

ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



St. Teresa of Calcutta

Memorial: 05 September



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

SEPTEMBER
2023

“My past, O Lord,
to your mercy;
my present,
to your love;
my future,
to your providence.”

Saint Pius of Pietrelcina
(Padre Pio)

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Friday September 1

Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

1 Thessalonians
4:1-8

Psalm
97:1-2,5-6,10-12

Matthew
25:1-13

Let us be holy in a broken world.

God gives his Holy Spirit to us to be holy, to live lives that are pleasing to him, more and more (1 Thes 4:8,1). This journey to holiness begins with baptism and gradually moves forward with the other sacraments: Eucharist and Confirmation. Through Confirmation we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and are strengthened to live our faith. Through grace alone, most of us were blessed to have a divine encounter in our lives: the experience of the love of Jesus being poured into our hearts, being born again and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul reminds us in the letter to the Philippians, "do everything without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like lights in the world, as you hold on to the word of life". Let us be not like the foolish virgins. We are called to watch and keep our lamps burning, to have our spirits awakened to meet the Lord, when he calls us.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with the Holy Spirit to overcome our sinfulness and to remain in you. Lead us to eternal life. Amen.

Saturday September 2

Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

1 Thessalonians
4:9-11

Psalm
98:1, 7-9

Matthew
25:14-30

Fulfilling the Kingdom dream of God the Father

Today's readings are a reminder of the gifts and graces God has given us. As mentioned in today's Gospel proclamation, God the Father has entrusted us with a mission, a Kingdom dream of the Father; from the beginning of time. And to fulfil this mission, he has blessed us with gifts and fellowship with our brothers and sisters. None of these gifts is for our glory, but his alone. But we cannot complete our mission by ourselves no matter how gifted or talented we are. As said in the first reading, we need others. We are called to work in unison with each other, to fulfil the dream of God the Father. When we neglect our task, we become like the man who was given one talent, yet did nothing about it. In the silence of our hearts let us ask God the Father: what is the Kingdom dream he has placed in our hearts and how he wants us to fulfil it. Allow his still small voice to lead us. We cannot fulfil his dream by ourselves, we need his grace and the support of the community.

Prayer: Abba Father, speak to my heart and lead me in your ways. Amen.

Sunday September 3

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah
20:7-9

Psalm
63:2-6,8-9

Romans
12:1-2

Matthew
16:21-27

Seek God's will.

Today's Gospel proclamation describes the interaction between Jesus and Peter, where Peter tries to persuade Jesus that he should not suffer and die.

We should ponder our reactions to others in their tribulations. If we try to understand the emotions and feelings of Peter towards Jesus, it is indeed a genuine human concern he is showing towards Jesus where he thinks maybe Jesus is not seeing the perspective that he sees.

Peter was like us who show our genuine concern for our family and friends. Some of the things we have to go through in this life strengthen us in our faith, which is the pathway we have to go through to be stronger.

We need to understand that God's plan for us does not end here on earth but his plan for us extends to our eternal life with him. When our loved ones have to go through certain trials and tribulations as such, our defense mechanisms activate unconsciously.

Jesus is teaching us that in every situation we need to seek the will of God. There is no exception to this. We may try to be selective when we seek the will of God in our lives but when we take Jesus as our role model and Saviour, we see that he never separated his life and God. It was all one. This is what he is inviting us to do as well.

Seeking God in every situation may be difficult if we try with our own strength. This is the reason that Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit, to be with us all the time, advocating and counseling us and leading us in the truth. This truth is not the way of the world that we see around us.

The world may say that suffering is only pain and it only resembles punishment. It is not so, even the greatest pain we go through can be turned into a blessing for us and many others just as it happened in the life of Jesus.

We only need to come to God as we are and surrender ourselves. When we give the truth of our hearts to the Lord, he will fill us with the Holy Spirit which will guide us to help others.

The Holy Spirit can help us to understand God's will in our lives rather than being framed in our ways of thinking. Comfort, luxury, and being healthy may be blessings according to the world, but not to us as Christians.

Anything from the hands of God should be a blessing to us; when we accept any situation in the Holy Spirit, it will bring us happiness. Therefore let us seek true happiness from Christ alone.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the strength and right mind to discern your will and work according to your plan. Amen.

Monday September 4

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

1 Thessalonians
4:13-18

Psalm
96:1,3-5,11-13

Luke
4:16-30

The Lord empowers the powerless.

A visitor to Australia asked this question: "What are the worst states to live in?" The other person responded jokingly: "The state of poverty, the state of blindness, the state of captivity and the state of oppression." Any believer who hears the words of our Lord in the Gospel proclamation will not be affected by such states. Because our Lord is the anointed one who brings glad tidings to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed. His revolutionary message of love empowers the powerless. It is good news for those living in states that are often despised and neglected by society. Despite threats on life, our Lord was faithful to his mission. The Spirit is calling us to be proclaimers of the good news to our afflicted neighbours and even strangers. Are we sensitive enough to the pain of the helpless, to the one caught in bondage? Can we find time to enlighten someone struggling with studies or direction in life? Our calling is to help someone feel loved and liberated.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me in my mission despite my fears and weakness.
Amen.

Tuesday September 5

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

1 Thessalonians
5:1-6,9-11

Psalm
27:1,4,13-14

Luke
4:31-37

Jesus has overcome all evil.

Jesus had recently moved to Capernaum from Nazareth (Mt 4:13). Capernaum was a thriving city with wealth as well as decadence. Because it was the headquarters for many Roman troops, word about Jesus could spread all over the Roman Empire from there. A man possessed by a demon was in the synagogue where Jesus was teaching. This man made his way into the place of worship and shouted at Jesus. Satan will invade our lives wherever and whenever he can. But Jesus' authority is much greater than Satan's, and where Jesus is present, demons cannot stay. Therefore we need not be afraid. The people were amazed at Jesus' authority to drive out demons. Jesus faced many demons during his time on earth, and he always exerted authority over them. Evil influences even the most unexpected places, in an attempt to draw us away from God. Evil permeates our world, but God. The first step toward conquering evil is to recognize Jesus' authority and power, for he has overcome all evil.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to overcome evil and the world, so that my life will become a testimony to your glory. Amen.

Wednesday September 6

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Colossians
1:1-8

Psalm
52:10-11

Luke
4:38-44

Power of intercession

Today's Gospel proclamation shows the healing of Simon's mother in law. The people interceded for Simon's mother in law asking Jesus to heal her. What would have happened if they had not interceded? Would she have been healed? She may not have been. This passage teaches us the importance of intercession. Her loved ones asked Jesus for her healing, and he healed her. We also have to learn to intercede for others. There is power in intercessory prayer than we could ever imagine. Are we willing to intercede for people? If it is a loved one we certainly will, but what if it is someone who we are not fond of? I have been in positions where I was asked to intercede for a person I actually did not much care for. But when I started to pray for this person I felt an inner peace like never before. Some ridiculed me saying I had no business praying for someone who has been harming me. As God's children we are called to love like he does. Are we ready to intercede for those we love and those we do not?

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to intercede for all those who need you.
Amen.

Thursday September 7

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Colossians
1:9-14

Psalm
98:2-6

Luke
5:1-11

Patience and endurance

God's mercy never leaves us and in his time he answers all our struggles and issues. We should believe him not because of our ulterior motives, since we cannot hide anything from him, every little thing in our lives is widely open to him. As weak humans we maybe tempted to turn our direction away from the Lord, since we expect quick answers. However sometimes God allows pain and suffering to enter into our lives, not as a punishment but because he wants us to experience his presence in and through that struggle, issue or suffering. He is with us and he empowers us to face the reality of our lives. We need endurance and patience to walk this journey in him. He never allows us to sink and his mercy rescues us from danger. Joshua 1:9 says "Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go". This scripture strongly penetrated my heart, and gave me the courage to persevere. Let us have faith because he will move mountains and set us free.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be patient and endure the challenges of the spiritual journey. Amen.

Friday September 8

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Micah
5:1-4

Psalm
13:6-7

Matthew
1:1-16,18-23

Let us be like Mary.

Today is one of the three birthdays we celebrate in the liturgical year, the others being the birthdays of Jesus and of John the Baptist. Mother Mary played a unique and vital role in the plan of salvation. She was instrumental in the Lord's hand like no other human person, for she was chosen and set apart for this purpose to be the Mother of God. Mother Mary was conceived and born immaculate and was full of grace. Her parents would have been overjoyed at the birth of their daughter. The couple would have wondered what she would turn out to be. The entire creation was groaning until the Saviour was born. The whole world was waiting for the redeemer. The maker of the universe, the God of creation was able to bring out this plan of salvation into action through the obedience of Mary our Mother. Thus her entire will was surrendered to God in obedience. It may have been difficult, painful and uneasy sometimes. Yet, she had the courage, faith and obedience to say yes to God's call. May we also respond to God's call.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the same grace as Mother Mary to be surrendered to your will. Amen.

Saturday September 9

Memorial of Saint Peter Claver, Priest

Colossians
1:21-23

Psalm
54:3-4,6,8

Luke
6:1-5

Are we more pious than we are loving?

A young woman moved into a new parish and attended daily Mass. She often rushed into church after Mass had started and left before Mass ended. A group of parishioners went to the parish priest and complained. After waiting patiently for them to finish, the priest calmly explained that the young woman had come to him early on to ask for forgiveness and explained her situation. She was taking care of three little children as well as her bed ridden aunt, while her husband had gone away for work. She would wake up at 4am, cook breakfast for her family, prepare the children for school, rush off to church and rush back before the school bus picked them up. Are we more pious than we are loving? The Pharisees were more concerned about their observance of the Sabbath law but the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus Christ, was more concerned about the hunger of his disciples. Are we moved by what moved the heart of God? When a choice has to be made between the rule of the law and the law of love, the law of love prevails.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I love others instead of judging them.
Amen.

Sunday September 10

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel
33:7-9

Psalm
95:1-2, 6-9

Romans
13:8-10

Matthew
18:15-20

Be like clay in the potter's hands.

The words of the Psalmist resound loud and clear, "If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Preserving a soft heart in a world of hardship is a daily battle. The natural impulse is to harden and toughen our hearts to endure constant strife, disappointment and offense. A soft heart in this world, would seem a weakness or vulnerability. However, today's second reading says that "love is the fulfillment of the law". In other words, love is justice; love is the way. And if we choose the way of love, our hearts must be yielding, malleable and sensitive to the whispers of the Holy Spirit. While a hardened heart may guard us from being hurt and disappointed, the Lord calls us to be boldly soft-hearted, even if this may be costly and painful. He desires a heart that feels his presence, hears his voice, responds to his promptings, and is mouldable in his hands. He calls us to tear down the walls, surrender our defences and strip our hearts bare.

Today's Gospel proclamation declares a powerful word: "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." If we then bind ourselves to resentment, revenge, bitterness, and/or even apathy, then we have chosen for ourselves an eternal imprisonment within these plagues. If we instead loosen ourselves from such strongholds, and bind ourselves to forgiveness, grace and compassion, heavenly reinforcements will follow.

A soft heart in the eyes of God is far from weakness and is anything but a setback. A soft heart, in his eyes, is a place where heaven and earth can meet. A soft heart houses his love, and when we choose love, we choose unity. And Jesus promises "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

As written in Ezekiel, the Lord calls the gentle-hearted to be his watchmen. That is, to move in him, and thereby watch over his people. The instruction is: "when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me." A stubborn heart would limit us in this mission, for brittle things are hard but easily breakable. A brittle heart cannot bend to his will or be shaped into a vessel. A yielded heart; however, is pliable, and can take whatever shape or form as desired by the Father. It can be stretched like a net to catch his people in his love.

Let us ask the Lord to show us where our hearts are still brittle due to past experiences. Let us ask that any stiffening agents like anger, unforgiveness or offense be removed, and that our hearts be made tender and gentle just like his.

Prayer: Abba Father, may my heart be open to your voice.
Amen.

Monday September 11

Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Colossians
1:24-2:3

Psalm
62:6-7,9

Luke
6:6-11

Life in all its fullness.

Life, what is it? What makes life worth the living? Is it the security of wealth, recognition, acceptance, power, love? The list could go on. Or is it what St. Paul writes "it is Christ in you, the hope for glory" (Col 1:27). As the words of that beautiful song rings, "Life is worth the living, because he lives," life not in an abstract manner, the very source and cause of life in all its meaning and fullness comes to make his home in us: Christ is Life. Today's Gospel proclamation says that our Lord comes to heal and restore life, and more importantly our withered, fractured souls which lay hidden to the world. 22 years ago on this day broken, withered souls caused much harm as we remember the attacks of 9/11 on New York City. But as we continue to believe in faith that Christ is in us and that his desire and intention is that we transform into life in all its fullness, let us hope from that place of knowing that when we speak Jesus over ourselves first, then we speak healing and life into the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me find life in all its fullness in your beloved Son Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday September 12

Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Colossians
2:6-15

Psalm
145:1-2,8-11

Luke
6:12-19

Transforming love of Jesus

Today's Gospel proclamation illustrates the scenario where the apostles received their calling. These twelve men were not those who held position, prestige, or power in society but were those who did not have any education or social status. Jesus chose them and appointed them as his apostles not because of their capabilities, but because he was assured of what God was capable of doing through them. Similarly, God has extended an invitation to us to serve him and continue his mission. Are we ready to respond to this call? St Paul teaches us that the ideal way to respond to this calling is to build our lives in Christ. This becomes possible only through prayer. When we are united with Christ, we let God work through us. Just like Jesus manifested the power of God by being united to the Father, when we unite with Christ, we will be able to do the same. Let us surrender our weak and broken lives into the hands of Jesus. Through him we gain transformation and the power to continue his mission and spread his love to others.

Prayer: Abba Father, may my heart always rejoice in you.
Amen.

Wednesday September 13

Memorial of Saint John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Colossians
3:1-11

Psalm
145:2-3,10-13

Luke
6:20-26

Put on a new self for new life.

Often we remark that God has favored us when people speak well of us, or when material benefits come our way or when life is filled with laughter and merry making. Today's reading of the Beatitudes, seems to contradict that view, and says the opposite. Blessed are the poor, hungry, weeping: they are the ones who are favored by God. That blessedness comes from becoming a disciple of the Lord. A disciple is one who imitates the lifestyle and the attitudes of the master. To be a disciple of the Lord then, is to imitate his life style. Only to such is the blessed condition given. Pseudo Christians however, seem to be perfect disciples of the world, not Christ. Teilhard de Chardin says "if we do not believe, the waves engulf us, nourishment fails, sickness lays us low or kills us and divine power would seem remote. If on the other hand, we believe, the waters are welcoming, bread is multiplied, our eyes open, the dead rise again, the power of God is, as it were, drawn from him by force and spreads through all nature".

Prayer: Abba Father, empower us to live like your Son, who became utterly poor and vulnerable and received heavenly glory. Amen.

Thursday September 14

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Numbers
21:4-9

Psalm
78:1-2,34-38

John
3:13-17

Gaze on the Cross

The Feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross is an invitation for us to look to and gaze at our Lord Jesus on the Cross. Often, we look at the person who causes us pain or we gaze at the problem or challenge we are facing. They become our idol and dictate our mood swings. But the Word tells us; as our Lord was trying to explain to Nicodemus, that we are called to look at the Exalted One. On that Cross, he carried the burden of our sins and pain. He shouldered our weakness. In the Old Testament, to be cured of the snake bite, the people were invited to look upon the bronze serpent, the curse itself. In the New Testament, our Lord became the curse that we might be redeemed and be set free. The power of the cross is beyond our understanding and comprehension. It is a symbol of real love for us and a personal expression of Jesus' love for each of us. Say to yourself, "My Jesus, died for me, my Jesus gave his life for me. My Jesus suffered that I might live and experience salvation and eternal life."

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus and the cross upon which he hung that we might be set free. Amen.

Friday September 15

Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Timothy
1:1-2, 12-14

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

John
19:25-27

We have been called to serve.

Throughout the crucifixion, the unwavering commitment to the mission and the intensity of Jesus' love for his people is felt clearly. What comfort in times of suffering to recall how faithful Jesus was to us. Giving his mother to the apostle he loved was a great act of love. The Blessed Mother walked with Jesus as a quiet strength for him. As we celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows let us be aware that she is the same loving force in our lives leading us to Jesus and to the Father. St Paul who was a strong contributor to the cruel fate of the early disciples experienced the power of God. His eyes that were blinded were opened to the reality of the truth and he set out on a mission to serve God selflessly. It is said that never a man magnified his office as Paul did. He did not magnify it in pride: he magnified it in wonder that God had chosen him for a task like that. He found in Timothy - a young man - the perfect disciple who could be trusted. We are called to be like Paul and Timothy in this era.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us a heart to serve you in obedience to your will, following the example of Mary our mother. Amen.

Saturday September 16

Memorial of Saints Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs

1 Timothy
1:15-17

Psalm
113:1-7

Luke
6:43-49

Live according to God's Word

How many of us are reactive, quick to judge and fight back when we are faced with conflict. We focus on the crisis and miss out on hearing the quiet whisper of the Lord, which is to turn to the word of God. In the first reading, Jesus is reminding us that while we were sinners, he came into the world to save us. Our Lord is earnestly reminding us to go to his Word, to learn, behave and conduct ourselves according to his Word. The Word of God is a double edged sword which will pierce through joints and marrow and convict our spirits. Do we consciously check our behaviour and conduct with God? Do we have an honest check-in with our Lord to search our behaviour and actions? Are they pleasing to him? What fruits of the Holy Spirit do we harbour and display? Or what foundations have we built our relationship with God on? Let us repent for not living our lives according to his Word. Let us claim the blood of Jesus to redeem us and cleanse us. Let us connect to his Word and live in a way that is worthy of his calling.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I consciously follow your Word.
Amen.

Sunday September 17

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sirach
27:30—28:7

Psalm
103:1-4, 9-12

Romans
14:7-9

Matthew
18:21-35

Forgive others as God forgives us.

The basic theme that runs through today's readings is to do to others what God has done for us. When I think about all that God has done for me, I remember all the material and financial blessings he has bestowed on me and my family.

But then as I pondered deeply I realized that he has done much more than that. He has loved me when I could not even love myself. He has taken me through many storms and valleys. He has answered my prayers when I was not even faithful to my promises. He has done more for me than I could have ever done for him.

Today he is asking us to remember what he has done for us, either big or small, and do to others as he has done for us.

In the first reading from the book of Sirach, the author writes "Forgive your neighbour the wrong done to you; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven" (Sirach 28:2). How many times has the Lord forgiven our sins? Do we keep a count? Is it that he has no choice but forgive our sins when we go for confession? No. He forgives our sins because of the love he has for us.

He has a desire to have us close to him. He wants nothing more than to be loved by the children he loves. Once we have received this love and forgiveness from him, he gives us a command to love others and forgive others as he has forgiven us.

The Psalmist echoes these sentiments in today's Responsorial Psalm. "Bless the Lord, my soul; and do not forget all his gifts, who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills, who redeems your life from the pit, and crowns you with mercy and compassion" (Ps 103:2-4). The Psalmist is reminding us to keep remembering what the Lord has done in our lives.

In today's Gospel proclamation the Lord Jesus is asked how many times one should forgive another person's sins. He replies, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22) and tells the disciples the parable of the unforgiving servant to illustrate how important forgiveness is.

When we read this parable, we may find fault with the servant for not forgiving a small debt when he was forgiven a big debt by the master. This is our humanness.

God knows this is a weakness of humans and he wants to remind us today to forgive those around us as he has forgiven us. To love those around us as he has loved us.

Prayer: Abba Father, I ask for your grace to be able to remember what you have done for me, and to do the same for others. Amen.

Monday September 18

Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Timothy
2:1-8

Psalm
28:2,7-9

Luke
7:1-10

Faith to believe.

In today's Gospel proclamation Jesus is moved by the faith of the Centurion, who acknowledged his unworthiness and simply believed in the power and authority of Jesus to heal his dying servant. This is the kind of faith that the Lord expects each of us to have in our life. Faith to hold on to Jesus, faith to believe that the Lord is in control, faith to know that nothing is impossible for Jesus and faith to accept that Jesus will work everything out for our good at his appointed time. As I look at my life, can I say that I have the same faith to believe that the Lord is in control? Do I truly believe? Or do I worry and remain anxious? In the first reading, we are called to lift our prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings to the Father because this is what pleases his heart. He wants to be a part of the day-to-day life of his children and that is why he sent his son Jesus to save us so that through the death and resurrection of Jesus we will have victory to overcome the day-to-day struggles of life.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for faith to believe that nothing is impossible for you. Amen.

Tuesday September 19

Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Timothy
3:1-13

Psalm
101:1-3, 5-6

Luke
7:11-17

Be compassionate.

Jesus' action in today's Gospel proclamation gives us invaluable insight into his attitude towards suffering, specially that which is endured by women. As Jesus walked with the disciples into the town of Nain, they noticed a dead man being carried out for burial. Imagine the heartache of the mother, already a widow and now left without her only son. Her deep grief touched the heart of Jesus and was drawn to her in her vulnerability. Jesus' first action was to console and comfort her with his presence, urging her not to weep. Jesus comforts those who weep. It is recognised that compassion is the most effective way to connect with another and is based on the beauty of our shared humanity. We are called to be the compassionate heart of God in our world as we continue to carry out Jesus' mission. Let us embrace this challenge as the Lord invites us to demonstrate love and compassion to those who are hurting around us with a warm embrace, comforting words, taking the time to listen, pray or lend a helping hand.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be compassionate.
Amen.

Wednesday September 20

Memorial of Saints Andrew Kim Taegön and Companions, Martyrs

1 Timothy
3:14-16

Psalm
111:1-6

Luke
7:31-35

God's love - the anchor of our lives.

When we think about the mysteries of the universe, I often wonder; are we worthy or righteous enough to be loved? Today's first reading reminds us of our obligations to the Lord. While God has graciously granted us the freedom of life, it is the church that will light the path to live a righteous life. It is only through Jesus that we are able to unite with the Spirit and experience the mysteries of his Godliness. As I attempted to comprehend the love of our Father, a story that deeply touched me came to my mind: the story of the Footprints: "As I was walking on the beach with God...I witnessed two pairs of foot prints that belonged to me and God. During the darkest moments in my life, I only saw one set of footprints, so I questioned God why he would abandon me. He said, "My child, I love you, when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then I carried you". During our darkest hours when we question; "God, where are you?" Or "why me God?", just remember that God is with us, he is carrying us.

Prayer: Abba Father, grant us the grace to be united with your Spirit.
May your love be the anchor of our lives. Amen.

Thursday September 21

Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and evangelist

Ephesians
4:1-7, 11-13

Psalm
19:2-5

Matthew
9:9-13

Building the body of Christ - the Church.

St Paul tells us that we are called to a mission of building up the body of Christ. Even the smallest task is important in this ministry. What is important is to serve the Lord. Our service may be to our family, workplace, parish, community or to the society at large. We need to do the task with patience, gentleness, humility, bearing with one another in love and in peace. In the Gospel proclamation we see Jesus calling Matthew the tax collector to follow him. Subsequently Jesus has a meal with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees tried to find fault with Jesus. They obviously could not understand Jesus' action. Are we too, at times like the Pharisees trying to find fault with our families, communities and parishioners who are trying to carry on the mission, when our thinking pattern is different to theirs. Have we hindered the work of others because of our brokenness? Have we valued human recognition more than seeing the move of God? May God reveal to us our hidden motives and purify our intentions.

Prayer: Abba Father, empower us to carry out the mission
that you have entrusted to us. Amen.

Friday September 22

Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Timothy
6:2-12

Psalm
49:6-10,17-20

Luke
8:1-3

Serving Jesus

Most of us have come to this journey in the Lord because we first sought a healing or an answer to a problem. Our loving Father in his mercy and grace healed us and delivered us from our past addictions and sinful ways. Now that we are followers of Christ what can we give back to him? Can we partake in his mission to others? It is clearly shown in today's Gospel proclamation how the disciples travelled through towns and villages with Jesus and some women assisted them with their resources. In today's hectic world we may not be able to travel and preach the Gospel leaving our families and children, but we can truly serve in many ways. We too can first and foremost intercede for many missions carried through the church, and share our resources and talents in small ways. We can also share the Word by distributing the Word among our friends, sharing it online and helping the needy and less fortunate. We are to be faithful in our jobs and do our best to see that others are benefitted through it all.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for making us your disciples.
May we share what we have so that your name is glorified. Amen.

Saturday September 23

Memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest

1 Timothy
6:13-16

Psalm
100:1-5

Luke
8:4-15

Listen to God's Word.

The sense of hearing is a gift from God but sometimes we do not have control over what we hear. There is a lot out there in the world that is screaming for our attention, and it is a real challenge to sift through what really benefits us to allow entry into our heart. The parable of the Sower is an invitation for us to have a receptive heart with all the right conditions, most importantly to the right type of words to bear the right kind of fruits. Let us allow God's words to enter our hearts. Let us learn through the example of St. Pius of Pietrelcina, better known as Padre Pio, whose memorial we celebrate today. When our trials seem to keep us away from receiving and rejoicing in the word of God, let us look to this holy saint, who in the face of suffering and shame, allowed the goodness of God to sustain him and reached out to the needy with joy. Can we recognise the Word of God coming to us in different shapes and forms? What is obstructing the Word from taking root in our hearts?

Prayer: Abba Father, our hearts are yearning to hear your Word.
Speak, for your servant is listening. Amen.

Sunday September 24

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah
55:6-9

Psalms
145:2-3,8-9,17-18

Philippians
1:20-24,27

Matthew
20:1-16

Proclaim Christ in every way.

In today's First reading St Paul shares, that whether by life or death Christ will be exalted. Here was a man of God who was imprisoned for proclaiming the Gospel. He was hopeful that the proclamation of the Gospel will be carried on regardless of his life or death for in the midst of deep turmoil nothing could stop him from talking about Jesus.

It is interesting to mention that a few verses prior (vs 18) he talks about those who may preach Christ out of selfish or impure motives. And declares that as long as the Gospel is preached he is not concerned of such people or their motives, because in the end, Christ is been proclaimed.

Luke 9 mentions how the Lord called the twelve apostles and gave them power and authority to drive out demons, heal the sick and preach. In vs 49, John tells Jesus, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us." And Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for whoever is not against us is for us."

Sometimes we too can be caught up in condemning or exposing those who preach Christ differently. Every minute used for condemning can be used instead to proclaim Jesus to a lost soul.

The Lord has not appointed us to judge other people. In his mercy and love he has anointed us with the Holy Spirit to spread his Good News to those around us. This is our primary mission as we walk this journey in faith and surrender. Even more than our words, it is our actions that should bear witness to Christ.

As children of God should we be joining the bandwagon of division or be part of the healing process? There is a hurting world around us that is desperately in need for Christians to bring Christ's light to them.

So then, what is our calling? In vs 27 St Paul tells us that we ought to live our lives worthy of our calling, standing firm in one Spirit, determined with one mind for the spreading of the Gospel.

Further in verse 28 he says, in no way should we be intimidated by our opponents. Our calling is to not condemn our Christian brothers and sisters who preach Christ differently, specially those who are not part of our own church and even those who may condemn us. Rather we ought to cover them in our prayers that Jesus may lead them to repentance if need be and reveal more of his love to them.

As Jesus prophesied 'all' those who proclaim the Gospel will be persecuted. Do we join the persecutors or join Jesus' party in proclaiming the Gospel to all? The choice is ours.

Prayer: Abba Father, all I have is yours.

Take my time, gifts and possessions and use them for your glory. Amen.

Monday September 25

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Ezra
1:1-6

Psalm
126:1-6

Luke
8:16-18

Light of the world.

To follow Christ by living in obedience to his way and surrendering to his will in this secular world is like finding our way home through a dark forest. The darkness of secularism, the constant cackling noise of unbelief, the deceptively alluring call of those who pretend to know how to get us home, the unyielding obstacles of giant rocks and crevices demand a “worldly accepted way” of navigating if we are to move forward. In rousing the spirit of a gentile King Cyrus into releasing God’s people to build his temple in Jerusalem, we are shown that God is in full control over all things. There is no crooked way he cannot make straight to help us find our way if we seek to live surrendered to his will and his way. Jesus says “My sheep know my voice”, we are invited to listen carefully for that voice to lead us, for his word and path will always be revealed. When we receive that light of faith and wisdom to live, we are invited to illuminate the path for those who are to come. We can guide others on the path to finding Jesus.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill me with your Spirit so that the world may see you in my actions. Amen.

Tuesday September 26

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Ezra
6:7-8,12,14-20

Psalm
122:1-5

Luke
8:19-21

The inner circle.

When the disciples of Jesus came to him and told him that his mother and brothers had come to see him, the disciples may have expected Jesus to stop what he was doing and go to his mother and family, leaving the crowds behind. How did Jesus respond to his disciples? “My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it”. We want preferential treatment in this world, we crave to be acknowledged by others in society and in our church communities. We are considered family if we fulfill two conditions: if we hear the voice of God by reading the Bible and act on the voice of God, by putting his words into practice. How much time do we invest in doing the first? How much time spent in keen desire to know the truth in the word of God? Without the first we cannot fulfill the second – to act on the word. Let us become true members of Jesus’ inner circle: the family of God. Let us make a conscious effort to hear his voice and act on it. In today’s electronic age of audio bibles there is no excuse.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we have a deep desire to fill our hearts and minds with your Word. Amen.

Wednesday September 27

Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest

Ezra
9:5-9

Tobit
13:2-4,7-8

Luke
9:1-6

Are we merely existing or truly alive?

Is there a difference between 'existing' and 'living'? Is a broken bulb useful? Without power a bulb just exists. Once plugged in and switched on, it gives light and supports life. Our lives when taken as a bulb just exist unless it is connected to power. What is this power that transforms our existence as human beings, even in our brokenness, to living a life that is truly 'living'? In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus calls his disciples to action giving them power. When the disciples obeyed and responded, the power was manifested through their actions. We are called to action, in spite of our failures and sinfulness, for the power to be manifested through us. Do we remember the moments when we helped someone and the joy that accompanied that action? Do we remember the pain, rejection and suffering in our lives and the hope that uplifts us when we hold onto God for strength? During these moments, can we sense the hand of God sending out his power through us? Can we hear his call? What is our response?

Prayer: Abba Father, may we become alive in your Spirit.
Amen.

Thursday September 28

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Haggai
1: 1-8

Psalm
149: 1-6, 9

Luke
9: 7-9

Dwelling place of God.

Today's first reading gives us an instance where the Lord spoke to his people through the Prophet Haggai. Through this he is also speaking to us in our daily life. Most often in our daily life our priority is to fulfil our physical and emotional needs. What about fulfilling our spiritual needs? Our reply may be that we pray first thing in the morning. But what about during the rest of the day? Is prayer and our connection with the Lord our main focus or does our focus shift back to our comforts? The Lord is waiting to see the day when his people will be faithful to him and honour their Maker and know that their fulfilment comes from him alone. He does not want to see his people become vulnerable anymore. So, he says "Give careful thoughts to your ways" (Haggai 1:5) to see whether our conduct is pure and upright. Are we truly honouring our God in everything we do? Let us search our lives and see whether the Lord's house in our lives is ruined. We must turn to him in prayer, and he will teach us the way to rebuild it.

Prayer: Abba Father, I accept the truth of my heart that your dwelling place in my life is damaged. Come rebuild your home in my life. Amen.

Friday September 29

Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, archangels

Revelation
12: 7-12

Psalm
138:1-5

John
1:47-51

Messengers of love.

Today is the feast of the Archangels; Michael, who resembles God, Gabriel, who is known as God's strength and Raphael, who is the healing of God. The first reading describes how Michael fought the battle against the ancient serpent. It is revealed to us that, Satan and his angels were cast down to the earth. But the Blood of the Lamb has defeated the powers of the devil. The territorial distinguish mentioned here is not geographical but metaphorical. "Therefore rejoice you heavens and those who dwell in them" (Rev 12:12), what does this mean? Anyone who is in Christ has the heavenly experience and Satan cannot have any hold on them. We need to know if our internal disposition isn't in Jesus and we need to be cautious. The Gospel proclamation tells us to sit under the fig tree; where we hear the voice of God and the message of salvation. We are called to live the true message of salvation, which is love. Archangels work for spreading of God's love. Let us become angels of God's love on earth.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to love you and my brothers and sisters.
Amen.

Saturday September 30

Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Zechariah
2:5-9, 14-15

Jeremiah
31:10-13

Luke
9:43-45

Wall of fire.

Today's First reading and the Responsorial Psalm both speak of a wonderful promise from God that he will dwell among us. He promises to be the wall of fire that surrounds Jerusalem which will protect it and be the glory within it. Just like Jerusalem, he is the wall of fire around us, our families, our communities, and our nations no matter how scattered or far apart we are. God is the fire that surrounds us and protects us. He is also the glory within us. He is our joy and our hope, and we are made to glorify him. In both the First reading and the Responsorial Psalm, God invites us to rejoice and be glad in him. We are urged to sing and shout praises to him so that many nations can bind themselves to the Lord and he may dwell within them. Like the Israelites, we too are called to spread the Word and share the joy of the Lord with others. We can do this by the way we live: by reflecting the goodness and hope of leading a life with God who dwells within us. May our example inspire others to follow Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for being the wall of fire around us,
our families, our communities, and our nations. Amen.

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St. Teresa of Calcutta

St. Teresa was born on August 26, 1910 in Skopje, North Macedonia. She was the youngest child. She received her First Holy Communion at the age of five, and was confirmed in November 1916. Her father died while she was only eight years old leaving her family in financial straits.

St. Teresa's religious formation was assisted by the vibrant Jesuit parish of the Sacred Heart in which she was very involved as a youth. She left her home at the age of 18 to join the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland. She received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Therese of Lisieux.

St. Teresa made her 'Final Profession of Vows' on May 24, 1937, becoming, as she said, the "Spouse of Jesus for all eternity." From that time on she was called Mother Teresa.

On October 7, 1950 the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. By the early 1960s, St. Teresa began to send her Sisters to other parts of India. In order to respond better to both the physical and spiritual needs of the poor, St. Teresa founded many other missions.

St. Teresa's inspiration was not limited to those with religious vocations, but also to people of many faiths and nationalities with whom she shared her spirit of prayer, simplicity, sacrifice and her apostolate of humble works of love.

In spite of increasingly severe health problems towards the end of her life, St. Teresa continued to govern her Society and respond to the needs of the poor and the Church. By 1997, Mother Teresa's Sisters numbered nearly 4,000 members and were established in 610 foundations in 123 countries. On September 5, St. Teresa's earthly life came to an end. She was given the honor of a state funeral by the Government of India.

St. Teresa of Calcutta was canonized by Pope Francis on September 4, 2016 in a ceremony that was witnessed by tens of thousands of people, including 1,500 homeless people across Italy. Her feast day is celebrated on September 5.

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.