



Wednesday of the 33rd Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: 2 Maccabees 7:1, 20–31

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 17:1b–d, 5–6, 8b, 15 | **Response:** Psalm 17:15b

Gospel Acclamation: John 15:16

Gospel Reading: Luke 19:11–28

Preached at: the Chapel of Xolile Keteyi House in the Archdiocese of Durban, South Africa.

The Word of God today shows us people who held firm in tough times and challenges us to reflect on the way we use the gifts God has entrusted to us.

Dear friends in Christ,

Our first reading from the Second Book of Maccabees tells the story of a mother and her seven sons who choose death rather than betray God's law. Our psalm asks God to hear a just plea and expresses a longing to see God's face. And in the Gospel from Luke, Jesus tells a parable about a king who gives each of his servants one pound and asks them to use it well while he is away. Three different readings with one shared question: what do we do with the faith God has placed in our hands?

The mother in Maccabees is at the centre of this question. She watches each of her sons suffer torment, and she does not panic. She does not lose hope. She reminds them that God who created the world from nothing can give life again. She speaks the language of trust. In Jewish tradition, a mother was not only the one who cared for her children, but also the one who guarded the family's memory. Here, she becomes the voice of Israel's deepest belief that God is faithful.

Her courage is not dramatic. It is steady and real. And many families in South Africa will recognise this kind of courage. Parents who rise before dawn to catch taxis to work. Grandparents raising grandchildren on small pensions. Young people searching for work with determination even when opportunities feel few. Families holding themselves together through load shedding, tight budgets, and

the pressures of daily life. These simple acts of endurance, kindness, and persistence are their own form of holiness. They are the faith of the Maccabean mother made visible in our streets, townships, suburbs, and rural communities.

The psalmist gives us a prayer for hard times. He says that his footsteps have not slipped from God's paths. He asks God to listen. And he expresses a longing to see God's face. His prayer is not perfect poetry; it is honest hope. It speaks to moments when we look at our country and feel the weight of inequality, corruption, violence, and fear. The psalm tells us that our longings matter to God. It teaches us to bring our struggles before God with open hearts and to trust that he sees us.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells a parable as he approaches Jerusalem. Some people believe the Kingdom of God is about to appear at once. He tells them about a nobleman who goes away to receive a kingship. Before leaving, he gives each servant one pound. This is not a fortune. It is enough to work with. When he returns, he asks how they used it. Two have worked faithfully and with courage. One hides his pound in a cloth because he is afraid. Not lazy. Afraid.

This matters. Jesus is inviting his disciples to see that faith is not passive waiting. It is active trust. He will go away. He will return. And in the meantime, he expects his followers to use what he has given: their faith, their courage, their gifts, their compassion, their energy for service.

Ignatian spirituality helps us enter this story. Imagine you are one of those servants. Imagine holding that single pound in your hands. You do not know when the king will return. You do not know how much difference your small effort will make. You only know that you have been trusted with something. How would you use it? What fear might hold you back? And what hope might draw you forward?

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that the Kingdom grows through the way we treat one another. In South Africa this is concrete. It is refusing to join corruption even when corruption surrounds you. It is helping a neighbour who has less. It is giving fair treatment to employees. It is speaking truth with kindness. It is working for justice in a country where many still feel excluded. These acts may feel small. But the Gospel tells us that small acts, done faithfully, become part of God's great work.

So this morning we ask God for the endurance of the Maccabean mother, the honesty of the psalmist, and the courage of the faithful servants. May we use what we have been given to bring hope to our homes, our communities, and our country.

To guide your prayer this morning, consider these three questions:

- Where is God inviting me to be faithful in small, steady ways each day?
- Which gift of mine, however simple, can I offer to someone who needs hope this week?
- When I imagine Jesus returning and speaking to me, how do I want him to find me using the “pound” he has entrusted to me?

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-11nov-19-yc-ot-33/>

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.