

# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



**St. Euphrasia Eluvathingal**

*Memorial: 30 August*

**AUGUST 2023** | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

AUGUST  
2023

“I am not capable of doing  
big things,  
but I want to do every-  
thing,  
even the smallest things,  
for the greater glory of  
God.”

Saint Dominic

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## Assumption of Mary

Humility is the way that leads to Heaven.

Mary “rejoices in God because he has looked on the humility of his handmaid” (cf Lk 1:47-48). Mary’s secret is humility. The human eye always looks for grandeur and allows itself to be dazzled by what is flashy. Instead, God does not look at the appearance. God looks at the heart and is enchanted by humility. Humility is the way that leads to Heaven. God does not exalt us because of our gifts, because of our wealth or because of our skills, but because of humility. God lifts up those who humble themselves; he lifts up those who serve.

How am I doing with humility? Do I seek to be recognized by others, to affirm myself and to be praised, or do I think rather about serving? Do I know how to listen, like Mary, or do I want only to speak and receive attention? Do I know how to keep silence, like Mary, or am I always chattering? Do I know how to take a step back, defuse quarrels and arguments, or do I always want to stand out? Let us think about these questions.

Let us pray that Mary may accompany us on our journey that leads from Earth to Heaven. The secret to the journey is contained in the word humility. Let us not forget this word, and that lowliness and service are the secrets for obtaining the goal, of reaching heaven. (Pope Francis)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

## Tuesday August 1

Memorial of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Exodus 33:7-11;  
34:5-9, 28

Psalm  
103:6-13

Matthew  
13:36-43

I am a good seed of the Kingdom.

Am I causing others to sin? Am I an evildoer? Jesus reminds us: what we do here on earth matters, now and in life after death. In this world we have to grow amid weeds, amid the snares of the devil, amid sin, wickedness and corruption. We are the seed that God placed on this earth, the beloved children of the Father, who should be rooted in him. We are called to grow in Christ and to bear fruit for those around us for the glory of God until we are called back to his heart. It is easy to lose sight of this purpose: our call to holiness. We are called individually to bring others to the kingdom, to Jesus. Like Moses who pitched his tent and spent time with God – face to face, we are to seek him. In that experience God reveals himself and his true nature to Moses who continues to worship God in fasting and prayer receiving revelations for the people of Israel. Jesus is inviting us to pitch our tent with God, spend time in his presence in fasting and worship so that we grow in holiness.

Prayer: Abba Father, I declare that I came from you and am on a journey to holiness that leads me back to you. Amen.

## Wednesday August 2

Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
34:29-35

Psalm  
99:5-7,9

Matthew  
13:44-46

Are we willing to do hard things?

The Gospel proclamation reveals to us that it is those who seek, that will find the kingdom of God. We are on a journey in our relationship with God to seek and enter the kingdom. But it is the next step which is far more challenging than finding it. This is to own what we find. How often have we had a spiritual experience, a healing or a miracle (finding the treasure) but have not fully owned or grown deeper into the mystery of that experience. It is like finding treasure and taking a selfie and walking away. Are we willing to let go of what we treasure such as wealth, relationships, knowledge, position and power? Both merchant and the treasure seeker sold all they had to acquire what they found. This requires trust to endure criticism, to suffer and to go out of our comfort zones. Moses found the treasure when he encountered God at the burning bush and followed his commands and grew deeper in his relationship with him. Today is an invitation to let go and let God. So that God makes us the treasure that radiates his glory to the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to seek you and to surrender our lives in trust. Amen.

## Thursday August 3

Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
40:16-21, 34-38

Psalm  
84:3-6,8,11

Matthew  
13:47-53

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord.

Moses followed the instructions for constructing the Ark of the Covenant. Those who listened attentively to the parables of Jesus in today's Gospel proclamation responded positively when Jesus posed the question to them: "Have you understood all this?". Rather than commending the people for their attentiveness, Jesus unexpectedly completes the teaching with another parable about bringing out "old" and "new" from the storeroom. We often keep anger, resentment, unforgiveness in the storeroom of our hearts. However, when we surrender these emotions to God, the cloud will be lifted and, like Moses and the Israelites, we can proceed on our journey of faith, with something new in the storeroom of our hearts permitting the glory of God to fill us in the darkest night or day. In the Psalms we find many human sentiments: joys, sorrows, doubts, hopes and bitterness. Sufferings in our journey call for liberation, tears call for consolation, words await healing and slander a sentence of absolution.

Prayer: Abba Father, remove the dark clouds so that I may continue on my journey of faith. Amen.

## Friday August 4

Memorial of Saint John Vianney, Priest

Leviticus 23:1,4-11,15-16,27,34-37

Psalm  
81:3-6,10-11

Matthew  
13:54-58

Amazed by the awe and wonder of God.

Sometimes we may think we know someone well that we cannot know them any better. We may even be too familiar with Jesus thinking we know him well and lose the wonder of him. We are called to be like little children trusting, depending on Father God and being in awe at what he does in our lives. There is an old proverb that says 'Familiarity breeds contempt'. Sometimes our close association with someone can lead to a loss of respect for them. We see this in today's Gospel proclamation. Those in the synagogue could not accept that the person they knew was capable of such wisdom and authority. They were perhaps also jealous of the Lord, refusing to accept him as anything other than the carpenter's son. In prayer today, we may want to ask the Holy Spirit to show us the prejudices we have carried against those we are familiar with. Unknown to us, God may be moving powerfully in their lives and as we begin to accept and honour what God is doing, we also welcome an 'Open Heaven' above our lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to accept others in Christ, knowing that they too are loved, accepted and called by you. Amen.

## Saturday August 5

Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Leviticus  
25:1,8-17

Psalm  
67:2-3,5,7-8

Matthew  
14:1-12

Trials taken from the hand of God will lead to blessings.

The word of God be it the old or the new testament, is rich in the blessings of God. Today's responsorial psalm carries a beautiful blessing that we are familiar with. If the Lord does not bless us, keep us and shower his graces upon us where would we be? The grace of God works in our lives, when we have genuinely committed our lives to him. Recently, situations that seemed impossible to be resolved, and those in the world would have proclaimed as a right-off, were beautifully restored and renewed. I was shown how I could be a blessing to others through my pain and suffering. God's promises were fulfilled and the Word was made alive through his amazing grace. As the psalmist says I can also shout that God, our God has blessed us. The Gospel proclamation speaks of the adulterous life of King Herod which leads to the death of John the Baptist and the beginning of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus. There is a deep truth in all this: through every trial, there is a blessing to those who love God.

Prayer: Abba Father, your love knows no bounds. Thank you for your blessings. Give me the grace to be a blessing to others. Amen.

## Sunday August 6

### Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

Daniel  
7:9-10, 13-14

Psalm  
97:1-2,5-6,9

2 Peter  
1:16-19

Matthew  
17:1-9

#### Does Christ's radiant glory of light shine through us?

The Gospel proclamation speaks about the Transfiguration of Jesus, which was witnessed by the three privileged disciples. Peter, James and John testify to the revelation of Jesus when the glory of God was revealed through his shining face like the sun and dazzling white clothes.

Here we are reminded about the disciples who were struggling to pray and had twice slept on occasions where they were expected to pray. Yet, now in prayer and intimate connection with the Lord they are able to witness the event that transformed them and internalized God's ways in to their depths. Is it the same with us? Do we know God's concerns and will for our lives? Do we seek God's heart for our lives before we act or take decisions?

Next the Prophets Elijah and Moses appear, reminding us of the law and the prophets through which all human understanding is brought to fulfilment in Christ. Thus, may we be encouraged to follow and observe the Law/the Ten commandments which will be fulfilled when we follow Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus may we remember that the Lord came to bring the Law to perfection or fulfilment.

Let the words of the Heavenly Father echo in our hearts, minds and ears "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased: listen to him". Therefore, there is a great invitation before us to listen and follow the Lord. This has to be done on a daily basis, from moment to moment. Whenever we fail there is another option, to return to the Lord, through the four steps prayer tool, we come back each time we fall and fail.

In a special way we are assisted through the sacrament of reconciliation when we fall short of God's glory through our human weakness. Thus, there is this sublime capacity for all children of God to unite and remain in him, through whatever we experience. May we understand the value and worth bestowed upon us as children of God to inherit the kingdom and possess everything our Father in heaven owns.

We are the heirs of this Father God's inheritance, and we are greatly loved by him. Let us utilize this authority given to us. Therefore, when things around are dark and challenging let us hold on to this promise of God.

When we have the identity as God's own children, just like Jesus transfigured before the disciples, we too have a cherished value and an identity to hold on to. The glorious light will shine through us, as we unite and remain in prayer.

Prayer: Abba Father, open our eyes to believe and receive your blessings.  
Amen.

## Monday August 7

Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Numbers  
11:4-15

Psalm  
81:12-17

Matthew  
14:13-21

Give thanks with a grateful heart.

Often we complain and grumble at the slightest discomfort we face. We focus on the 'would haves' and 'could haves' without pausing to reflect and give thanks for what we DO have in the here and now. Do we not complain in our trials to others or to ourselves? For example, when we are ill. We focus on what has gone wrong. Do we give thanks in the areas of our health that we DO have? What a stark contrast to how Jesus dealt with the problem of feeding the 5000. Jesus focused and gave thanks for what he had. How would we have responded? Jesus gave thanks to God knowing that the 5 loaves and 2 fish would 'somehow' feed them. He had a heart of thanksgiving. Let us learn to cultivate a lifestyle of thanksgiving. St. Paul asks us to be thankful in all circumstances. It may not come naturally, but with practice we can become the people that God can move through. One thankful instance at a time. Let us eventually become so thankful that it will have a spillover effect on those whom we encounter.

Prayer: Abba Father, may our thankful hearts be a pleasing aroma to you.  
Amen.

## Tuesday August 8

Memorial of Saint Dominic, Priest

Numbers  
12:1-13

Psalm  
51:3-7,12-13

Matthew  
14:22-36

It is I; do not be afraid.

Friendship with God is a wonderful thing. Moses was dear to God's heart. "Throughout my house he bears my trust: face to face I speak to him...The presence of the Lord he beholds". Don't these words make us desire a deeper friendship with the Lord? Don't they make us also crave a face-to-face relationship with him? To not only be saved by him, but also be trusted and favoured by him? In today's Gospel proclamation, Peter asks Jesus a strange question, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." In a situation where Jesus was unrecognisable, Peter does not ask Jesus to come closer and reveal himself but asks Jesus to pull him nearer. In our lives, even when Jesus has made his way as close to us as possible, what stands in the way of connection, is our hesitation to accept his invitation to intimacy. Often, our friendships and relationships are tinged with disappointment, betrayal, or loss. But the Lord, declares to us today: "It is I; do not be afraid." He will not disappoint. He will not let us down.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I know you as Moses did. May your presence and your voice be louder and stronger than any storm. Amen.

## Wednesday August 9

Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Numbers 13:1-2,25  
14:1,26-29,34-35

Psalm  
106:6-7,13-14,21-23

Matthew  
15:21-28

### Childlike faith

Jesus talks about humility, being childlike, and God's love towards the wounded and lost. The first reading speaks about humility and obedience of the servant of God. In the Gospel proclamation the disciples were questioning about the greatest in God's kingdom. Our seniority, superiority or position does not matter. It is about having childlike faith. Children are characterized by their innocence, trust, and dependency. At the same time Jesus talks about those who are lost. It indicates his concern towards them. His heart is beating for the sake of his chosen sheep. He is concerned about quality not quantity. The word says: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones." Jesus is ready to rejoice over our repentance without keeping an account of our past. The heartbeat of the Father is always towards the lost and wounded. We are invited to enter through the gate. He knows us by our name. Our connection with Jesus is important. Let us be connected with Jesus through childlike faith.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to be humble and reciprocate your love.  
Amen.

## Thursday August 10

Feast of Saint Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr

2 Corinthians  
9:6-10

Psalm  
112:1-2,5-9

John  
12:24-26

### God loves a cheerful giver.

Today's readings are about giving with no reservations, to the extent of total denial of one's life. The life of St. Lawrence, deacon and martyr, whom we honour today is a true witness to this selfless giving our Lord is trying to explain to us. As individuals, we are blessed with a variety of gifts and talents. Even if we feel so plain and ordinary, there is something special hidden underneath the simple exterior, only if we take time to dig deep. For St. Lawrence, it was his generous heart, his compassion towards the poor and needy, his strong conviction to what he believed in. He never hesitated to put his gift into practice, even if it resulted in suffering. God honoured him by crowning him a saint; one we can turn to for sure intercession in the hour of our need. What is my own special gift from God? Do I use it often enough for the glory of God? Do I use it for the benefit of others as God has intended it to be? Our Lord reminds us that the more we give of ourselves, the more we receive, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Prayer: Abba Father, bless us with a generous heart, that delights in giving.  
Amen.



## Friday August 11

Memorial of Saint Clare, Virgin

Deuteronomy  
4:32-40

Psalm  
77:12-16,21

Matthew  
16:24-28

Accept Jesus' invitation

Today's readings line up beautifully with each setting the backdrop and justification for what follows in the Gospel proclamation. In his sermon to his people, Moses reminds and implores them to remember who God is and all he has done for them as his people. The detailing of the majesty, power and indescribable love of God calls out to me to just fall on my knees and worship. His mercy endures forever. The patience and generosity of God towards a stumbling nation, his choice of people who were stubborn, the reminder of his willingness to display his power and command over all living and created things to communicate with, save and protect this nation, forms the bedrock of an assurance on which we can take up Jesus' invitation to give up all of who we are if we are to follow him. If we belong to this magnificent all powerful and merciful God, how does our limited human understanding, wisdom or other human influences of this world stack up against his leading and his way?

Prayer: Abba Father, calm the noises that surround me so I may hear your voice. Amen.

## Saturday August 12

Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy  
6:4-13

Psalm  
18:2-4,47,51

Matthew  
17:14-20

Power of love and faith.

God is love that surpasses all understanding, a love that is endless, a love that heals all human brokenness, a love so pure, unfailing and amazing. Through today's first reading, God is reminding us to dwell in his love with every ounce of our existence to experience the riches of his kingdom and fulfilment of his promises. It simply fascinates me to fathom the amazing love of God. Some days, I look at my son and wonder, how a tiny little human who has known me only for a short period of time, could confide in me and experience love and warmth from me. Just imagine, if we wholeheartedly submit to the endless love of God with all the strength within us, just imagine the serenity, the peace and fulfilment that we would feel. Today's Gospel proclamation confirms, that all we need is faith as little as the size of a mustard seed to seek the wonders of his love. Faith that could move mountains, faith that gives sight to the blind and faith that parts the Red Sea, such is the love of our Father.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to seek you in spite of worldly barriers. Take complete control of our lives and fill us with your pure love. Amen.

## Sunday August 13

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings  
19:9,11-13

Psalm  
85:9-14

Romans  
9:1-5

Matthew  
14:22-33

### The Saviour who calms the storm.

Today's readings make us reflect upon our lives. Peter who loved the Lord, jumped into the water when Jesus told, "it is I". But initially he too like the others were in fear and could not recognize Jesus. In a crisis we too may not see or seek the Lord, who comes to us. We may be able to identify ourselves with St. Peter. As soon as we face a crisis we will be calling friends or relatives, asking for advice, reacting, not knowing what to do or become afraid.

The Gospel proclamation invites us to see Jesus who is coming through the storm to rescue us. Like he saw the disciples in the storm, he sees us in our crisis and he is concerned. In today's first reading we read of Elijah in crisis. He had run away in fear of Queen Jezebel. But the Lord came to him in his crisis.

Let us use the faculty of imagination given to us by God, and imagine how Jesus is coming towards our boat in the storm. He is showing us, how he is with us, when we go through a crisis. We are frightened to face a crisis. We do not want crises in our lives. Sometimes we do not want to pick up the phone, not knowing what we will be told. But the truth is we cannot avoid problems and storms in our lives. It may come as a sickness, economic crisis, relationship problems or children's problems. Sometimes we are not recollected enough to hear the voice of the Lord as Elijah did in crisis.

We need to seek the Lord who comes to us, while we are in the crisis, with no answers. We need to remember the image of how St. Peter walked on water, fixing his gaze on the Lord. The storm had not stopped. When he took his eyes off the Lord he started to drown, and Jesus saved him.

Jesus questions our faith as he says to St. Peter "O you of little faith why did you doubt?". Although we are able to be at peace while holding on to the Lord, as soon as we take off our gaze from the Lord, that is stop praying, the problem may seem to engulf us again. Then we must remember that Jesus is there, waiting to be called upon, to guide us through, like he saved Peter when he cried out: "Lord save me".

The psalmist says: "You rule over the surging sea, when it's waves mount up, you still them." The Lord is in complete control, we need to hold on in faith and trust. Let us ask the Lord Jesus to give us the grace to seek him and hold on to him so that he may turn the storms of our lives into blessings. Let us seek his grace to help us to recognize the people that he sends into our lives who can help us to seek him.

Prayer: Abba Father, anoint us with your Holy Spirit, so that we may believe in the higher truths as we go through storms in our lives. Amen.

## Monday August 14

Memorial of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Priest and Martyr

Deuteronomy  
10:12-22

Psalm  
147:12-15,19-20

Matthew  
17:22-27

Suffering leads to glory.

Today's Gospel proclamation gives two main points for our daily reflection. First: making the disciples aware of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When the apostles were called to join the ministry of Jesus perhaps like many of us, they expected to be part of a kingdom with glamour and glory like a worldly kingdom. Jesus is reminding us that the only path for resurrection is through suffering and death.

Second: the importance of being astute and responding to society based on factual decisions and structures. The Lord Jesus respected law and order and those who were in authority though he did not always agree with them. We are also expected to obey those who are in authority. Shepherds have been chosen by God to lead us into the heavenly kingdom. We are advised to give to God what belongs to God and to the world what belongs to the world. Anything distracting us from making this distinction should be given the least attention.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we face the challenges of this world while we keep our focus on heavenly riches. Amen.

## Tuesday August 15

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Revelation  
11:19; 12:1-6,10

Psalm  
45:10-12,16

1 Corinthians  
15:20-27

Luke  
1:39-56

A mother for all generations.

The Blessed Virgin Mary played an important role in the life of Jesus as well as in the establishment of the Church. We celebrate her life and remember what a strength she was to Jesus, the apostles and the early church. The Gospel proclamation describes how John the Baptist leapt for joy when Mother Mary visited Elizabeth. Mother Mary praises God for all he has done in her life. She recognizes that even though she is God's servant, she was blessed to be chosen to bring the Son of God into the world. She says: "for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed". No other woman bore this honour. It is for this blessing that she praises and glorifies God. The Blessed Mother was a woman of great faith and strength. Her life was centred around her faith. She believed when those around her lost hope and faith. She continued to do her mission even after her Son died and rose again. Her mission continues as she intercedes for us. She is a great strength to us.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for the gift of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Amen.

## Wednesday August 16

Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy  
34:1-12

Psalm  
66:1-3,5,8,16-17

Matthew  
18:15-20

### Humility

Relationships have problems, challenges, misunderstandings, confusion and clashes. The world offers us easy and simple ways of handling problems – fight mode – ‘confrontation’, the flight mode - ‘I don’t care’, the freeze mode - ‘it is not my problem’. In today’s Gospel proclamation, Jesus offers us a different way to handle relationship problems – ‘carefrontation’ because the person is more important than the issue. Taking the first step to resolve a misunderstanding is challenging. It is not easy to accept our mistakes or take the first step in talking to someone who has a problem with us. It forces us to let go of our ego and to be humble. This is how Jesus is pruning the branch that is not bearing fruit. It challenges us to be like Jesus, who said: “Father, forgive them”. Why is harmony so crucial that Jesus makes it a condition for our prayers to be answered? Why is harmony a promise of God’s presence? (Mt 18:19-20) When we swallow our pride and take the first step in bringing harmony, we can glorify God.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be humble.  
Amen.

## Thursday August 17

Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Joshua  
3:7-11,13-17

Psalm  
114:1-6

Matthew  
18:21--19:1

### Forgiveness

In today’s Gospel Proclamation Jesus speaks to us of the importance of forgiving one another. The master in the parable of the unforgiving servant was so merciful to wipe out the debt of his servant who pleaded for forgiveness, but the servant could not offer the same mercy and forgiveness to the person who owed him only a smaller amount. Often, this is our human nature wanting to retaliate and hurt the people who have wronged us. We want justice. When I feel hurt or find it hard to forgive, I gaze at the crucifix. What did Jesus do when he was falsely persecuted and condemned to death? He forgave those who hurt him and he is calling us to do the same. We must forgive just as we have been forgiven. In the first reading, the promise given to Joshua that God will be with him just as he was with Moses is the same assurance that he is giving us today. When God is with us, he will give us all the strength we need to forgive. If God is with us who can be against us?

Prayer: Abba Father, I ask for the grace to be merciful and forgiving towards those who have hurt me. Amen.

## Friday August 18

Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Joshua  
24:1-13

Psalm 136:  
1-3,16-18,21-22,24

Matthew  
19:3-12

Accept God's invitation.

Jesus says: "Many are called but only few are chosen." It is the essence of the parable and it also shows the cost of discipleship. Why aren't many chosen? Because they have refused to accept the invitation from God. It shows how some people are caught up in their self-importance. They reject the truth and refuse to acknowledge the importance of God's message. There is a warning to those who reject God's invitation. It demonstrates the consequences of turning away from God and choosing to live a life without him. Just as the king in the parable sends his troops to destroy those who rejected his invitation, those who reject God's invitation face a similar fate. This parable highlights the importance of accepting God's invitation to his kingdom. It shows how important it is to listen to God's message and accept his grace. It is a powerful reminder that we should not let pride, selfishness, or any other obstacle keep us from accepting God's invitation and experiencing the joy and blessings of his kingdom.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I joyfully accept your invitation.  
Amen.

## Saturday August 19

Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Joshua  
24:14-29

Psalm  
16:1-2,5, 7-8,11

Matthew  
19:13-15

What is our true identity?

We live in busy chaotic times, and we are surrounded by commercialism of the secular world. We lose ourselves in the fast paced world. We are forever running a mile to keep up with rapid changes of technology, economic uncertainty and global challenges occurring around us. We keep chasing the next dollar or rupee and we lose who we are, we lose our identity in Christ. In the middle of day to day life, we may have replaced God with other things: our children, our spouses, our jobs, our intellect, our businesses our assets or our position in society. Today, as we search the depths of our hearts, we are reminded that we are his 'beloved – we are God's children.' In the First reading, we reflect on the many choices we have to make in our daily struggles to walk with the Lord. We may even be rejected and mocked by the secular world but can we stand in faith and declare that we choose to serve the Lord? As we reflect on this truth, who do we believe we are? What is our true identity in Christ?

Prayer: Abba Father, may we remember who you are  
and keep our eyes focused on you alone. Amen.

## Sunday August 20

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah  
56:1,6-7

Psalm  
67:2-3,5-6,8

Romans  
11:13-15,29-32

Matthew  
15:21-28

We belong to God's family.

People who travel to other countries for various reasons often find out that being a foreigner in another land has its disadvantages. During the time of Prophet Isaiah, to be a foreigner in Israel meant a life of disadvantages. From a Jewish perspective, a foreigner had no place in the Kingdom of God.

Today we need not be foreigners to be at disadvantage. One's race or colour can become a disadvantage. One can be a foreigner in one's own country or even among one's family members. God's heart about foreigners is revealed in today's first reading. God reveals his heart for those of us who have lived as foreigners, whether it is in another country or in our own homes among our family members, or at our workplaces.

In today's Gospel proclamation we find a desperate mother. Her daughter was demon possessed and tormented for years. It was out of desperation that she reached out to the Lord. She knew there was a good chance that he would not help her because he was a Jew, and she was a Canaanite. She called out to him, but he refused to help.

The words of the Lord sound hurtful, but it had a strange effect on her. Her pride, her humiliation, her enmity against the Jews was taken over by her desperation as she cried out "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table". That was the moment in which she changed from being a 'Gentile' to a member of the 'Family of God'. The feet of the Lord became the holy mountain of God. He accepted her sacrifice of a broken spirit and a contrite heart and he answered her prayer.

When things are going well in our lives it is easy to trust in the Lord, but when things are bad and we become foreigners we may blame the Lord, question him, and lose faith. This woman is an example of how we must have faith in the Lord Jesus, even through struggles and disappointments. The Lord could not pass her by because of her faith in him. The Lord is reminding us that it is easy to let him pass us by when we are spiritually distracted, when our focus has shifted from him and when pride and arrogance rule our hearts.

The Lord Jesus calls us to pray for an increase in our faith that we too may be able to respond as this woman responded to God. He is reminding us to remain there like the Canaanite woman until his feet become the doorway to his holy mountain, where our sacrifices are accepted, and our prayers are answered. Let us approach him in humility, knowing that he will not reject a humble cry.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace and wisdom to enter your holy mountain. Amen.

## Monday August 21

Memorial of Saint Pius X, Pope

Judges  
2:11-19

Psalm 106:  
34-37,39-40,43-44

Matthew  
19:16-22

Have an undivided heart.

“Baal” refer to the gods of the Canaanites. “Baal” was the main Canaanite male deity, while Ashtoreth was the main Canaanite female deity. Baal worship was not exclusive. Those who worshiped Baal did not believe he was the only god—he was just one of many gods. Therefore, the Israelites worshiped both God and Baal. The problem was that, in worshiping other gods, the Israelites were not putting God first. The Israelites at the time of the Judges did what God wanted, but were not obedient. They proved this by their relapse into wicked conduct after each of the judges died. Similarly, the man in today’s Gospel proclamation told Jesus that he had kept the commandments. However, he did not have a heart of obedience. This explains why he refused to obey Jesus’ command to go, sell his possessions, and give to the poor. Let us examine our hearts, to check if there are ‘Baals’ like our fleshly attachments seeking fame and name. Let us not live in deception and miss out on everlasting life like the rich young man.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I have an undivided heart where my source of joy and happiness will only be you. Amen.

## Tuesday August 22

Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Judges  
6:11-24

Psalm  
85:9,11-14

Matthew  
19:23-30

Abundant peace.

Today’s First reading and the Responsorial Psalm teach us about the peace we receive by trusting the Lord who is all knowing. We may be nervous, just like Gideon was, to face what is waiting for us in the future. We may fear the unknown, but God promises that he is always with us. God is the one sending us into our future. When we are his faithful servants he will guide and protect us. God promises us peace in him as he goes before us to prepare the way for our steps. We might have doubts just as Gideon did and at times question God if we should listen to him, but he is patient with us and shows us mercy even in our doubtfulness. The peace that God gives us, surpasses all understanding because no matter what he is leading us through, we can always trust in him to do what is best for us. The Lord is our peace as we keep our eyes on his plan for our lives. We know that it can only come from him. May we find strength in trusting him and ask him to fill our hearts and minds with his abundant peace.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for the peace that you give us.  
Amen.

## Wednesday August 23

Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time

Judges  
9:6- 15

Psalm  
21:2-7

Matthew  
20:1-16

### Rewards of Eternal Life.

The Lord has been calling people and nations to work in building his kingdom. He being the King, empowers us in doing so. All those who respond to that call inherit the benefits of the kingdom and eternal life. It is not because we are in anyway better than others, but because we are more in need of his grace, due to having nothing or considered of no significance in the eyes of the world. It is said the Kingdom of God is built mostly from within prison cells and hospital beds. This has been my experience when ministering to those suffering after the Easter Attacks. Through their pain and struggles, reconciliation of family feuds were taking place. Empowerment in having the strength to forgive the perpetrators of that crime, and praying for their salvation. Some claimed the church and families got a new impetus to life and growth. Others say the Good News of eternal life manifest and those dear departed are now saints interceding for those left behind. They want to share their testimonies of the victory of the cross of Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, we thank you that through our pain we could discover you and eternal life. Amen.

## Thursday August 24

Feast of Saint Bartholomew, Apostle

Revelation  
21:9-14

Psalm  
145:10-13,17-18

John  
1:45-51

### Come and see.

Nathaniel boldly shared his views with Philip about Nazareth. Philip had extended the invitation to Nathaniel to meet the Saviour first hand. "Come and see" was what Philip had to offer, in the wake of Nathaniel's beliefs that Nazareth had nothing to offer. This is the same experience we have with various people we meet who have no touch of the Saviour. A certain person I spoke to, was quite certain that after our Lord Jesus died, his disciples had stolen the body and given history a false picture of the resurrection. What do we do when we meet such people? Do we argue? Do we curse and get angry? What does the Lord want us to do? Let us use this powerful invitation 'Come and see' and let us leave it to the Lord to birth faith in them. Our Lord did not fail Nathaniel but shared a vision of Nathaniel under the fig tree and Nathaniel could only exclaim, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God.' As we extend this eternal invitation 'Come and see' let us believe that many will be touched by our Lord Jesus.

Prayer: Abba Father, I desire to come and see your goodness in the lives of people as I share my faith with them. Amen.



## Friday August 25

Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time

Ruth  
1:1,3-6,14-16,22

Psalm  
146:5-10

Matthew  
22:34-40

### The Greatest Commandment.

Today's Gospel proclamation reminds us of the Greatest Commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and love your neighbor as your self." (Mt 22: 37,39) The Bible is all about the love of God. The culmination of God's love was the death and resurrection of Jesus that redeemed us from our sins. This opened the way to eternal life for all who believed in Jesus. It is said in 1 Jn 4:19-21 "We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God" yet hates his brother, he is a liar." When I look back at my life it was the love of God that came in search of me, when I was far away from him, when I was lost in this world, in my sin. He revealed his love into my depths and he made all things new. Once we experience this love, no longer can we live for ourselves, our first love has to be God and love experienced in our depths needs to be shared with our brothers and sisters too. Thus it is said in 1 Jn 4:17, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with the Holy Spirit to experience your love in our hearts that will enable us to obey your Greatest Commandment. Amen.

## Saturday August 26

Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time

Ruth  
2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17

Psalm  
128:1-5

Matthew  
23:1-12

### Living in the right attitude.

Through baptism we enter into the family of God. But we are recognized as children of God through our life conduct. We need to have the nature of God when we are children of God. In the first reading, we see how Ruth was unselfish and continued her journey with her mother-in-law to an unknown land. Though Ruth was a foreigner in the land of Israel, God favoured her because of her unselfish attitude. When we live in the right attitude, blessings flow to us. Today's Responsorial Psalm depicts the fruits of living in the right attitude. We value our freedom. God has given us directions to navigate in the direction of God. We are called to live fruitful lives. In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus teaches us to have the proper attitude according to his will. God's favour rests upon us not when we are famous, but when we live in the right attitude. Living the will of God is not only serving his people in the church, but elsewhere too. The Lord disregarded the performance mentality of the Pharisees and blessed the silent responses of Ruth.

Prayer: Abba Father, grant me the grace to break away from a performance mentality. Amen.

## Sunday August 27

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah  
22:19-23

Psalm  
138:1-3,6,8

Romans  
11:33-36

Matthew  
16:13-20

### Who is Jesus to us?

As spiritual warriors, many of us have heard of binding and loosing. But there is another key that disciples can use to open doors that no one can shut and shut doors that no one can open.

The Word of God reveals this prophetic key in both the Old and New Testaments. It is the key of David. Some call it the "Isaiah 22:22 key" it reads, "The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder. Then he shall open, and no one shall shut. And he shall shut, and no one shall open."

Jesus has the key and can open and close as he wills. Our job as visionary people is to discern his will and kingdom purpose so we can train our authority in his name to open what he wants opened and shut what he wants shut.

When life goes in ways we do not expect, and when those directions include suffering and disappointment, we can easily become discouraged. We wonder if God has forgotten us. We worry that our lives will sputter out like a car that has run out of gas. We fear we will end, "not with a bang, but a moan."

In Psalm 138, David begins by thanking the Lord for his "unfailing love and faithfulness". God answered his prayers, even on the day David offered them. Even though God is infinitely great, "he cares for the humble". David was surrounded by troubles and enemies. In faith, David said, "The Lord will work out his plans for my life for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever" (138:8). David had trust in God's greatest purpose for him, which God would fulfill. Thus, David did not have to be afraid or discouraged. God would take care of him.

In today's Gospel proclamation Jesus warns his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. Why? The people were looking for the Messiah to bring a political kingdom, but for now the kingdom is existing in a spiritual form.

Who is Jesus? He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The eye of faith recognises who Jesus is. By faith we take hold of this Son of God, and from him we obtain the free gift of salvation and reconciliation.

Christianity is not a set of rules to comply with or rituals to be performed to win God's favour. It is a connection. We are brought into God's family and set free from all captivity. Who is Jesus to us? Are we answering to the revelation of God being given to us or are we denying it?

Prayer: Abba Father, I ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit to be open to your Word, and to know you more. Amen.

## Monday August 28

Memorial of Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

1 Thessalonians  
1:1-5, 8-10

Psalm  
149:1-6,9

Matthew  
23:13-22

There is victory in truth alone.

St. Paul emphasizes that God was the atmosphere in which the church lived and moved and had its being. Just as air is in us and we cannot live without it, the church cannot live without God. God hears every word we speak, and God sees the intentions of our hearts. Manipulation and evasion should not take place, and love should reign over all else. We have the powerful witness of Jesus on the Cross. Today we celebrate the Memorial of St. Augustine who once denied God's existence. After his conversion, he said that Jesus "has become our justice, our sanctification, our redemption so that, as it is written; let him who glories, glory in the lord. Truth then has risen from the earth, Christ who said, "I am the truth" was born of a virgin. And justice looked down from heaven because believing in this newborn child, man is justified not by himself but by God. Truth has arisen from the earth...And justice looked down from heaven for man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven."

Prayer: Abba Father, may the truth set us free and may you be glorified in us.  
Amen.

## Tuesday August 29

Memorial of the Passion of Saint John the Baptist

1 Thessalonians  
2:1-8

Psalm  
139:1-6

Mark  
6:17-29

Journey with the Lord.

Being a true Christian is challenging. If we look at church history, we can see many saints who went through difficult journeys. Sometimes we have to go through tremendous pain to remain faithful Christians. The Christian journey is a calling from the Lord. We need to listen to his voice attentively and obey his word. At times, it may bring us to an uncomfortable or disturbing place where we do not experience his presence, however if we are faithful to him, he will turn everything to good. As Christians we cannot live alone, as we have responsibilities towards others. We need to pray for them and bring them to the Lord. Let us also be honest with God. We cannot hide anything from our Lord because everything is open before his eyes. Therefore, we need to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, otherwise we will not be able to continue this journey with love and strength. Let us ask the Lord to create a new person in us to bring his love to the world, and say yes to him and say no to evil.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I remain faithful on my spiritual journey.  
Amen.

## Wednesday August 30

Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

1 Thessalonians  
2:9-13

Psalm  
139:7-12

Matthew  
23:27-32

### Are we hypocrites?

In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus talks about the Pharisees. He bluntly calls them hypocrites. He likens them to "whitewashed tombs" which look beautiful but within the tombs are nothing but bones and filth. Let us place ourselves in the Pharisees' shoes. How would we react if someone accused us of the depth of hypocrisy that Jesus was accusing the Pharisees of? The Pharisees appeared to be righteous. However, Jesus accuses them of being filled with hypocrisy and evil. We strive to look good and be appreciated. We want to be competent, successful and happy. However, we also may try to hide the vulnerable and fearful sides of ourselves. We may try to hide what we consider our "bones and our filth." Jesus knows that we also are hypocrites at times. And he knows that we want to look good and be successful. Am I presenting myself as good and holy, when at times I am a hypocrite? Jesus does not expect us to be perfect, but that we be who we are and not pretend to be holier, happier or more satisfied than in reality we are.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be authentic.  
Help us to believe and trust in you. Amen.

## Thursday August 31

Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

1 Thessalonians  
3:7-13

Psalm 90:3-5,  
12-14,17

Matthew  
24:42-51

### Be faithful to the Master.

St. Paul expresses his gratitude to the Thessalonian community; his heart overflowing with love for them. Faith amid trials and faithfulness to their call encouraged St. Paul and the rest of the apostles. This is the same calling given to us in today's Gospel proclamation. Jesus reminds us that we should be faithful stewards. Our serving begins from home, as he said "the smallest deed you do to the least of them is done unto me". Every deed done in love and serving even when we are hurt and tried, is faithfulness to our Lord. Let us try to have a constant relationship with our Lord listening to his voice and being filled with his power. Then the Holy Spirit leads us in our day to day work and gives us the energy and strength to go on sharing the love of Christ. The Holy Spirit will prompt us to do certain things because he is sensitive to our needs. Therefore let us not waste our time on earth as the psalmist reminds us that our life is short like the grass which sprouts in the morning and dries up in the evening.

Prayer: Abba Father, make us faithful servants who serve others in love.  
Amen.

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# St. Euphrasia Eluvathingal

Euphrasia Eluvathingal was born on 17 October 1877. She was an Indian Carmelite nun of the Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala. Her mother's deep piety and great devotion to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, had a strong influence on Euphrasia from her childhood.

From the stories that her mother told her, especially about St. Rose of Lima, she grew with a strong desire to practice the virtues to suffer for Jesus and to be holy, and to do all this in a quiet, hidden manner.

Euphrasia began to detach herself from earthly possessions and pleasure, and took a great interest in spiritual matters. She wanted to become a religious Sister, but her father strongly opposed it. He wanted Euphrasia to marry into a rich family. Her intense prayer life, which included the rosary, fasting and abstinence, brought about a change of heart in her father, who granted her permission to enter the convent.

On 10 May 1897, she became a postulant and took the name Sr. Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and on 10 January 1898 she received the holy habit of Carmel. She practised the virtues of humility, charity and renunciation and grew in holiness with the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For the periods of grave illness and the trials of the powers of darkness that she endured, she was rewarded by intense spiritual joys.

Thus, with a pure heart Mother Euphrasia gave her maternal love and tenderness to those who sought her help. She gave them the comforting words of Jesus' Gospel and interceded for them. For each little kindness bestowed upon her she would reply, "I will not forget it, not even after death".

Mother Euphrasia offered her life in sacrifice for love of God. She abandoned herself to his will and finally joined him in the heavenly embrace with her holy death on 29 August 1952. She was canonised as a Saint by Pope Francis on 23 November 2014 in Vatican City.

**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.