all to see!

Time for silent prayer

Go Forth

Reader: May the light of Christ enfold us and keep us, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Reader: May we go forth to let our light shine in our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Mary, mother of us all,

All: pray for us.

Reader: All holy men and women,

All: pray for us.

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



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

Extinguish candles and pause.

Suggested Additional Resources

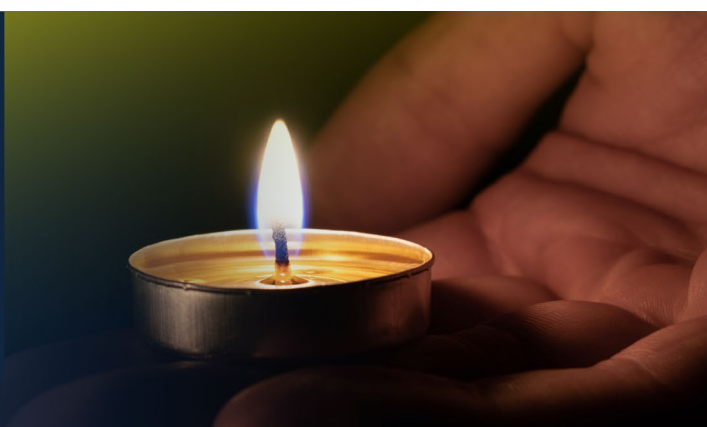
Song [Christ, Be Our Light](#) by Bernadette Farrell

Song [My Lighthouse](#) by Rend Collective



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Readings: Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111: 4–9; 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16.

Wednesday

Today's Daily Prayer – World Day of Prayer for the Sick

Today's prayer will focus on praying for the sick in our families, our school and our parish communities.

Preparation: Heart-shaped Post-It Notes for writing the names of people to be remembered in the prayer: relatives or friends who are sick; groups of sick people, e.g. those suffering with cancer; or people who minister to the sick, such as nurses, paramedics. These will be posted on a Prayer Wall. Choose readers 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 may wish to include in today's prayer.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God ... the holy presence of each other ... and the holy presence of ourselves ...

Leader: Holy Spirit, come and fill our time together. Help us to be fully present here, to your Word, to one another and to the world you love.
Let us make the Sign of the Cross, being aware of the movement of our hands and the words that we are saying.

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

Leader: Today is the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. We are invited to pray for the needs of the sick and for all who care for the sick, including family members, health workers and volunteers. As the prayer candle is lit, let us pause for a minute of silence to remember and pray for all who are sick and all who care for the sick.

Light candle and pause.

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.

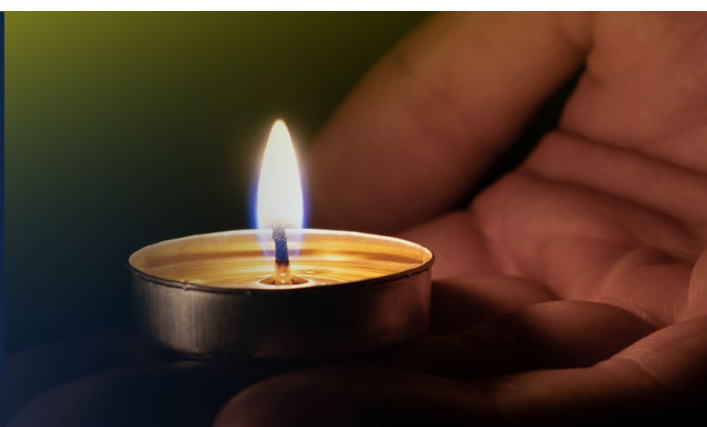
Leader: Let us prepare to listen attentively to the sacred words of Scripture.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (11: 28–30).



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‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’ (Pause for silence.) Narrator: The Gospel of the Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Respond

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Let us pray for all people who are carrying heavy burdens.

Reader: For all people who are sick and in need of healing. May they know the comfort of God’s healing presence and the love and support of their loved ones. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all family members who are caring for their sick relatives. May they be given the strength and courage in times of fear and worry, stress and concern, sadness and loss. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For doctors, nurses and all who work in healthcare institutions. May they carry out their work with professionalism, responsibility and compassionate hearts. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We make these prayers through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

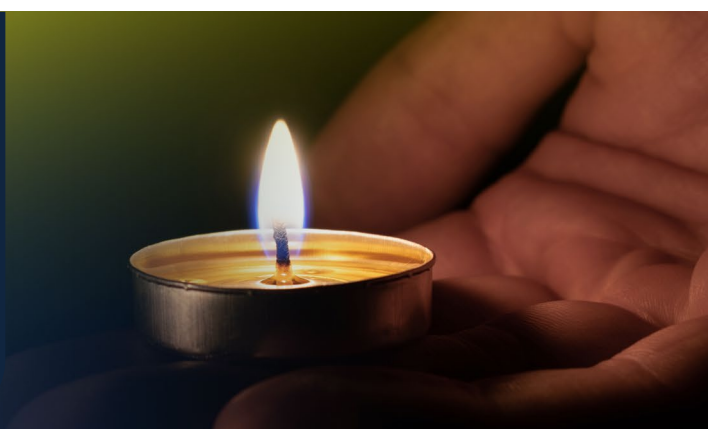
Placing of Names on a Prayer Wall

Leader: Each of you are invited to name who you wish to pray for on the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. Write the name slowly and mindfully on a heart-shaped Post-It Note and in silence post it on the Prayer Wall.



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The names of people to be remembered in the prayer might be the names of relatives or friends who are sick; groups of sick people, e.g. those suffering with cancer; or people who minister to the sick, e.g. nurses, doctors, paramedics – or anyone you might be thinking of who is unwell.

Go Forth

Leader: Let us conclude this time by praying the Hail Mary for the sick.

All: **Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.**

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of death. 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**

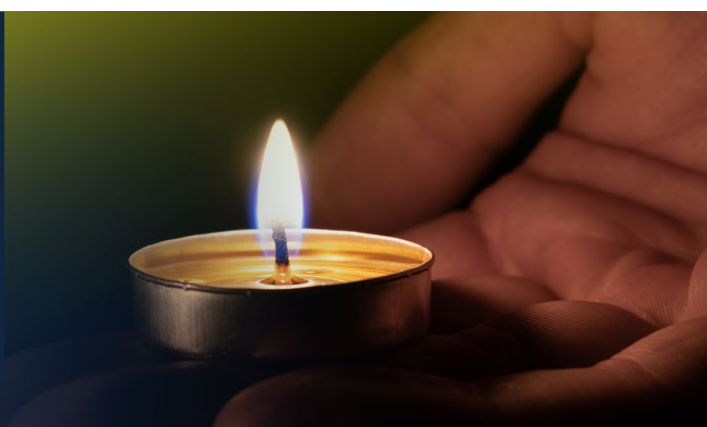
All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Extinguish candles and pause.



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Readings: Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111: 4–9; 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16.

Thursday

Today's Daily Prayer – Your light will shine like the dawn!

Preparation: The first reading last Sunday described positive attitudes and charitable actions or works of mercy. Isaiah reminds us that these ways of being and doing mercy are ways for us to shine and let God shine through us. Choose readers and someone to light the candle. Provide copies of the Responsorial Psalm response for all.

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: Holy Spirit, come and fill our time together. Help us to be fully present here, to your Word, to one another and to the world you love.

Let us make the Sign of the Cross, being aware of the movement of our hands and the words that we are saying.

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

Light candle and pause.

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.

Reader: A reading from the Book of Isaiah.

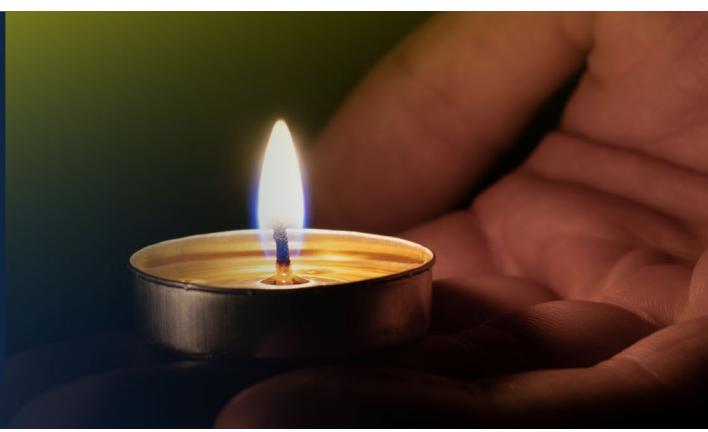
Thus says the Lord: 'Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin. Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Your integrity will go before you and the glory of the Lord behind you. Cry, and the Lord will answer; call, and he will say, "I am here". If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon.

Pause for silence.



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The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Respond

Responsorial Psalm

Leader: Our response to the reading will be to pray the psalm.

A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

All: **A light rises in the darkness for the upright.**

Reader 2: He is a light in the darkness for the upright:
he is generous, merciful and just.
The good man takes pity and lends,
he conducts his affairs with honour.

All: **A light rises in the darkness for the upright.**

Reader 3: The just man will never waver:
he will be remembered for ever.
He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.

All: **A light rises in the darkness for the upright.**

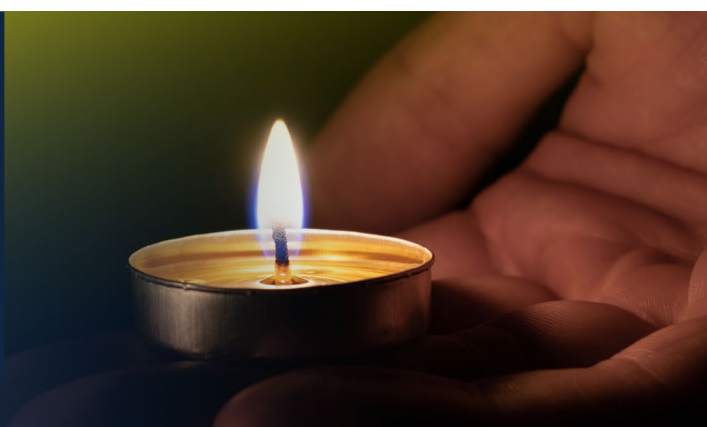
Reader 4: With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His head will be raised in glory.

All: **A light rises in the darkness for the upright.**



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Go Forth

Leader: May we be generous, merciful and just people.

All: Amen.

Leader: May we have firm hearts and trust in the Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May we give to the poor with open hands and hearts.

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

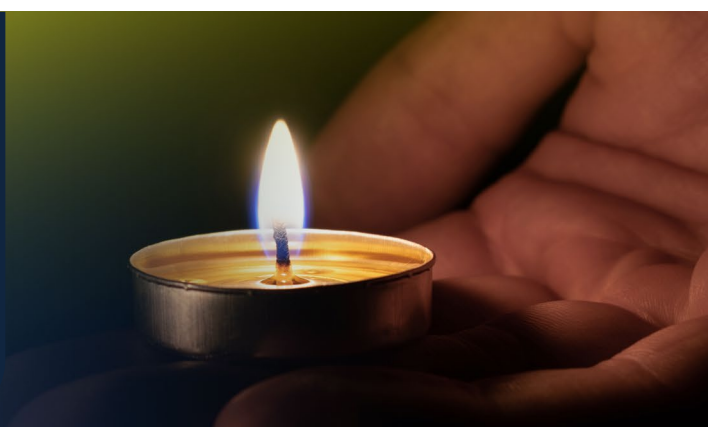
All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Extinguish candles and pause.



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Readings: Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111: 4–9; 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16.

Friday

Today's Daily Prayer – You are the salt of the earth!

Preparation: Today we will pray about the message from Matthew's Gospel where Jesus tells his disciples that they are the salt of the earth. Preparation: If you have a chance, prompt the group earlier to think about their personal gifts, and passions. It might also be helpful to preload the song [Bring Forth the Kingdom](#) by Marty Haugen. Choose readers and someone to light the candle. Provide copies of the Litany response for all.

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: Holy Spirit, come and fill our time together. Help us to be fully present here, to your Word, to one another and to the world you love.
Let us make the Sign of the Cross, being aware of the movement of our hands and the words that we are saying.

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

Light candle and pause.

Background to the Sunday Gospel

In this Gospel reading, Jesus uses the metaphor of salt to explain the principles of discipleship to his immediate followers. In the time of Jesus, salt was a very rare and expensive commodity. It was used for adding flavour to food and making it taste better, as well as preserving food so it would last longer. This was especially the case in these days before refrigeration. It was also used as a healing agent. Jesus emphasises the distinctive taste of salt. As Christians living in this 21st century we are called to follow Christ and to add a distinctive flavour to the way we live and to the lives of others. The Church encourages us to be salt of the earth by practising the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Listen

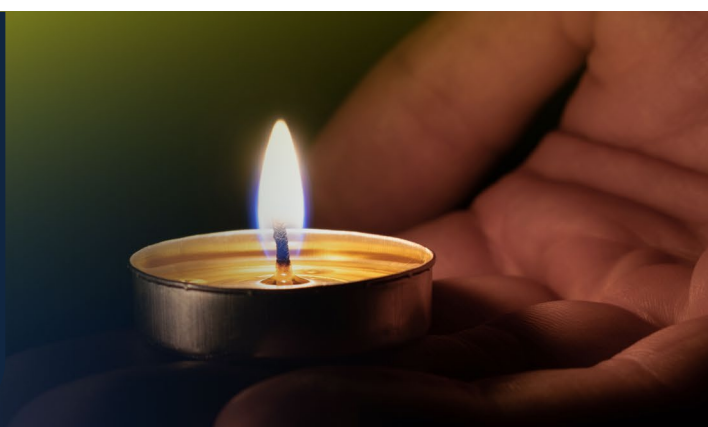
If possible, the scripture passage is to be read from a Lectionary or a Bible, which could be put in an honoured place. Readers are to read slowly and clearly when proclaiming the Word of God and treat the text with reverence.

Leader: Let us prepare to listen attentively to the sacred words of Scripture. Listen for one word from this Sermon on the Mount as preached by Jesus. Choose a word that touches your heart and can be your guide for living in 2026.



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

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.'

Pause for silence.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Respond

A Litany

Leader: Each one of us has unique gifts, but sometimes we don't recognise them or use them for the good of ourselves, others and the world. Salt was and is used to add flavour to food and make it taste and last better. If we use our gifts, we can make life better for ourselves and others, e.g. family, friends, work colleagues, teachers and staff, people in the parish and the wider community.

Reader: When we welcome someone new to the community and help them to feel comfortable ...

All: **we are being salt of the earth.**

Reader: When we listen to the story of another person and show genuine interest ...

All: **we are being salt of the earth.**

Reader: When we reach out to someone who is hurting and offer help ...

All: **we are being salt of the earth.**

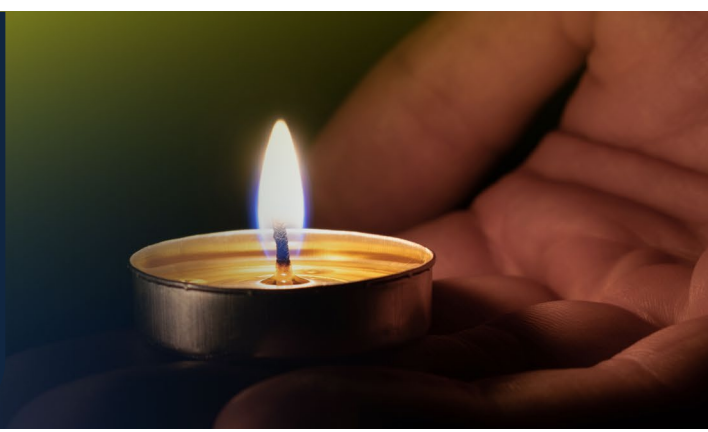
Reader: Let us spend time in prayer asking Jesus to help us to be people who make a difference in the lives of others.

Time for silent prayer



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Go Forth

Leader: With Christ beside me, our 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.

