



RISEN LORD
COMMUNITY



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



St. Gerard Majella

Memorial: October 16

OCTOBER 2022 | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

OCTOBER
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“Christ has no body now, but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth, but
yours. Yours are the eyes through
which Christ looks compassion into
the world. Yours are the feet with
which Christ walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which
Christ blesses the world.”

Saint Teresa of Avila

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Editors

Lalith Perera
Louis Benedict

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The Holy Spirit - God's gift (From the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

“God is Love” and love is his first gift, containing all others. “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Because we are dead or at least wounded through sin, the first effect of the gift of love is the forgiveness of our sins. The communion of the Holy Spirit in the Church restores to the baptized the divine likeness lost through sin.

He, then, gives us the “pledge” or “first fruits” of our inheritance: the very life of the Holy Trinity, which is to love as “God has loved us.” This love (the “charity” of 1 Cor 13) is the source of the new life in Christ, made possible because we have received “power” from the Holy Spirit.

By this power of the Spirit, God’s children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear “the fruit of the Spirit: . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

“We live by the Spirit”; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we “walk by the Spirit.”

Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God “Father” and to share in Christ’s grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory.

Saturday October 1

Solemnity of St Therese of the Child Jesus, Virgin & Doctor of the Church

Isaiah
66:10-14

Psalm
45:11-12,14-17

1 Corinthians
13:4-13

Matthew
18:1-5,10

Become a child to receive the kingdom.

Often we interpret the love of God and our relationship with him through our human relationships. A loving earthly father makes it easy for us to envisage a loving Heavenly Father. In today’s first reading from Isaiah we are asked to rejoice for Jerusalem, a city which has suffered much plunder and war and is likened to the tenderness of a mother. God assures the inhabitants that he will send peace and love to her like never before. How do we experience that peace and love? It is in humble acceptance and not in our assumptions. The Gospel proclamation teaches us the virtue of being humble like children because that practice makes us the greatest in the kingdom of God. St. Therese was such a gentle little soul, who went through much pain and suffering till at one moment she encountered the love of Christ which filled her with great joy and hope. No more was she a sad, depressed crying child but a soul burning with love for Jesus. Let us become like her filled with the love and presence of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for the grace to give up our ways of thinking and understanding and become as little children in your kingdom. Amen.

Sunday October 2

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Habakkuk
1:2-3; 2:2-4

Psalm
95:1-2, 6-9

2 Timothy
1:6-8, 13-14

Luke
17:5-10

Gift of faith.

Today's Gospel proclamation speaks to us about the faith one can possess, which is often known as "a gift in an earthen vessel". The Lord Jesus said that our faith can even move mountains. From our childhood we have heard many phrases relating to the power of faith. Yet, what actually is faith? Faith is to have an attitude of expectancy and optimism even when there are setbacks, shortcomings and failures overwhelming us.

Faith is having hope and courage to glide through despite our circumstances and situations; because as Christians we are called to walk by faith not by sight. The letter to the Hebrews says that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen".

Looking at our country and its present situation, the Covid crisis, the Easter Sunday attack, the 30 year ethnic conflict in our nation have taught us to have faith in the unseen future. We remind ourselves to stay positive, hoping that all these circumstances will ultimately work out for our good by God's grace. Therefore we rely and depend on God and live surrendered to him, and it is another way to be possessing this gift of faith we have received from God.

As we believe and trust, "that the Lord will make all things work together for the good of those who love him", we can be assured eventually that all things will have a positive outcome. Of course we know that some characters in the Old Testament like Joseph and Moses had difficult journeys in life. For there are no shortcuts to success in life and this is true even in our walk with God.

We are called to remain close to God in prayer and then God will open doors of opportunities, no matter how difficult the situation may seem. Thus as a nation we are called to implore God and stay connected trusting in him. When we wait upon God, sometimes it can be painful and frustrating. We have to focus on God's goodness which will help us to develop an attitude of expectancy.

Just like Jesus' disciples who came out of the darkest moments we too as a nation could expect a breakthrough. What we need to do is surrender in prayer, cultivate an attitude of expectancy, be courageous and hopeful in faith. We need to remain and rest with him in faith. What seems impossible will then be made possible by the God of the impossible.

"Faith is different from proof; the latter is human, the former is a gift from God." Blaise Pascal (Catholic Theologian). Let us pray for such deep faith and trust in our loving God.

Prayer: Abba Father, increase our faith, show us the way, and guide us.
Amen.

Monday October 3

27th Week in Ordinary Time

Galatians
1:6-12

Psalm
111:1-2,7-10

Luke
10:25-37

Am I serving God through my neighbour?

In today's Gospel proclamation a religious leader asks Jesus a question: "who is my neighbor?" We think of neighbours as people with whom we get along, with whom we have common interests and who respect and honour us. But Jesus challenges us on how we can extend ourselves, by dying to our self-interest and putting the needs of our neighbours before our needs. The Parable of the Good Samaritan throws a light on how we have understood the Gospel. The Priest and the Levite were concerned of their need to protect themselves than to help a man who was beaten by robbers. They would have had to sacrifice their time and money on a stranger, who may not repay back and through whom they may not get any benefit. On the other hand we see a Samaritan considered as an enemy of Jews, who sees a man in need of help, reaches out and helps him with his time and resources and becomes his neighbour. Who is my neighbor? How will I respond to a stranger in need of my help? Do I respond like the levite or do I reach out?

Prayer: Abba Father, may I have a heart to bring you to my neighbor by serving the needy. Amen.

Tuesday October 4

Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi

Galatians
1:13-24

Psalm
139:1-3, 13-15

Luke
10:38-42

Sit at the feet of the Master.

In this age of information and technology, we see amazing advancements in science like we have never seen before. It is easy to get distracted by many things. We can find anything and everything we want at the click of a button on the Internet. We need to ask ourselves the question, how much of this is actually needed for us? There is little point in any of it, if we do not know how to discern what is right and what is wrong. Not every human being is the same, each person is unique. God came to the earth as one of us so that we may have a relationship with him. We build this relationship and intimacy with Jesus through prayer and contemplation and it is through prayer that everything else in life flows. What do I choose when I have many options at my hand? This beautiful passage about Martha and Mary explains this. We should work hard but if we do not first sit at the feet of Jesus and learn to listen to his voice then all our labour is in vain. We become peaceful and bear much fruit when we find time to sit at his feet.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to sit at your feet, to hear your voice and to be guided by your love in what we do. Amen.

Wednesday October 5

Optional Memorial of Saint Faustina Kowalska, Virgin

Galatians
2:1-2, 7-14

Psalm
117:1-2

Luke
11:1-4

Pray unceasingly.

Today the Lord is teaching us how to pray. As Christians we know many prayers. The question is how do we pray? Are we thankful to the Lord for our lives? Are we right with God with our actions in our day to day lives? Have we asked pardon from the Lord for our mistakes? Many of us do not do that and we may not even think about it. We need to commit ourselves to prayer every day and give glory to our God for every moment of our lives because he is our creator, and we need his presence in our lives. Otherwise, our lives will be in chaos because we are vulnerable people and we need his leading and his love. But sometimes we may be tempted to think or question because we pray every day but God does not seem to listen to our prayer. God is with us all the time but we need to pray faithfully and give glory to him because faith needs to grow instead of doubt. Let us make a commitment to spend time with him every day and then our lives will be blessed, joyful and peaceful.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to connect with you through prayer and awake our hearts and minds to experience your love. Amen.

Thursday October 6

27th Week in Ordinary Time

Galatians
3:1-5

Luke
1:69-75

Luke
11:5-13

The unlimited power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit reveals to us the glory, the majesty, the grace, and love of our Savior. He gives us knowledge of the things of God, opening our eyes to the truths of Scripture, and forming our minds on the basis of these truths. (1 Cor 2:10-16). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are led to godliness and greater holiness. Jesus was crucified so that we may be redeemed and receive eternal life in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, as Saint Paul says to the Galatians, we often start with the spirit but end in the flesh. If we ask God for the Holy Spirit, the great gift from the Father, he will not fail us. The Spirit's work is not in the realm of our feelings but our unshakeable faith, based on trust in the promises of God. Dry ground cannot produce fruit until it receives rain, in the same way, we too cannot bear fruit until we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as rainfall from above. "Through the baptism that liberates us from change and decay we have become one in body, through the spirit we have become one in soul." (Saint Irenaeus)

Prayer: Abba Father, take control of my life and may I experience the freedom and power of your presence in my life. Amen.

Friday October 7

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Galatians
3:7-14

Luke
1:47-55

Luke
1:26-38

God is greater than any other force.

“Relapse” is what frightens most when recovering from a vicious addiction. It sets back recovery. It takes persistent efforts to be successful. The evil of addiction should not be taken lightly. Similarly, our Lord Jesus says that evil oppression which may seem to have gone away will come back forcefully. It is not to say that evil will prevail. But rather it is a call to persevere in prayer and to have faith in God that what God does is far greater than any oppression of evil. The stories of evil rather than frightening us are challenging us to live holy lives as we have been delivered from evil by the death and resurrection of Christ. It calls us to witness to the power of God’s love. No evil can break or destroy God’s abiding and holy love for us. Today we celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary established to celebrate the victory over the enemy forces in Europe. The Holy Rosary is another weapon against evil forces. Relapse in remaining holy is human. Holiness is hard but regret is harder.

Prayer: Abba Father, deliver us from the evil one.
Amen.

Saturday October 8

27th Week in Ordinary Time

Galatians
3:22-29

Psalms
105:2-7

Luke
11:27-28

The promises of God nourish our faith.

St. Paul wrote to those Galatians who accepted Christ Jesus as the Lord of their lives to teach them that it is through faith in Christ Jesus that they are liberated. We know that the first Covenant was fulfilled in the person of Christ Jesus. Therefore the law which kept the people of God (of the first Covenant) connected to God is now kept within our hearts by the gift of faith. Through our baptism we have clothed ourselves with Christ Jesus. We no longer need to be disciplined by the law. We have our true identity now as Children of God. We became children of God not by observing the law but by accepting the love of Christ Jesus through faith. The promises of God in the Scriptures nourish our faith. When we make the “Word of God” the foundation of our lives, our faith grows. Through the Gospel proclamation the Lord Jesus said to us that true blessedness is to be rooted in the “Word of God”. The example the Lord Jesus gave us is the Blessed Mother, who accepted the “Word of God” and the “Word” grew in her.

Prayer: Abba Father, grant me the grace for your Word to grow in me.
Amen.

Sunday October 9

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kings
5:14-17

Psalm
98:1-4

2 Timothy
2:8-13

Luke
17:11-19

Relationship with the Creator.

In today's Gospel proclamation we see our Lord Jesus meet ten lepers. In those days, being a leper meant that one was in a hopeless situation. Besides the horror of the disfiguring of bodies, leprosy was associated with loneliness and helplessness. Regardless of how loved they were, and like Naaman in the first reading, no matter how rich or powerful they were, they would not be spared the curse of the disease. They were sent to the desert to live without human contact. For such people, a visitation from our Lord provides hope and a light like no other.

Those of us who are in desperate circumstances, like the lepers, are reminded that we can have the same experience of visitation of the Lord as we go for Mass, sit before the Blessed Sacrament, go for confession, or sit in silence and open our hearts to him in personal prayer. How many of us do these things but continue to live in hopelessness and desperation. What did the ten lepers do differently? They approached the Lord with expectant faith. Then they refused to accept their senses, their understanding and emotions as real. Instead, they accepted the Word of God as real. Whenever we take the Lord at his word, there is an initial period of darkness, where all we have is the assurance of his word. Our senses, intellect and emotions will not collaborate the word of the Lord. Yet as we act upon the word, the breakthroughs will come, and the reality of the world of the Spirit will break into the material world.

Though we receive many healings from the Lord, the enthusiasm created by such an experience can be short lived, as our nature takes over our desire to deepen our relationship with the Lord. We too, like the nine lepers, get on with our usual way of life. The grateful leper's action proved that he believed that it was the Lord Jesus who healed him. He placed the Lord Jesus at the highest point of his life and at that moment he became a worshipper and received God's favor upon his life.

In the second reading we find St. Paul, who was once a respected figure in the society, a respected Pharisee looked up to by good religious people, now chained and thrown into prison, and treated like a common criminal. Under normal circumstances, this would have been a curse like leprosy. However, for the one in a relationship with the Lord, a crisis is something that opens the gates to a divine experience. St. Paul discovers "that the Word of God is not chained" (2 Timothy 2:9), and because of the suffering he endures, "the elect" experience the saving power that is in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to go beyond the answers to my leprosy, and discover the true blessing of a relationship with you. Amen.

Monday October 10

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Galatians 4:
22-24,26-27,31; 5:1

Psalm
113: 1-7

Luke
11:29-32

Jesus - sign of God's perfect love.

Today's psalm encourages us to praise the Lord. We accept that we were created to praise God's name, and yet we often neglect his glory. Thus, the psalmist repeats the encouragement so that we will be more ardent and faithful in praising the Lord. Honest praise of God does not mean that we go around saying, "Praise the Lord" all the time. Instead, it is a response to thinking about who God is and what he has done, as shown in his Word. While praise by its very nature is somewhat instinctive, it also can be nurtured as we intentionally meditate on God's greatness and glory. Do we discern before we decide on something? Today's Gospel proclamation teaches us that Jesus is greater than any signs that we may have witnessed. If we have him in our hearts, we do not need any more signs. Do we allow Jesus to have a special place in our hearts? Jesus wants to come and live in our hearts. The simple request is repentance for our sins. Can we repent and invite him to make his home within us?

Prayer: Abba Father, I ask for your forgiveness and I seek your love.
Amen.

Tuesday October 11

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Galatians
5:1-6

Psalm
119:41,43-45,47-48

Luke
11:37-41

The challenge to the internal journey of life.

In today's Gospel proclamation the Lord speaks to a legalist (a Pharisee). Externally they seem to be doing things right, following the rubrics of their faith to the letter. For example, they ceremoniously and religiously wash their hands before meals. They are offended when the Lord disregards this obligation. The Lord brings to their mind a reality, stating "Did not he who made the outside make the inside also?" Inside most of the pharisees however, there was much greed, cheating, forcing exorbitant payment (extortion) for services rendered, evil intent and other forms of wickedness. Jesus slammed them as fools. We need to use our intelligence and reflect interiorly on the attitudes we entertain. God wants us to have the mind of his Son. Many years ago in a Court Case, I was asked to state a lie if I needed to win my case. I refused. Was called foolish. I held on to my principle with great internal struggle but I eventually won the case. Let us live by the principles of the Kingdom and God will be on our side.

Prayer: Abba Father, when sin crouches at the door of my heart may I be on guard lest it destroys me. Amen.

Wednesday October 12

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Galatians
5:18-25

Psalm
1:1-4, 6

Luke
11:42-46

Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit.

We have evil desires that we cannot ignore. For us to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, we must deal with our evil desires decisively. Those who ignore sins or refuse to deal with them would be unable to lead a transformed life. To accept Christ as our Savior, we need to turn from our sins and willingly nail our sinful nature to the cross. This does not mean, however, that we will never see traces of its evil desires again. We still have the capacity to sin, but we have been set free from sin's power over us and no longer must give in to it. We must surrender our sinful tendencies to God's control, crucify them, and draw on the Spirit's power to overcome them. The Spirit produces these character traits that are found in Christ. They are the effects of Christ's control - we cannot obtain them without his help. If we want the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us, we must join our lives to his. We must love him and imitate him. Then we will fulfill the purpose of the law to love God and our neighbors. Which qualities do we want the Spirit to produce in us?

Prayer: Abba Father, may your light guide our life.
Amen.

Thursday October 13

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
1:1-10

Psalm
98:1-6

Luke
11:47-54

Let us become authentic disciples.

In today's first reading St. Paul speaks about the power of the blood of Christ. Through the blood of Jesus, we have obtained freedom, it is more than a physical freedom, he talks about our mental freedom which enables us to embrace and respect each other as Jesus loves us. When we start to respect and treat others as we respect ourselves, we can build mature human relationships. Our discipleship is meaningful, when we respect and accept others in spite of their weakness and failures. In both words and deeds we need to be authentic disciples, bearing witness to the grace that has been given to us. As disciples of Christ, are we looking for grace or comforts? Are we responding to the call of Christ or not? If we ignore the call of Christ we are walking away from light into darkness. Jesus shed his blood to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body with himself as the head. At the right time he will bring us together to be with him forever; then people will understand. On that day, all people will bow and accept Jesus as Lord.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to love others as you love me.
Amen.

Friday October 14

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
1:11-14

Psalm
33:1-2,4-5,12-13

Luke
12:1-7

Cherished and loved by God.

Today's Gospel proclamation talks about the fear of God. When Jesus speaks to his apostles he asks them to be aware of the Pharisees' yeast, which is hypocrisy. Many people live as white washed tombs, showing the world how religious and good they are but in fact they lead a hypocritical life behind closed doors. Many a times we fall prey to such people and eventually realize their deceit. The only person we need to follow is Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Jesus talks about how valuable we are to God. More often than not we think that we are a mistake. Let us not feel depressed, lonely and rejected, because he loves us. The Lord says that every hair on our head is counted. God knows everything about us. As it says in Psalm 139 there is no place we can go to hide from God. He is all sovereign and he has carved our names on the palm of his hands. He created us with love and he will take care of us no matter what. All we need to do is to trust in him. Are we ready to trust him completely?

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to trust in you.
Amen.

Saturday October 15

Memorial of Saint Teresa of Avila, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Ephesians
1:15-23

Psalm
8:2-7

Luke
12:8-12

Let the truth of your kingdom reign in us!

St. Teresa of Jesus, also known as St. Teresa of Avila, at the age of seven ran away from home desiring martyrdom, but it did not happen. God's plan was for her to enter the Carmelite Order and she spent her time purifying herself through fasting and prayer. She had a profound mystical union with God and received knowledge of the mystical inner life. She went on to reform many Carmelite convents and founded new ones. Many years later, she was named the first woman Doctor of the Church. The Gospel proclamation challenges us about the fundamental state of our heart before God. How is my relationship with God? Often we harden our hearts against the Holy Spirit who is leading us to repentance. It is the Holy Spirit that will bring our sins to light so that we can receive forgiveness and be purified. Let us spend time in prayer so that we may be open to the presence and promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives, so that we too could commune with the Father's heart and be able to grow as one body of Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I receive the grace to know that in you I lack nothing, you alone are enough for me. Amen.

Sunday October 16

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus
17:8-13

Psalm
121:1-8

2 Timothy
3:14--4:2

Luke
18:1-8

Unceasing prayer.

Having instant access to whatever we can think of to fulfil our desires and needs is definitely a huge advantage of living in the 21st century. However, this seemingly amazing characteristic of today's world has left us busy and impatient.

We are so used to having instant results, that when things do not come as easily as they should, we give in to despair and anxiety. But today, the word of God reminds us of the importance of striving and persevering, specially in our prayer.

In today's first reading, we see Moses on top of the mountain with his arms outstretched, while his people fight the Amalekites. Amazingly this act seems to be the determining factor in the Israelites' success in the battle, for when Moses had his hands raised, the Israelites were winning and when his hands were resting the tables turned.

We believe that Moses was not merely holding his hands high but praying fervently and interceding on behalf of his people. This was such a tiring act and ultimately Aaron and Hur had to support Moses to carry on. And the result was victory for the Israelites.

This is our calling during these times of trouble: to stand in the gap between heaven and earth, to draw down God's graces upon the needs of many through our tireless intercession. We are not expected to do it all on our own but join hands with the many faithful, for this is what pleases our Father.

As we listen to the Lord Jesus' words in the Gospel Proclamation, we are assured of the power of unceasing prayer. In contrast to the loving and faithful God that we ourselves cry out to, the judge in today's parable is a man 'who neither feared God nor respected any human being.'

However, he gave into the widow's pleas simply because she had the courage and perseverance to appeal to that corrupt judge over and over again, without giving up, until justice was served.

Would our merciful Father, turn away from us when we cry out to him day in and day out? Do we dare to present our cause to him often enough or do we give up so easily after the first few attempts?

We are challenged today to keep our hopes alive and trust in God in the midst of disappointment and struggle. Our God never delights in our miseries but awaits eagerly to fill us with good things. So, what is it that stopped his graces from flowing into our lives? Is it our lack of perseverance? Are we really pleading for a just cause?

Prayer: Abba Father, we lift our eyes towards you for our help comes from you alone. Amen.

Monday October 17

Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr

Ephesians
2:1-10

Psalm
100:2-5

Luke
12:13-21

By grace we have been saved through faith.

We are aware of the uncertainty of our life on earth. The complexity of the design of our bodies have led to various research to find new ways to ensure we live longer and ultimately to push the limits of our life span. Our criterion of success seems short sighted. By extending our life by two more years on earth what do we hope to gain? When will our greed end? We should acclaim medical and scientific advancements while not forgetting our primary calling. Through today's Gospel proclamation we are reminded that faith can give us a life of eternal joy instead of adding few finite number of years to our life span. It is by God's grace that we are saved. It is a gift that is given to us when we become sons or daughters of God through his beloved Son. We are sometimes worried about our material possessions and we focus on protecting the riches we have gathered on earth. Instead, let us focus on storing more heavenly riches that endure for eternity. There we will have infinite joy with God.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for forgiving us through your Son and saving us by your grace. Amen.

Tuesday October 18

Feast of Saint Luke, Evangelist

2 Timothy
4:10-17

Psalm
145:10-13,17-18

Luke
10:1-9

The mission God calls us to accomplish.

God calls us to spread his Word to others. At one point the Lord changed our lives and strengthened us with his Word. By attending Holy Mass, prayer meetings and other services, the Lord is filling us for the purpose of bringing others to him. He calls us to be filled by him, to witness to what he has done in our lives and take him to others. We love the Lord and have a relationship with him, but we may be nervous to go out and tell people about the Lord. The truth is that God knows our limitations. St. Paul was called to witness to the Lord after his conversion. His weaknesses and limitations did not stop the Lord working in his life and through him to many others. God calls us to stop focusing on ourselves and instead focus on his power. He can use our weaknesses to bring about a miracle in another person's life. So, the next time we feel like running away from the mission God is calling us to, let us remember that God was able to work through St. Paul's weaknesses and made him a great preacher. He can do the same for us.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for calling me to witness to you. May I lay down my fears at your feet and complete the mission. Amen.

Wednesday October 19

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
3:2-12

Isaiah
12:2-6

Luke
12:39-48

The divine mystery of the Gospel is now being revealed to us.

God's kingdom is revealed to us not because of what we have done, we cannot earn it nor do we deserve it. It is only by the grace of God that the divine mystery is being revealed to us by his Spirit. The mystery was hidden from the world for many years and revealed through Jesus at the appropriate time. The mystery is known only by divine revelation – whenever we read the Word, it is made known and insight is given about the secrets of the Kingdom. We are a blessed generation, because we have easy access to his Word and we are able to frequently receive the Sacraments. God chose us as his sons and daughters. We have now entered into his Holy Body - the Church, in union with Jesus. We are called to share this Gospel of joy with our brothers and sisters. We are to share these riches in Christ with those around us. The Church offers many opportunities for us to grow in our journey with the Lord, let us utilize them and meditate deeply on the mysteries and wonder of God's grace.

Prayer: Abba Father, it is unfathomable how you love us;
thank you for choosing us. Amen.

Thursday October 20

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
3:14-21

Psalms 33:
1-2,4-5,11-12,18-19

Luke
12:49-53

Seek first the Kingdom of God.

The prosperity gospel sells faster as it caters to the drives of human being's need to get material comfort and not follow the narrow path of dying to self and living a sacrificial and sacramental life. Are we here to satisfy our bodily desires or to obey God? Often times I am driven internally to please myself and please others more than God. My inner drives try to find gratification in human approval rather than in pleasing God. There are some who preach a different gospel message, which promises earthly riches and a comfortable life. However we know that the Gospel of Jesus leads us to heavenly riches. It invites us to a life of love, sacrifice and forgiveness. As the Lord Jesus says in today's Gospel proclamation, he has come to set the world on fire with the Holy Spirit. As believers we are called to become partakers of this heavenly mission; sharing the Gospel of Christ, and living a life that is led by the Holy Spirit. As we become authentic disciples our lives will become powerful witnesses.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I bear witness to you and lead others to you.
Amen.

Friday October 21

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
4:1-6

Psalm
24:1-6

Luke
12:54-59

Be attentive to the signs of the Kingdom.

The Lord Jesus wants us to be attentive to the different signs in our lives. Some of the signs we receive are from God. Other signs or clues may come from the people in our lives, from family, friends or strangers. Sometimes, we ignore or deny what we see, and what seems obvious. It is easy for us to blame others than do something when we can actually respond to the call. Sometimes we see violent, painful and tragic situations around us, but God has a plan that could raise us up even amidst such pain and tragedy. At times it is difficult to see God's presence, but we need to hold on. Let us pray that the Lord Jesus will change our hearts and our lives that we may fully live for him. Let us seek his help in choosing what is right and turn away from sin and from attachments to worldliness which keep us from loving and serving him wholeheartedly. May he open our eyes and ears so we can see and hear his signs. Let us also repent for being hopeless and for giving up so easily sometimes.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we live a life worthy of our calling, may we walk humbly, patiently and lovingly. Amen.

Saturday October 22

Optional Memorial of Saint John Paul II, Pope

Ephesians
4:7-16

Psalm
122:1-5

Luke
13:1-9

Let us bear fruits worthy of the Kingdom.

Once a preacher explained that what matters more is not our giftedness, but our 'givenness'. We are called into a life of surrender, rather than one of showcasing our giftings. Today's first reading reminds us that God distributed unique gifts among his people to build up the body of Christ. If we live merely on our giftedness and neglect to connect to the Giver of those gifts, then we are no different than the fruitless fig tree in Luke's Gospel. Interestingly, the fig tree grows fruit before its leaves open. Moreover, when we have gifts but fail to lead a life connected to and laid down for Christ, we resemble a fig tree adorned with leaves and seemingly fruitful, while in reality, having no real fruit. If we truly pursue intimacy and abide in Christ, then our lives will blossom within the Heavenly orchard. Only when we give ourselves as Christ did, will we be raised up as he was. When we surrender instead of perform, give instead of display, and abide instead of remain on the surface, only then, will we begin to see fruits among our leaves.

Prayer: Abba Father, show me how to bear fruit through the gifts you have sown in me. Let my life be a continuous song of surrender. Amen.

Sunday October 23

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sirach
35:15-17,20-22

Psalm
34:2-3,17-19,23

2 Timothy
4:6-8, 16-18

Luke
18:9-14

Fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the author of our faith.

In the first reading Sirach proclaims “The Lord is a God of justice” and this justice shows no partiality. On the surface it would seem that justice and mercy cannot co-exist. Yet they exist in their fullest capacity in our God who is the God of infinite justice and infinite mercy!

The Lord reconciles these seemingly irreconcilable virtues in himself as he hangs on the cross, satisfying the demands of justice, by selflessly pouring out his life blood in atonement for our sin, which becomes a river of infinite mercy, to which we can turn.

In today’s second reading we see St. Paul at the end of his earthly journey. How changed is this life from the early life of St. Paul as a Pharisee and persecutor of Christians? St. Paul has the fulfillment in his heart that his life has been well lived, he has no regrets, but is confident of his reward from God.

Here we see a life that has had its foundation and base centered on the Lord Jesus. The self-giving love that our Lord Jesus demonstrated on the cross has been evident in St. Paul’s life too. We see now his unwavering confidence in God even as he faces trials, cruelty and death.

In the Gospel proclamation in contrast we see the Pharisee, whose eyes are fixed on himself and those around him and not on God, even his prayer is a prayer of comparison and self-glorification. But the tax collector though he may have done many wrong things in his life, humbly fixes his eyes on God, and as he does so, sees his own reflection, as a sinner, and prays a prayer we can all pray, for we are all sinners before God and in need of God’s infinite mercy.

Touched by this incomparable love our lives can never be the same. When we turn and fix our gaze upon our beautiful Saviour in humility, admitting our nothingness before his completeness, and open ourselves in complete submission to our mighty God, we allow his transformative nature to work in our own lives.

Humility is the door that leads us to God’s mercy, it is the gate by which we stop looking at ourselves and those around us and instead fix our gaze upon the One who can change us and make us whole. A life time thus spent gazing upon our Lord and Saviour transforms us little by little into the image of him upon whom we gaze. And someday on the fulfillment of our own earthly journey, a life thus transformed will enable us too, like St Paul to proclaim with confidence “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”

Prayer: Abba Father, may I keep my eyes fixed on Jesus alone.
Amen.

Monday October 24

Optional Memorial of Saint Anthony Mary Claret, Bishop

Ephesians
4:32 -- 5:8

Psalm
1:1-4, 6

Luke
13:10-17

Follow the way of love.

The first reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians says that we are expected to live as children of light and to imitate Christ. This is to live a life of love. In the Gospel proclamation we see how the Lord Jesus saw a woman who was possessed. She had been in bondage to an evil spirit for eighteen long years. The Lord Jesus released her, enabling her to live a life of love. The Lord Jesus shows the synagogue leader that love is more important than blindly obeying the law. Today we also celebrate the Memorial of St. Anthony Mary Claret, who founded the Congregation of Missionaries Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary commonly known as the "Claretians". His zealous life and the wonders he wrought, both before and after his death, testified to his sanctity. His prayers to God were so powerful that it is said that even earthquakes were stopped. Today let us ask the Holy Spirit, to pour the love of God into our hearts, for us to live a life of love. May we imitate Saint Anthony Claret.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we can live a life of love. Amen.

Tuesday October 25

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
5:21-33

Psalm
128:1-5

Luke
13:18-21

Let all kinds of submission be obedience to Christ.

Today's first reading describes the fundamentals of a Christian marriage. The call for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up forsaking his own will, describes a kind of selfless love that is quite hard to do, and yet this is what Jesus expects of a husband: a selfless love. As much as the husband would love his own body, he is to love his wife. No man could love his wife as much as Christ loved us. Can we submit our will to God? Let us examine our conscience, and identify opportunities where we can submit to Christ. The Gospel goes on to describe how the mustard tree provides shelter for birds. In the same way, a bit of yeast expands the volume of flour to make a 'little bit' go a long way. Marriage brings two people together to live the destiny to which they have been called for within the framework outlined by Jesus, and it can impact the whole society. Such marriages create a foundation for children to grow in the manner the mustard seed would grow to be a blessing to others.

Prayer: Abba Father, impress upon our hearts the wonders of your truth, so that we can live out the life of obedience you have called us to. Amen.

Wednesday October 26

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
6:1-9

Psalm
145:10-14

Luke
13:22-30

Conquer the narrow path, obey the commands of God.

As parents, we strive to teach our children the virtues of life. Among them, the highest place for Christian parents should be to teach their children to walk in the ways of the Lord. The most appropriate of such virtues is embedded in the living of the 10 commandments. Personally I would tell my daughter, that if she wants a long and happy life on earth, she has to fulfill the 5th commandment. Many are the times I have emphasized the need to honour parents because it is pleasing to God and will lead to eternal life. Our life on earth is a pilgrimage in preparation for eternity, which the Lord proclaims in the Gospel proclamation today. The Lord Jesus tells us that the entry to eternity is narrow. We, as sinful in nature as we are, need all the time we need here on earth to mature from the baby steps of life to a truly spiritual walk with God. In this sense, we need more time on earth to prepare fully to enter eternal life. What better way than honouring our parents to ensure a long life. Let us ask God to help us as we strive for holiness.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me enter through the narrow gate into your kingdom. Amen.

Thursday October 27

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Ephesians
6:10-20

Psalm
144:1-2,9-10

Luke
13:31-35

Finding strength in the Lord and in his power.

Everything that could go wrong did go wrong in the last week. I was drifting away into the abyss of fear, anger and loss of peace, because of a person at work. I called my family hoping that a word they may say would comfort me, but that did not happen either. That night in prayer, I asked myself; where have I truly placed my confidence in? Was it on human authority and their frailties or on God's unfailing and absolute power? St Paul exhorts; "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power and put on the whole armour of God". As we gaze upon the magnificent face of the Lord Jesus Christ and invite the Holy Spirit, we find our strength in him, realising all other human power is puny before the majesty of our God. Because in the end, every knee would bow down before him. As we put on the full armour of God, and carry the word of God we will be ready to share the Gospel. Let us pray in the spirit, so that in his strength and in his power, we will be armed against the fiery darts of Satan.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill me with more grace that I may not take my gaze off of you and strengthen me with your power. Amen.

Friday October 28

Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Ephesians
2:19-22

Psalm
19:2-5

Luke
6:12-19

Love alone attracts and changes the human heart.

Today is the feast of the apostles Saints Simon and Jude. The readings invite us to look into the foundation we have built for ourselves. What is it that we treasure the most and from where and whom do we draw our strength? The first reading reminds us that we are a people whose foundation is built strongly on the apostles and prophets and our cornerstone is Christ Jesus. Is this really our foundation? The reading also reminds us that our body is the temple of God. If we are wondering day and night about our purpose in this crisis situation, it is to become a way for God to come into the lives of others. He wants to talk to others through us. The Gospel proclamation describes how Jesus appointed his twelve apostles. These were the twelve that accompanied Jesus on his mission and there could be similar people placed in our lives irrespective of their choices in life. They may not always agree with us but God wants us to be with them anyway and accompany them and love them until God gives a breakthrough.

Prayer: Abba Father, setting aside our wants and desires may we do what is best for others. Amen.

Saturday October 29

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Philippians
1:18-26

Psalm
42:2-3,5

Luke
14:1,7-11

My soul longs for you, O God.

In today's Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus invites us to live a life of humility. We are called to be free from being overwhelmed with the honour and glory the world offers us. However, our human nature is such that we often tend to long for praise, honour and glory from other people. Even our act of serving the Lord may at times have the hidden motive of being recognized, valued and appreciated by others. Being humble does not require us to feel inferior about ourselves or consider ourselves as having little value. Instead, we are to fix our eyes on God and look at ourselves and those around us the way God sees us. This in turn helps us to love and serve God and our fellow human beings in the true spirit of humility. It is this freedom that St Paul bears witness to in his ministry, when he says, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain". Following the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, we will then be able to live our lives to the fullest. In whatever we say or do let us strive to please God and do everything for the glory of God alone.

Prayer: Abba Father, let my thoughts, words and deeds glorify you all my days. Amen.

Sunday October 30

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom
11:22 -- 12:2

Psalm 145:
1-2,8-11,13-14

2 Thessalonians
1:11 -- 2:2

Luke
19:1-10

Let us not hide from God.

This Sunday we find readings which could be quite challenging. The First Reading presents the epitome of mercy shown by the Creator God who has the absolute power over creation. God loves everyone and everything that he created, it is our fallen nature that deceives us into thinking that we are unloved, orphaned and abandoned. The Father's love never leaves us.

In the Gospel proclamation the Son of God who is the perfect representation of the Father, lives that mercy. As he enters the house of Zacchaeus he personifies the mercy of God, which transforms the so-called sinner.

As I pondered over the story of Zacchaeus, I was led to put myself not in the place of Zacchaeus, but of the Lord Jesus. I am quick to see the sin and brokenness of others and am quick to correct them. The Lord Jesus had a different approach. He looked up and saw Zacchaeus, perched on the sycamore tree. Zacchaeus was curious to see this miracle working teacher, possibly desiring that he was in a better state to meet the Lord Jesus without hiding.

Is this not what sin does; making us hide and withdraw from God? I would have at my best, spoken to him kindly but firmly pointing out all his wrong actions. I would have offered him spiritual guidance and encouraged him to repent for his sins and come to God.

Yet, the Lord Jesus did none of that. He offered fellowship to the sinner by getting self-invited to the house of the sinner. Staying at someone's house was probably the best way in that culture, to show one's closeness to the other. Zacchaeus would have been the most shocked, at the words of the Lord Jesus, knowing who he truly was.

When was the sin pointed out to him? When was he corrected or admonished? A gesture of love and honour did it all inside the sinner's heart. True repentance is not only feeling sorry for one's sins but making a U-turn towards the heart of God. The Lord was delighted at the conversion of this sinner, but the so called righteous people - like many of us - began to mutter in disagreement.

Those people had not experienced the Holy Spirit at the time but we have. We also have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). The Holy Spirit in us empowers us to function in the mindset of Christ.

Let us claim what has been given to us freely, as the full price has already been paid by our Saviour.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for your amazing love, mercy and forgiveness.
Amen.

Monday October 31

31st Week in Ordinary Time

Philippians
2:1-4

Psalm
131:1-3

Luke
14:12-14

Life was not meant to be a bed of roses.

Walk into a convenience store...pick up a food product and check for any dates, they always carry an expiry date. And so it is with us... we do not have the date printed on our bodies but the reality is that there is such a date. Hence, Saint Paul in his letters remind people of their youth and such a time of enjoyment but at the same time he cautions them that there will be a time when all that strength will fade away and the golden globe will be shattered. Life will come to a standstill and we will have to stand before our Maker. Our Lord Jesus Christ had a trail blazing ministry of miracles, signs and wonders and this kept his followers elated and delighted. No sooner he shared about his impending death, a pall of gloom and disbelief descended upon his followers who wanted a joyride all along. The point is that we were made for Heaven and therefore any suffering on earth is good because it will bring us to the reality that our final destination is the kingdom of God and not the earth.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I fix my gaze on heaven in both times of sorrow and joy. Amen.

Prayer of St. Pio of Pietrelcina after Holy Communion

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have you present so that I do not forget you. You know how easily I abandon you.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for you are my life, without you, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord, for you are my light, without you, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I hear your voice and follow you.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love you very much, and always be in your company.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for you, a nest of love.

Stay with me, Lord, for it is you alone I look for, your love, your grace, your will, your heart, your Spirit, because I love you and ask no other reward but to love you more and more.

With a firm love, I will love you with all my heart while on earth and continue to love you perfectly during all eternity. Amen.

Praise the Lord !

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St. Gerard Majella

St. Gerard Majella was born in 1726 in Italy to a family of seven. St. Gerard grew up in poverty with a great respect for the poor. When he was 12 years old, his father passed away, and his mother sent him away to live with his uncle and learn to become a tailor, like his father. After a few years of working as a sewing apprentice, St. Gerard took on a job with the local Bishop of Lacedonia as a servant.

As the days passed, St. Gerard began to grow pale and thin, often fasting and in prayer at a nearby Cathedral. He applied to the Capuchin monastery at Muro twice, but was turned down. He was told his health was not well enough for such a strenuous life. However, he did not give up. In 1749, at the age of 23, he joined the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer and just three years later became a professed lay brother.

St. Gerard took the three vows of Poverty, Chasity and Obedience. He stayed close to the poor and served as a sacristan, gardener, porter, infirmarian, and tailor. However, because of his great piety, extraordinary wisdom, and his gift of reading consciences, he was permitted to counsel communities of religious women. St. Gerard was often called on by the poor and the sick. Wherever his presence was demanded he graciously presented himself. He was there to **“Do the Will of God”**.

This humble servant of God also had faculties associated with certain mystics including, levitation, bi-location and the ability to read souls. Throughout his life, several miracles were attributed to him, including restoring a boy's life after he fell from a high cliff. St. Gerard's last recorded miracle is one that many credit toward his becoming the patron of expectant mothers. Shortly before his death, St. Gerard encountered a young girl. He had dropped his handkerchief and she set out to return it, only to be told to keep it. He told her she **“may need it someday”**. Years after St. Gerard's passing, the young girl got married and conceived. As she went into labor, she was on the verge of losing her baby. She asked for the handkerchief, and almost immediately, her pain abated and she proceeded to give birth to a healthy child, something very rare during that time.

St. Gerard became ill with tuberculosis, and died on October 16, 1755 at the age of 29, having spent 6 years in religious life. He was canonized on December 11, 1904. His Memorial is on October 16.

On Our Knees - In His Hands is a book of reflections and aid to prayer, based on the daily readings of the Mass. Its purpose is to help Catholics and other Christians engaged in the normal hustle and bustle of life to discover God's presence and direction in the practical situations they are placed in. This is made possible by a group of writers who themselves are lay people living at the heart of busy day-to-day life.

