



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



**St. John Henry Newman**

*Memorial: 09 October*

**OCTOBER 2023** | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

OCTOBER  
2023

“I sought to hear the voice  
of God and climbed the  
topmost steeple,  
but God declared:  
Go down again - I dwell  
among the people.”

St. John Henry Newman

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## Sunday October 1

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel  
18:25-28

Psalm  
25:4-9

Philippians  
2:1-11

Matthew  
21:28-32

God living in us and working through us.

Our Lord Jesus lived his whole life to glorify God his heavenly Father. He humbled himself to the point of death in obedience to the will of the Father. With every breath he said yes to God's will. Because of this as St. Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians God greatly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name.

In today's Gospel proclamation we are introduced to two brothers, both sinners. One openly denies his father, yet later repents and does his father's will. The other verbally agrees to obey, yet does not follow up with his action. This may be a good time to make a deep examination of our own minds and hearts.

In baptism we have entered into the family of God being redeemed and adopted into sonship/daughterhood through the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Does our life reflect this great calling? We are provided opportunities each day to do the will of our heavenly Father, in our families, our work places and in our everyday situations.

In these times do we choose compromise over obedience? Do we choose comfort over doing the right thing? We may go to church services and prayer meetings and know many prayers by heart and know the language of Christian living, but words can be meaningless if not followed through with action. Are we Christian in name, but worldly in our actions?

Being a true follower of Christ is not an easy calling, denying our flesh and walking in the ways of Christ is one of the hardest things we can do, and it is impossible to do this by ourselves. But Christ in his great mercy has already redeemed us, he paid the price for us and sent the Holy Spirit.

Every Christian receives this wonderful gift of the Spirit at our baptism: God living in us, and working through us. When faced with difficult circumstances, when we need to make the choice between the will of God and the world we can lean into the grace that flows to us through the Spirit.

Christian repentance is recognition and turning away from sin. It is a turning towards God. It is a change of mind and heart in response to the great love our God has bestowed upon us and a deep desire to not offend him anymore.

As we examined our lives we may have come to the conclusion that we have fallen short of God's will in many areas of our lives. But let us not be disheartened because there are no sinners who cannot be reconciled with God when they repent. There is no sin that is too big for God to forgive.

Prayer: Abba Father, forgive the many times I have disobeyed you.  
Empower me with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Monday October 2

Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

Zechariah  
8:1-8

Psalm  
102:16-23,29

Matthew  
18:1-5,10

The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.

The Lord Jesus says that unless we become like children, we will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. We need to have childlike faith in his love and mercy. Jesus welcomed sinners and showed his love through his actions like dining with Zacchaeus, and calling a tax collector. We cannot understand his love and mercy. What we need to understand is that we can keep returning to his heart that is waiting to embrace us. He will transform us according to his beautiful plan. This is the invitation given to us. It is only in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that we are able to walk in Christ. We need to have the same attitude of Jesus in us. God has placed us in his vineyard. He wants us to witness to him wherever we are placed and bear fruits in the Spirit. Carrying the attitude of Christ in our hearts in humility we are called to serve him. Let us take the truth of our hearts to his feet and surrender our lives and he will empower us with the Spirit to serve him and glorify him. He will send his angels to protect us.

Prayer: Abba Father, teach me your ways. Teach me to live according to your truth, for you are my God who saves me. Amen.

## Tuesday October 3

Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Zechariah  
8:20-23

Psalm  
87:1-7

Luke  
9:51-56

Be open to the fountain of blessings.

God's heart is yearning to lead humanity to experience his unconditional love and throughout history we see how even powerful nations felt insecure when the presence of God was not among them. The first reading says: "nations will come seeking to worship God" and what is remarkable is that nations which are enemies with each other will also come to the city of God to experience the glorious blessings that are promised. Reconciling with one another, accepting each other as they are, repenting for their selfish nature and surrendering their lives will be the gate for mighty blessings that were promised to flow like a fountain of fresh water. In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus taught his disciples to respond in love, when the Samaritans did not accept him into their city. Our human nature would prompt us to use power and authority like James and John but Jesus showed another way: the way to win people to the kingdom of God. Our attitudes would attract others to possess the spiritual gifts which God's children possess.

Prayer: Abba Father, let me open my eyes to the mission I have so that my life will be a blessing for another to seek the kingdom of God. Amen.

## Wednesday October 4

Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi

Nehemiah  
2:1-8

Psalm  
137:1-6

Luke  
9:57-62

### Commitment to Christ.

As Jesus and his disciples were continuing their journey various people expressed their desire to follow him. However they were unable to give immediate responses like Matthew and the other apostles, who left everything and followed him. Jesus desires that his disciples be wholehearted in their commitment to him and his mission. Jesus desires to be first in our lives. We have family, children, friends and professions. However, our primary commitment has to be to Jesus. This call is a challenge for us, because, our families and responsibilities are important and rightly so. Jesus wants us to know that if our primary commitment is to him, everything else in our lives will be in proper perspective: our families, jobs and finances. When we strive to follow Jesus, it is easy to stray from the path. When we become aware that we have strayed from the path, we can correct our course. This is what Jesus asks of us. If we do so, our lives will be filled with graces. It is our choice.

Prayer: Abba Father, each time we stray from your path help us correct our course and bring us back to your presence. Amen.

## Thursday October 5

Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Nehemiah  
8:1-12

Psalm  
19:8-11

Luke  
10:1-12

### Share the Good News.

Today's readings teach us how to spread the Good News among the people. God is expecting this from us who have been nourished by his love. Having experienced his love our responsibility is to share this love with our neighbours. We need to step out of our comfort zones. The kingdom of God is at hand for you. We need to bring Jesus to the world. However, before we go to the world first we need to immerse ourselves in the love of the Lord. When we bear him in us we are filled with peace and joy. As scripture says in Mark 16:17 "These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mk 16:17-18) Let us be aware of our calling as disciples of the Lord and spread his Word among the nations. The Holy Spirit is always with us, strengthens us and leads us on this journey.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to bring your love to the world and make disciples in your name. Amen.

## Friday October 6

Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Baruch  
1:15-22

Psalm  
79:1-5,8-9

Luke  
10:13-16

Listen to God's Word.

God speaks to us far more than we realise. He wants to communicate with us directly and frequently. But we often harden our hearts through fear, unbelief, and pre-occupation with the issues of daily life. In today's Gospel Proclamation, Jesus laments that people reject the Good News despite all he does for them. The prophet Baruch prays in the First Reading about the disobedience of the exiles who did not listen to God's voice but followed the beliefs and desires of their own hearts, despite having been delivered out of slavery. In our own lives we can be quick to forget the good that God has done for us, when he has delivered us from our own misfortunes. By rejecting his word, we are rejecting him. We need to truly repent of our sinfulness and return to God. We should sit at the feet of the Lord in prayer, reading and listening to his word, so that we will hear from him. As believers, we are called to share the Gospel with others. If we choose to live our lives according to his word, we can declare the truth in love, and minister to the lost.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I listen to your Word with an open heart.  
Amen.

## Saturday October 7

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Baruch  
4:5-12,27-29

Psalm  
69:33-37

Luke  
10:17-24

How do we open ourselves to the work of God in us?

"It could be said that each mystery of the rosary, carefully meditated, sheds light on the mystery of man. To pray the rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and our Mother." (Saint John Paul II) As we celebrate the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary, let us strive to pray the rosary meditatively. In today's readings we see the consolation of Jerusalem. Jesus seeing his disciples experiencing divine power, expresses his joy to the Father in gratitude. Our Father wants his love and mercy to come alive in us, he wants us to know the joy which comes from being filled with the Spirit. The power and authority revealed through Jesus and the extent of power that can be wielded in our own lives to do the same works is immense. How do we open ourselves to the work of God in us? It means carving a space and time for prayer. Let us seek the intercession of the Blessed Mother, read the scriptures, and ask the Holy Spirit to bring the Word to life in a deeper and inspiring way.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be open to your work in my life.  
Amen.

## Sunday October 8

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah  
5:1-7

Psalms 80:  
9,12-16,19-20

Philippians  
4:6-9

Matthew  
21:33-43

The God of peace is with us.

Today's readings speak about bearing good fruit. It is easy for us to take pride in the fact that we are the ones who have been called to be God's people when his own people rejected his Son and killed him.

Let us do some soul-searching if we are actually producing the good fruit that God expects from us. Are we being fruitful? We who have received the Holy Spirit at Baptism and Confirmation, are expected to bear his fruits, namely peace, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. Do we make a difference in the world we live in, by our inner responses?

St Paul elaborates on the joy we ought to have, as Christians. Being joyful in good times is no big deal. Yet, rejoicing, specially in difficult times, refusing to be anxious is not possible, unless the source of all joy lives in us, namely the Lord Jesus.

When we choose to trust in his goodness and faithfulness at all times, joy and gratitude fill our hearts. This is the secret of the peace that transcends all understanding, that guards our hearts and minds against all offence and bitterness.

Recently I was blessed to witness this behaviour in a young mother who had to go through a bitter divorce, but chose to turn that crisis into a blessing as she started to allow the Lord to love her and renew her mind with his truths as against the lies presented by her own wounded heart and also the well-meaning friends and family around her.

Her transformation has blessed her children who were badly traumatised by the separation of their parents, and the transcendent peace she carries in and around her is drawing the children to walk with the Lord too.

The Holy Spirit is teaching her the art of inner response as opposed to reaction, and others including her estranged husband are puzzled as to how she seems to be so joyful and peaceful. This young woman needs no cross around her neck or a rosary in her hand to show that she is a Christian. Her life speaks loud and clear, that she belongs to the Giver of true peace and joy.

Today's Gospel proclamation states that "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes?"

Therefore let us not grow fainthearted when we face rejection, instead hold onto the Giver of life. His perfect plan will unravel and will surely not harm us.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we produce good fruit and bear witness to your love and compassion. Amen.

## Monday October 9

Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Jonah  
1:1-2:1-2,11

Jonah  
2:3-5,8

Luke  
10:25-37

Selfless love pleases God.

God's plan for our lives is often not what we wish. God is love and he is compassionate towards his children and wants to fulfil our hearts' desires. "Find your delight in the Lord who will give you your heart's desire" (Ps 37:4). We could have ideas and desires of doing good for others with self-ish motives, which are not pleasing to God. Prophet Jonah's story brings to our mind the love that God had for the people of Nineveh. Jonah had other plans but God's plan was materialised. We could never run away from God. The best and the safest place for us to live is in a surrendered internal disposition. We could relax because through a surrendered internal disposition God's will materialises in our lives and that fulfilment becomes our heart's desire. The Gospel proclamation tells us God's plan; God is love and his will is that we love others. We often discern the will of God. His will is that selfless love should motivate our actions. Let us love because God is love and we are children of this loving God.

Prayer: Abba Father, purify and heal my heart to love others as you love me.  
Amen.

## Tuesday October 10

Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Jonah  
3:1-10

Psalm  
130:1-4,7-8

Luke  
10:38-42

The Lord destroys evil and rebuilds goodness.

Today's first reading shows God's merciful love which moved people to repent and seek forgiveness. It brings out a sudden and total conversion of the city. Firstly, there is an acknowledgement of guilt. Secondly, repentance is manifested by outward action – fasting and prayer. Fasting depicts wanting new attitudes and a new way of living – turning away from cruelty and violence. Thirdly, God's response to their repentance. Be it family, neighbourhood or workplaces, we may have similar issues: hurtful spouses, difficult children, disturbing siblings, unjust bosses and troublesome neighbours. Sometimes we think that life would be better without them, but God does not think so. He has permitted such people in our life for our salvation. By holding on to Christian values and not hurting or destroying others, God wants us to come back to him. Then we will see the wrong we have done and through grace start living differently. The Lord destroys evil in our family, neighbourhood and workplaces and rebuilds goodness instead.

Prayer: Abba Father, reveal your love for me and help me to return to you.  
Amen.



## Wednesday October 11

Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Jonah  
4:1-11

Psalm  
86:3-6,9-10

Luke  
11:1-4

Our loving Father in heaven.

In today's first reading Jonah gets angry because God did not carry out the evil he threatened against Nineveh. When Jonah was in discomfort God provides a plant to grow over his head, to comfort him. But the next morning God sends a worm who attacks the plant and the sun blazes over Jonah's head and again he wishes to die. We want God to take away our discomforts and forgive our sins but we are not ready to forgive our brothers and sisters. We often judge them, condemn them and complain about them whereas God's heart moves for them with love and compassion. Let us remember that God our loving Father is concerned about our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical well being. Our God is compassionate, merciful and forgiving. When we lose our way, he will once again open the way for us to repent and turn back to him. He will never get tired of coming after us or of waiting for us to return to him. Let us say the prayer that Jesus taught us, that we may love and forgive others just as he loves and forgives us.

Prayer: Abba Father, holy is your name, may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

## Thursday October 12

Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Malachi  
3:13-20

Psalm  
1:1-4,6

Luke  
11:5-13

Shameless persistence.

In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus teaches about prayer. A book that I recently read called prayer as shameless persistence. We need to persevere even when results do not seem to appear at our pace. Persistence, or boldness in prayer overcomes our insensitivity, not God's. Practicing persistence does more to change our hearts and minds than his, and it helps us understand and express the intensity of our needs. Persistence in prayer allows us to recognize God's work. Persistent prayer also gets us rooted in seeking what God wants for us daily. We try our best to be good. As parents, even though we make mistakes, we try to treat our children well. How much better would our perfect heavenly Father treat his children? The most important gift he could ever give us is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). The Lord Jesus promised to pour out this gift on the believers after his death, resurrection, and return to heaven (John 15:26). Having received the Spirit let us persist in our prayers.

Prayer: Abba Father, teach me to be persistent and bold in prayer. Amen.

## Friday October 13

Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Joel  
1:13-15; 2:1-2

Psalm  
9:2-3,6,8-9,16

Luke  
11:15-26

Experience God's forgiveness.

Today's First reading teaches us about the repercussions of sinning against God. Prophet Joel prophesies about a time where locusts will invade the land as a result of sinning against God. This locust invasion is said to destroy the crops and result in a famine. Joel calls out to the people to mourn and repent; he asks the priests to mourn for the sins of the people. He asks them to declare a holy fast before this day of doom comes and he implores them to call out to the elders of the land to come to the house of the Lord so they may repent and mourn for their sins. This reading urges us to not offend God. He is a loving God, but he is also a God of justice. As it is described in the Responsorial Psalm, he rules with righteousness and judges the people with equity. The Lord ensures that the just ones will not suffer injustice and shields them with his power and grace. The good news is that God forgives us when we repent. Let us go to him, confess our sins and experience his mercy and forgiveness.

Prayer: Abba Father, cleanse our hearts, as we confess our sins and repent.  
Amen.

## Saturday October 14

Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Joel  
4:12-21

Psalm  
97:1-2,5-6,11-12

Luke  
11:27-28

We have an ally who is the Lord of hosts.

The prophet Joel presents us with a God who "roars" and "raises his voice," a God who makes "the heavens and the earth quake" (Joel 4:16). The question is; who is God roaring at? He is roaring at our spiritual enemies – the devil, the sin and the world: our own fallen desires and temptations. God is much more powerful than all of them. Just a simple roar and they vanish, leaving us safe in his care. The passage tells us that at the same time that he roars at our enemies, God makes himself a refuge for us. So rather than focusing on the terrifying roar let us focus on the peaceful refuge. He is our hiding place, our fortress. Isn't it a comfort to know that we have such an ally as the Lord of Hosts? Try to recall some of the times the Lord has come through for us in a powerful way. Let these examples become a foundation for our thinking today: I know that I can trust in the Lord! I believe that his 'channels' are flowing through me right now – life, power, peace, and refreshment (Joel 4:18)

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for your deep, abiding and merciful love.  
Amen.

## Sunday October 15

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah  
25:6-10

Psalm  
23:1-6

Philippians  
4:12-14,19-20

Matthew  
22:1-14

Where are your garments of good deeds?

The readings for today speak about the Marriage banquet to which we are invited. In the Gospel proclamation, though many were invited, they missed the opportunity since they had other things to do. This is a reflection of how we may be living our lives. The Marriage celebration is the epitome of the normal life in a community and it is also the highlight in spiritual life.

The book of Revelation tells of the future Marriage of the Lamb to his bride the church and we are looking forward to that glorious event. In these times, every day at Mass we are invited to such an experience in our union with Christ Jesus. We may or may not be using this opportunity and living life concerned with other things we feel are more important.

In the Gospel proclamation, one of the invitees was found to be enjoying the feast without a wedding garment. The garment is symbolic of the righteous deeds that should accompany our faith.

Almsgiving, prayer, fasting and works of mercy as outlined in the Gospel of St. Matthew are the gifts we can bring to the Wedding feast of our Lord Jesus. We need to be spiritually ready to participate at the heavenly banquet.

This tells us that in our spiritual journey we should not have this 'me and my God syndrome' but rather while worshipping and loving God our attention must spread to the less fortunate and those in need.

Real spirituality is falling in love with God and not falling asleep but waking up to the reality of suffering in this world. Through prayer God takes away the heart of stone that we are born with and gives us a heart of flesh to reach out to the less fortunate.

I met certain friends and their conversation was about investing in this company and that company and looking for promising opportunities. One friend mentioned that he always has to get his cost back wherever he puts his money.

Another friend who was a Christian, told him: "my brother, I invest in places where they cannot return anything to me and where the left hand does not know what the right hand has done. And then God looks after my needs at the right time. As I invest in heaven, he provides for my needs and takes care of me. He takes care of my needs and not my greed".

Saint Paul tells us that our God will supply every need of ours according to his riches in glory. The author and maker of the universe is able to provide for us in times of suffering. Let us believe that we can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens us.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for the grace to reach out to those in need.  
Amen.

## Monday October 16

Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
1:1-7

Psalm  
98:1-4

Luke  
11:29-32

God's ultimate plan for us.

Consider how blessed and privileged we are, that, through Jesus we receive grace and heavenly peace. Do we think about what God's ultimate plan may be for us? Most of the time, we are told by our parents, teachers and the community about what our ultimate plans should be in life. We go through life struggling to identify our purpose. And we lose our Lord in the search to define our life purpose. In the first reading, St Paul shows how he was called by God to preach the Good News and reveal Jesus Christ to the world so that many will have eternal life. God's ultimate plan for us is to have an intimate relationship with him. What a blessing it is to know that we too, like St Paul can be called to preach the Good News to the world. It is a privilege and a calling to us. The Psalmist reminds us, "if today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Therefore let us be open and willing to accept the truth of God's Word and allow God to bless us with his presence and healing in all the areas of our lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, reveal your plan for my life.  
Amen.

## Tuesday October 17

Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr

Romans  
1:16-25

Psalm  
19:2-5

Luke  
11:37-41

Are we genuine in our faith?

The Gospel proclamation challenges us to reflect on our lives and the way we prioritise our actions. It highlights the danger of placing too much emphasis on outward appearances and rituals while neglecting the truth of our hearts. It is easy to fall into the trap of going through the motions and following external rituals without allowing our hearts to be transformed. God looks beyond our external actions and examines the state of our hearts. It prompts us to ask ourselves if our faith is merely surface-level or if it has truly penetrated our inner being. One reflection point is the question of authenticity. Are we genuine in our faith and in our pursuit of righteousness? Or do we externally display our faith while internally straying away from the Lord? This passage reminds us to be aware of God's presence in our lives. When we surrender the truth of our hearts and accept our failures, God will pour out his mercy and kindness upon us. He will empower us with his love to be authentic disciples.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we not pretend to have virtues or qualities that we do not have. Amen.

## Wednesday October 18

Feast of Saint Luke, evangelist

2 Timothy  
4:10-17

Psalm  
145:10-13,17-18

Luke  
10:1-9

Am I carrying out my mission?

In today's Gospel proclamation Jesus is reminding us of our mission. We are called to spread the good news to a world that does not accept Jesus, to a society that has not encountered the love of the Father, to our own families who may not have a personal journey with the Lord. We have been chosen and appointed to be a light, to host the presence of the Lord, to take upon rejection, to be humble, to show love and mercy so that the world, the society and our families will be touched and changed according to the way we live. The Lord says that the road ahead will not be easy. Even the disciples faced many challenges and obstacles along the way but they held onto the mission to which they were called. In the first reading, we see how St. Paul was rejected and abandoned by his companions but that did not stop him from preaching the Gospel, he continued his mission solely relying on the power and the strength of the Lord. As I look at my life, can I say that I am fulfilling the mission to which I have been called?

Prayer: Abba Father, give us love, peace and humility so that we have the strength and courage to gather the harvest for you. Amen.

## Thursday October 19

Memorial of Saint John de Brébeuf and Companions, Martyrs

Romans  
3:21-30

Psalm  
130:1-6

Luke  
11:47-54

Witnesses to Christ.

Jesus condemns the Pharisees for denying the people the ways of God. As believers of Christ we have a mission to bear witness to the Good News. Are we doing that? Does our life reflect Jesus? Most often we see Christians who sing of the joy of the Lord but live a life of misery like God did not exist. Or even worse live a downtrodden life burdened by many worries, plagued with anxiety and doubt, living with bitterness and resentment. But that is not how the Lord wants us to live. In John 10:10 the Lord says that he came so that we can have life in its fullness. He is our Savior, so why do we carry our burdens instead of surrendering them to him? When we do that we are filled with the fruits of the Spirit and become witnesses to Christ. Others will want to experience the peace, love and joy that we have, which can only be obtained by having a relationship with the Lord. Unlike the Pharisees we can be true witnesses by living a life of faith. Are we ready to live a life of faith and be witnesses to Christ?

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to journey deeper with you so that I may bear witness to you. Amen.

## Friday October 20

Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
4:1-8

Psalm  
32:1-2,5,11

Luke  
12:1-7

Let us be true to ourselves.

Today's Gospel proclamation says that whatever we have said in the darkness will be heard in the light. Sometimes we fear the truth being revealed. Specially when we are guilty of some wrongdoing that can cause negative consequences for us. We may end up fabricating stories to avoid or reduce the risk of facing judgment from those who love us or those who have the power to punish us. When Judas Iscariot realized the magnitude of the sin he committed when he betrayed the Lord Jesus, it was his conscience that killed him in the field of blood. Today in the Gospel proclamation we are reminded that we should be living our lives with a great deal of integrity. Traps of this world such as money, pleasure and comfort can make us forget the value of integrity. The Lord Jesus is inviting us to be cautious when we are not true to ourselves. And he confirms that no guilty soul can remain hidden from being exposed. Whatever we have done in secret will be laid out in the open, so let us do that today, by surrendering the truth of our hearts.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us strength to live with integrity, love and care towards each other. Amen.

## Saturday October 21

Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
4:13,16-18

Psalm  
105:6-9,42-43

Luke  
12:8-12

Inner transformation.

In today's first reading St. Paul uses the example of Abraham to show that we are justified by faith alone which is a gift from God. St. Paul wrote these words to the Jews of his day who believed that circumcision along with faith was required to be right with God. But, God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15 was spoken before the rite of circumcision was revealed in Genesis 17. By faith alone Abraham received the promise of a son born to Sarah in their old age (Genesis 21); that is why God counted Abraham's faith as righteousness. We too will be declared righteous, if we believe in Jesus by accepting him as our Lord and Saviour. Previously, my faith in God was limited to religious rites. But when I came into this journey through a personal crisis, my inner transformation impacted even my family. Having faith in Christ is not just trusting him when things go well. The Gospel proclamation assures us that the seal of faith which is the promised Holy Spirit will defend us in our moments of trial and persecution too.

Prayer: Abba Father, may you be glorified through my inner responses of faith. Amen.

## Sunday October 22

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah  
45:1,4-6

Psalm  
96:1,3-5,7-10

1 Thessalonians  
1:1-5

Matthew  
22:15-21

Do I reflect the image of God?

It is commonly known that the Pharisees despised Jesus and over and again in the Gospels we see many instances where they try to cause trouble for Jesus.

Today's Gospel proclamation gives a detailed recount of such an intense effort from the Pharisees' to entrap the Lord. The Pharisees could not have chosen a better time, with the presence of the Herodians, the ones who held the political powers in Israel at that time, to ask the crafty question 'Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?'

In whatever way Jesus chose to answer this question, he would have been at fault, either with the Pharisees or with the Herodians. Yet our Lord sees right through the carefully crafted plan of the Pharisees and makes it an opportunity to drive an important message home: 'repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.'

In saying so, Jesus did not deny the civil duty of the time but emphasised that there is more to life than what the Pharisees were focusing on. Our highest priority should be to serve God and give him what is due: 'give to God what belongs to God.'

We, who are made in God's own image, therefore, belong to God fully and completely but are we living in this beautiful awareness? When the Pharisees looked at the coin, they had no trouble in recognizing Caesar's image and did not object to what Jesus had to say to them.

In the same way, when someone looks at us, can they see the face of God through our countenance? Can I see God's face shining through me when I look into the mirror every morning? Do my thoughts, words and actions reflect the image of God? Are we ready to give ourselves in service to God because we know that we belong to him?

These are challenging questions that would test us beyond our imagination, but we are reminded in today's second reading of our inheritance, that came to us 'not merely in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.'

As sons and daughters of God, let us hold fast to our inheritance and live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today, we may be confined to a limited understanding of our worth and value, defined by our successes and failures and shaped by the words of the world around us, but the word of God is spoken anew over us, reaffirming our identity as God's children, chosen and set apart, so that we may stand firm and offer our lives in service to the one whom we belong.

Prayer: Abba Father, we stand before you, ready and willing to be sent forth as a light unto the world. Amen.

## Monday October 23

Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
4:20-25

Luke  
1:69-75

Luke  
12:13-21

Put your trust in our unfailing God.

Abraham's unwavering faith in God despite all odds underpins today's message of living in reliance on God, trusting his word and guiding hands so that we may not perish asset rich but spiritually poor. As a parent of a child with a life-limiting situation, it was my mission to seek to have faith like Abraham so that my child will be healed. I grappled with the impossibility of holding on with conviction that I will have my desired miracle. Several years later I realise God has instilled in my spirit not unshakable conviction of a desired outcome, but an absolute trust in him that he can take us through whatever life throws at us. A trust in God "through whom all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. He is before all things and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:15-17). In that trust follows fearlessness and peace in Jesus just as he promised. Chasing a materialistic life without God possibly is a life of death - death of peace of mind.

Prayer: Abba Father, bless me with the gift of faith so I may trust you.  
Amen.

## Tuesday October 24

Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
5:12,15,17-21

Psalm  
40:7-10,17

Luke  
12:35-38

Receive the grace won by Christ.

St. Paul says that the Son of God became man to redeem the world. Jesus by his suffering, death and resurrection gained for us, what we had lost in sin. He changed the course of sinful humanity from condemnation and death to justification and life. He made us righteous in the sight of God so that we are able to participate in eternal life. This grace is a free gift. We have not earned it, we need to accept it by faith. Let us with grateful hearts contemplate how Jesus changed the course of humanity. In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus explains how we should live, so as not to lose eternal life. The parable talks about a servant waiting for the master. A servant waiting for his master would be alert, listening to every sound, with a light burning and with keys in hand. In the same way let us be ready, striving for more intimacy with the Lord and awakening of the Spirit by holding on to the 'Word'. We know that we cannot by our own strength earn the grace that Jesus won for us, because it is a free gift of mercy.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with the Holy Spirit, so that we will be able to live the life Jesus won for us. Amen.



## Wednesday October 25

Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
6:12-18

Psalm  
124:1-8

Luke  
12:39-48

Let us give what we have already received.

We live in a transactional world where we purchase, have agreements or exchange something in return. We sometimes wonder what the minimum effort is to receive the maximum benefit. In our human weakness we may apply these principles to the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is beyond this logic. Our inheritance to the kingdom is a gift. Jesus initially asked his disciples to follow, and then later called them to 'be' and make disciples. This is our journey, to first encounter and then to make disciples of others. Today in the Gospel proclamation, Jesus is reminding us to not fall into the trap of thinking that we are better or that we know better because we are disciples/Christians. We are called to grow deeper in our relationship with God and others. The more we grow in our relationship with him the more we shine his light and attract those in the fringes to the love of Christ. The question today is "am I happy just being a follower near heaven's gate or do I become a citizen, thus taking the responsibility of discipleship"?

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be courageous in sharing your Word.  
Amen.

## Thursday October 26

Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
6:19-23

Psalm  
1:1-4,6

Luke  
12:49-53

In his hands we lay ours in hope for greater faith.

Today's Gospel proclamation speaks of faith. In the first reading the apostle Paul speaks of hope. Faith and hope go hand in hand, bearing a great significance in the faith journey of a follower of Christ. According to Isaiah 41:10, the Lord holds us by his righteous right hand. Faith and hope are an intertwining of the hand of God and our sinful, wretched, feeble hand. The only way that we can be strong to not pull away from the firm hand of God is to be grounded in faith, through which we will receive the necessary hope to hold on to his hand until his promises are fulfilled. The mustard seed is probably the tiniest seed and yet it grows even up to 30 feet, giving shelter to many creatures. Faith is a gift from God and we are called to nurture and grow this faith to such a giant proportion not just for our benefit but also to radiate hope for others through our faith. We are to primarily use this faith received by grace to walk in holiness and help others walk in holiness too so that one day we will all enjoy eternity.

Prayer: Abba Father, strengthen my faith to the extent that I will be filled with hope and joy to carry out your will. Amen.

## Friday October 27

Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
7:18-25

Psalm 119:  
66,68,76-77,93-94

Luke  
12:54-59

Divine cleansing.

What makes an action good or evil? It is the intention behind it. Action is the fruit while intention is the root. We are called to bear good fruits. In today's first reading, St. Paul reminds us that bearing fruit as Jesus' disciples is not easy. Sin, which is the root cause of evil, limits growth and hinders our fruit bearing capacity. Sin is like a stubborn stain on the fabric of our lives. One of the ways to overcome sin is by using the 'free laundry service' that our Mother Church offers to us. It is known as "the Sacrament of reconciliation". This is where the divine cleansing happens. Jesus washes us with his precious blood and makes us spotless. What about the times while trying hard to get rid of an addiction we end up falling deeper into it? The times we decided to do good but ended up doing just the opposite? We become disheartened. Our loving Lord on his way to Calvary, fell many times. He shows us that it is in rising up that we imitate him. When we are disheartened, let us make use of the 'free laundry service'.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for being merciful towards me.  
Amen.

## Saturday October 28

Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Ephesians  
2:19-22

Psalm  
19:2-5

Luke  
6:12-16

From the cross to the crown.

The Gospel proclamation describes how Jesus chose his apostles. After much prayer and preparation, Jesus chose Judas his betrayer as well as Peter who denied him but later became the leader of the Church. According to the plan of salvation, everyone had a role to play. Our loving Saviour and Redeemer had to deal with people who loved him ardently and also deal with people like Judas. Both categories were important, thus the Lord experienced joy and pain in his life. We too experience happiness as well as sorrow. Joys in life keep us lifted up but what about sorrows? Let us remember the famous saying: "No pain, no gain". The Lord's suffering paved the way to salvation. From the cross to the crown, from death to resurrection, from shame to glory, the Lord endured it all. May our suffering, rejection or pain remind us that they are sometimes necessary for our growth in character. Going through rough times with endurance can build our lives as a tree that goes through pruning bears much fruit in future.

Prayer: Abba Father, strengthen us when we go through hardships in life,  
as everything will lead us to glorify you in the end. Amen.

## Sunday October 29

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
22:20-26

Psalm  
18:2-4,47,51

1 Thessalonians  
1:5-10

Matthew  
22:34-40

A call to live with compassion.

The word of the Lord seems to express sympathy for the sojourner and those who are less fortunate. The love of the Lord for such people is such that in the Book of Exodus he says that he will hear their cry and the wrath he will pour out on those who take advantage of them will be deadly.

When we commit an injustice, we assume that it is swept under the carpet and will soon be forgotten but the reality is that we will have to face the consequences.

Time and life are in God's hands and the repercussions may not come immediately. We assume it is all over and forgotten. Sometimes people come with prayer requests for failing businesses and other opportunities and it is only when we ask pardon for sins committed that the blocks are cleared up.

The importance of loving our neighbours as much as ourselves is stressed in today's readings. Our Lord Jesus declares the greatest commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God and you shall love your neighbour." Our Lord Jesus was summarising the 10 commandments and the various laws which were over 365 and more than the days in a year.

People were so caught up in observing the various laws that basic precepts of love and tolerance were forgotten and their spirituality was tending towards the selfish.

It is easy to look after our own needs and cares. This is clear when petitions are made for prayers. It is often about our children, finances, jobs, future, sicknesses and about ourselves. We get so sucked into looking after our needs and fail to recognise that many around us are in worse situations.

Our Lord beautifully and tactfully put them all together in simplicity and yet as a challenge. Often, we are tempted to love God and pray to him but we fail to look around and be his hands, feet, voice and have his heart.

God is calling us to shift from selfish living to selfless living. Gazing on the face of God should open our hearts to the suffering of people around us. We need to be sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters. We cannot turn away from suffering and go about our way.

We are called to carry God's love and mercy to a broken world. In that process we are also expected to care for our brothers and sisters according to our capabilities.

Let us seek to have the mind of Christ so that we may have spiritual vision to see Christ in those who are poor and suffering. Let us minister to them as Jesus wants us to.

Prayer: Abba Father, let me live with the heart of Jesus burning within me.  
Amen.

## Monday October 30

Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
8:12-17

Psalm  
68:2,4,6-7,20-21

Luke  
13:10-17

Healing a crippled world.

The Gospel proclamation speaks of a woman crippled for eighteen years, made straight by the Lord. If we had seen it, there would have been a “wow” on our lips. Not so the synagogue official. He was more concerned about observance of the law. The Lord manifests works of compassion and love: a response from the heart. What the Lord reveals is a celebration of a deeper meaning. A release from the effects of the fallen world we find ourselves in. A world that lives and tries, without success, to live according to the flesh in seeking happiness. We are however invited to put to death the deeds of the body, so that we might live in freedom; not as slaves to fear and uncertainty. For this the Lord invites us to share life in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives birth to a relationship as adopted sons and daughters; taken into the family of God, which is our destiny. This enables and encourages works of compassion like the Lord did. But be ready to face misunderstanding, rejection and suffering. Is that not why we are here?

Prayer: Abba Father, may I as a heir, have love to work in your estate in bringing healing to this crippled world. Amen.

## Tuesday October 31

Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

Romans  
8:18-25

Psalm  
126:1-6

Luke  
13:18-21

Outrageous grace of God.

Today's readings express our desire to be free from whatever is tying us up, whatever is keeping us in bondage. St Paul tells us that we groan inwardly as we wait to be set free. The responsorial psalm recalls a time when the Lord freed the people from bondage: “It seemed like a dream”, the psalmist writes, “then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs”. A few verses later the psalmist cries out once again, “Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage as streams in dry land”. This serves to remind us that the journey into freedom of the children of God is a life-long journey. The bigger the obstacle the more strength we need to climb it. The more serious the issue, an even greater faith would be required to overcome it. The more serious the sin the more faith we need to be forgiven. We are reminded in the Gospel proclamation that we need to be patient with ourselves and have faith that, like a mustard seed that grows into a tree, our journey into freedom will progress over time nourished by the outrageous grace of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, deepen my faith in your amazing grace.  
Amen.

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# St. John Henry Newman

St. John Henry Newman was born on February 21, 1801, in London. He was the eldest of six children, with two brothers and three sisters. His father, John Newman, was a banker, and his mother, Jemmia, was from the French Huguenot ancestry.

Newman experienced a conversion of heart at the age of 15. He was an Anglican, but later converted to the Catholic faith at the age of 44. Before his conversion, he was an English theologian and a leader of the Oxford Movement. By 1832, a conflict with a colleague led to his resignation as a tutor at Oxford. In 1845, Newman was accepted into the Roman Catholic Church. His conversion was difficult for many who knew him. Many of Newman's friends and family deserted him, and the members of the Oxford Movement became divided.

In February 1846, Newman traveled to Rome where he was ordained a priest in the Catholic Church and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1854, at the request of the bishops of Ireland, Newman traveled to Dublin and became rector of the newly-established Catholic University of Ireland.

By the 1860s, Newman started to write autobiographical works and letters to explain and justify his theological convictions and life to others. He also engaged in a war of written words with opponents. His ideas were summarized in the line, "*Here are but two alternatives, the way to Rome, and the way to Atheism*". By 1870, Newman was a well respected theologian in the Church.

Newman's health began to fail in 1886, and he returned to Birmingham where he spent the last years of his life. He celebrated his final Mass on Christmas Day in 1889. On August 11, 1890, he died of pneumonia.

Pope Francis canonized St. John Henry Newman on October 13, 2019. His feast day is on October 09.

**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.