



PRAYER FOR LIVING

**DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR
LITURGICAL YEAR B~MAY**

**SR. SANDRA SEOW
VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES**



verbum dei

Prayer for Living Daily Reflections for Liturgical Year B

Copyright © 2021 Sr. Sandra Seow
All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may
not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever
without the express written permission of the author.

Saturday, 1st May, 4th week of Easter, St. Joseph the Worker
Genesis 1:26-2:3, Matthew 13:54-58

Jesus came to his home town and taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? His sisters, too, are they not all here with us? So where did the man get it all?' And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is despised only in his own country and in his own house,' and he did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Jesus, the son of the carpenter

The people in Nazareth heard Jesus as He spoke and taught in the synagogue and they were amazed because they recognised Him as the “*carpenter's son*”. Because of this, they rejected Jesus. Today, like the people of Nazareth, we often think that God is present only in the extraordinary spectacles and wonders. Let us look with eyes of faith and see that God continues to come to us and touch our lives through the day-to-day events as well as ordinary people we encounter.

Today, as we celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, let us also remember that Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world through a poor and simple family, and was raised as a son of a carpenter in a village. Like Joseph, His earthly father, Jesus too worked in the trade of carpentry. Thus, we remember and pray for all workers, especially those labourers and domestic workers who are unjustly treated and are underpaid. Let us also pray for employers to be just and kind to those under their charge. A blessed Labour day to all!

Question for reflection:

How can I see and recognise the presence of God in each person whom I encounter and in each circumstance that I live?

Sunday, 2nd May, 5th Sunday of Easter.

Acts 9:26-31, 1 John 3:18-24, John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and

every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are clean already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a branch -- and withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire and are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for whatever you please and you will get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit and be my disciples.”

To be in a relationship with Jesus the Vine

“I am the vine, you are the branches”: Let us contemplate on this image of Jesus as the vine and we as the branches, which speaks of intimacy, communion and relationship. As Christians, we are called to be branches attached to Jesus the vine. There, we draw nourishment, grow and bear fruit of His loving presence to others.

Sadly, these words of Jesus seem to be pointing to the demand to be productive branches that would be rewarded and the warning not to be useless branches because these would be cut and thrown away. Jesus is not demanding us to be productive by living an active life of doing things for Him. His main concern is that we choose to be in a constant and intimate relationship with Him. Bearing fruit is a consequence of the depth of communion we have with the Vine. Thus, Jesus is not looking for quantity but the quality of our inner life. In union with Him, we then truly become an extension of His presence of love to others.

Question for reflection:

How is the state of my inner life with Jesus?

Monday, 3rd May, SS. Philip and James, Apostles.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8, John 14:6-14

Jesus said to Thomas: ‘I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.’ Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.’

Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works. In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.'

To see Jesus is to see God the Father

In today's gospel, Philip told Jesus, "*Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied*". This request revealed his longing to encounter God face-to-face so that he could have complete joy and peace here and now. What about us? What are we searching for in order to be satisfied? May we come to realise that no created things in this world can truly satisfy us. Like St. Teresa of Avila, we too say with conviction: "*Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices.*"

How can we see God in our daily lives? Jesus, in the gospel, told Philip: "*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*", and this gives us the clue to the question. Jesus is the human face of God the Father, and thus, to see Jesus is to see God. The invitation is to constantly enter into an intimate and loving relationship with Jesus by contemplating His life in the gospel, by recognising His love in the Eucharist, by seeing Him in the face of those around us, especially in the poor and the weak. Seeing Jesus with eyes of faith in the here and now is a foretaste of seeing God face-to-face in the life to come.

Question for reflection:

What is the invitation of Jesus for me today?

Tuesday, 4th May, 5th week of Easter.

Acts 14:19-28, John 14:27-31

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do

not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me say: I am going away and shall return. If you loved me you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe. I shall not talk to you much longer, because the prince of this world is on his way. He has no power over me, but the world must recognise that I love the Father and that I act just as the Father commanded.'

The gift of peace

"Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you...": Peace is Jesus' gift to each one of us. The peace of Jesus does not refer to the absence of external trouble or conflict, rather it is the peace that comes from living a life in union with Him that gives us the inner strength and courage to live through the challenges of loss, failure, problem.

The presence of the Risen Jesus is the source of our peace. His presence continues today, no longer in physical human form, but in and through the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus said in the passage: *"I am going away and shall return"*. Indeed, He is present to each one of us in the Holy Spirit who never fails to put into our heart the gift of His peace. In moments when we feel that our hearts are troubled or afraid, let us turn to the Spirit of Jesus who abides in us, and allow Him to fill our hearts with the gift of His peace. May we keep these words of Jesus in our hearts today: *"Peace I leave you, my own peace I give you"*.

Question for reflection:

Am I ready to receive the gift of peace that Jesus wants to offer me today?

Wednesday, 5th May, 5th week of Easter.

Acts 15:1-6, John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are clean already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with

me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a branch -- and withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire and are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for whatever you please and you will get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit and be my disciples.”

The call to remain in Jesus our Vine

The same life of God runs through us in the same way nourishment runs through the branches of the vine. This is the depth of God’s love for each one of us! All we need to do is to remain in Jesus the Vine and daily seek to grow in a deeper relationship with Him.

Our deep union with Jesus leads us to become His channels of life and love in the world- to our family members, friends, fellow parishioners/ community members, even to strangers and people whom we struggle to get along with. Today, Jesus invites us to stay, to abide, to remain in Him so that God’s life can flow in us and through us to others. In this way, we will truly bear much fruit and live our vocation as His disciples.

Question for reflection:

Do I abide in Jesus or am I disconnected from Him?

Thursday, 6th May, 5th week of Easter.

Acts 15: 7-21, John 15:9-11

Jesus said to his disciples: “I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete.”

By living out the commandment of love, we remain in Jesus

“Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love...”: We remain in Jesus’ love when we keep the greatest commandment of love. In John 13:34, Jesus said, *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”* By putting this commandment into practice, we will experience authentic joy in life.

To be a true Christian is not simply fulfilling obligations and completing rituals, but it is to receive love and to give love. Love is the foundation of our Christian faith. Thus, Jesus reminds us to be connected to Him, the true Vine. By being in communion with Jesus, we experience ourselves unconditionally loved by Him. From there, we share His love with those around us. Today, let us put into practice this commandment of love so that we can have lasting joy in our hearts.

Question for reflection:

How can I choose to concretely give love to those around me today?

Friday, 7th April, 5th week of Easter.

Acts 15:22-31, John 15:12-17

Jesus said to his disciples: 'This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. My command to you is to love one another.'

By the way I love, I am Jesus' friend

Today, we are invited to intently listen to Jesus as He personally says these words to us: "*You are my friends*". He befriends us despite our failings, our character flaws, our mistakes, etc. He expresses His love for us, His friends, by laying down His life for us and by making known to us the loving and merciful heart of God His Father. Do we value His friendship?

To truly call Jesus our friend entails that we need to do our part by loving the concrete people we meet each day, even the ones whom we do not like. We love them by choosing to bless them with kind words, by showing patience and compassion, by doing good to them, by praying for them, etc. It is not simply to verbally say that "*Jesus is my best friend*"

but we are called to befriend Him by living His commandment of love. May we today remain in His friendship!

Question for reflection:

How can I behave as a friend to Jesus?

Saturday, 8th April, 5th week of Easter.

Acts 16:1-10, John 15:18-21

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If the world hates you, you must realise that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you do not belong to the world, because my choice of you has drawn you out of the world, that is why the world hates you. Remember the words I said to you: A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too; if they kept my word, they will keep yours as well. But it will be on my account that they will do all this to you, because they do not know the one who sent me.'

We belong to Jesus

"...because you do not belong to the world, because my choice of you has drawn you out of the world, that is why the world hates you.": We do not belong to the world, but Jesus. Out of love, He has called us to be His disciples, to be Christians. Out of love, we have responded to His call. Therefore, the question we need to constantly ask is, "*What does Jesus want from me?*", and not "*What does the world want from me?*"

Jesus always invites us to live out the gospel values of love and truth in our daily life and to become witnesses for Him to those around us. Often it is not easy to go against the current culture that promotes self-interest, apathy and competitive spirit. It is tempting to keep quiet and go along with the flow. We need to remember that though we are in this world, we belong to Jesus and so, we are not from this world. Thus, we ask Jesus, our Master, for the gift of courage to bear witness to Him.

Question for reflection:

How can I fearlessly bear witness for the Risen Jesus today?

Sunday, 9th May, 6th Sunday of Easter.

Acts 10:25-26,34-35, 44-48, 1 John 4:7-10, John 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. My command to you is to love one another.'

All we need is to be loved and to love

"I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love": Jesus loves us, no matter if we feel that we are worthy or not, no matter if we respond to Him or not. Jesus' love is unconditional and with no strings attached and calls us today to remain in His love. It is not easy to understand and experience true unconditional love. Often, we have grown up with parents loving us always with a "but", *"Daddy and mummy to love you but you have to eat your vegetables"*, *"I love you, but you need to get full marks for your test"*. Thus, we struggle to believe that God loves us, forgives us, accepts us with all our weaknesses, etc. He is with us in our suffering and pain.

Today, Jesus draws us into His love that does not condemn but loves us completely, unconditionally and eternally. From this experience of being loved, we are sent out with the mission of love, especially caring for those who have been wounded by rejection and betrayal as well as those who feel unlovable. Jesus never stops loving us, no matter what. Nor should we.

Questions for reflection:

Do I struggle to believe and accept that I am unconditionally loved by God? How can I give my love to others with no strings attached?

Monday, 10th May, 6th week of Easter.

Acts 16: 11-15, John 15:26-16:4

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning. I have told you all this so that you may not fall away. They will expel you from the synagogues, and indeed the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is doing a holy service to God. They will do these things because they have never known either the Father or me. But I have told you all this, so that when the time for it comes you may remember that I told you.'

The Spirit comes to strengthen our faith in hardships

In today's gospel, Jesus was concerned that His disciples' faith would be shaken due to persecutions and hardships. What about us today? We too might experience difficulties in life that make us question God and His love for us or even make us want to simply walk away from our faith. In the same way that Jesus promised the gift of His Spirit to His disciples, He too promises us the same gift of the Holy Spirit who is in us to empower us, strengthen us and comfort us. We are never alone in our struggles and sufferings.

We are witnesses of Christ's living presence in us and with us. Thus, we are called to be channels of the Holy Spirit to others who are in afflictions and whose faith in God is shaken by bringing His comfort, peace and strength to them. With the Spirit in us, we can strengthen the faith of others. Today, may we continue to bear witness to the Risen Jesus, even in the difficult moments in life.

Question for reflection:

How willing am I to be the channel of the Holy Spirit to others, especially those who are suffering from loneliness, sickness, family crisis?

Tuesday, 11th May, 6th week of Easter.

Acts 16: 22-34, John 16:5-11

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Now I am going to the one who sent me. Not one of you asks, 'Where are you going?' Yet you are sad at heart because I have told you this. Still, I am telling you the truth: it is for your

own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will show the world how wrong it was, about sin, and about who was in the right, and about judgement: about sin: in that they refuse to believe in me; about who was in the right: in that I am going to the Father and you will see me no more; about judgement: in that the prince of this world is already condemned.'

Loss and gain, sadness and happiness

In today's gospel, the disciples were sad because they somehow sensed that they would soon lose Jesus, their Master and Friend. However, Jesus told them that something new would come from this loss. He needed to go away so that He could send the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to them. It would be in and through the Holy Spirit that Jesus would carry on being present with them and in them. In fact, in and through the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to be with us today.

In life, we, like the disciples, have to go through experiences of loss, for example, loss of health, loss of a loved one, loss of a relationship, etc. We grieve, afraid to let go and become sad at heart. As we stay with Jesus in prayer today, let us also be encouraged by His promise that losses are not the end, but means of encountering Him in new and life-giving ways. Let us put our trust in Him.

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus' message for me today?

Wednesday, 12th May, 6th week of Easter.

Acts 17: 15, 22-18:1, John 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you to bear now. However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking of his own accord, but will say only what he has been told; and he will reveal to you the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine.'

The Spirit of truth leads us the way to know and love Jesus

We need the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth, in our life. He is the one who always leads us to know and love the complete truth, who is the person of Jesus. Jesus who said, "*I am the Truth*" (John 14:6), reveals the true heart of God to humanity and His eternal love for all of us. He is the incarnated love of God the Father. It is through Jesus that we come to know who God is, i.e., God is love.

The Spirit of truth guides us to know Jesus, not just intellectually, but to know Him with our hearts and enter into a deeper relationship with Him. Today, let us call on the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and guide us towards Jesus. Come, Holy Spirit!

Question for reflection:

Am I aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life?

Thursday, 13th May, Ascension of the Lord.

Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 4:1-13, Mark 16:15-20

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven and said to them, 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.' And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven; there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

Go out and live the mission

As we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, let us ask Jesus in this time of prayer, "*Lord, what do you want from me?*" In the second reading, St. Paul wrote to the community of Ephesians and all of us today: "*I...implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together*".

Jesus calls us to be involved in the vocation of love by fulfilling the words that St. Paul stated. He needs us today to convey hope to those who are living in sadness, to build unity in broken relationships, to bring justice to situations of prejudices and discrimination. In this mission, we are not alone because Jesus continues to work with us. The gospel expresses this important point when St. Mark wrote that although Jesus was taken up into heaven, He continued to work with the disciples as they went about doing the mission. Today, He too works with us as we share in His mission.

Question for reflection:

How can I get more involved in the mission that Jesus has entrusted to me?

**Friday, 14th May, 6th week of Easter, St. Matthias, Apostle.
Acts 1:15-17, 20-26, John 15:9-17**

One day Peter stood up to speak to the brothers -- there were about a hundred and twenty people in the congregation, 'Brothers,' he said, 'the passage of scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David, foretells the fate of Judas, who acted as guide to the men who arrested Jesus- after being one of our number and sharing our ministry. Now in the Book of Psalms it says: Reduce his encampment to ruin and leave his tent unoccupied. And again: Let someone else take over his office. Out of the men who have been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was living with us, from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from us, one must be appointed to serve with us as a witness to his resurrection.' Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, 'Lord, you can read everyone's heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place.' They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the twelve apostles.

Making decisions with God

As we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthias today, we read in the Acts of the Apostles the account of how the disciples decided on which two

candidates, Joseph and Matthias, was the one to take the place of Judas. Firstly, they used their human judgment and nominate two among many. Then, they turned to God with trust and asked Him for guidance as they prayed: “...show us therefore which of these two you have chosen”. They cast lots to know what God wanted. It might seem as though the disciples were making the final decision based on chance. However, it was their way to include God in the decision-making. The main point here is to see their freedom to let go of being in control so as to seek what God wanted and aligned their will with His.

An inherent part of life is making decisions. Do we pray and include God in our decision-making? Do we let go of the need to be in control and allow God to have space in our lives to reveal His will? Like the disciples in today’s passage, may we always make prayer as the foundation of life and create a space where God can work for our good.

Question for reflection:

How can I include God more in decisions that I struggle to make?

Saturday, 15th May, 6th week of Easter.

Acts 18:23-28, John 16:23-28

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘In all truth I tell you, anything you ask from the Father he will grant in my name. Until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and so your joy will be complete. I have been telling you these things in veiled language. The hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in veiled language but tell you about the Father in plain words. When that day comes you will ask in my name; and I do not say that I shall pray to the Father for you, because the Father himself loves you for loving me, and believing that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world and now I am leaving the world to go to the Father.’

Placing my prayers into the loving care of God the Father

“*In all truth I tell you, anything you ask from the Father he will grant in my name*”. Jesus seems to be saying that whatever we ask in prayer, we will receive it. However, our life experiences tell us that we sometimes do not get what we ask for in prayer. We ask for a loved one to be healed but the person remains sick. We ask for a family problem

to be solved but nothing seems to improve. Yet, Jesus invites us to keep asking the Father because as He Himself says in the passage: “*the Father himself loves you for loving me*”. In His love for us, we trust that no prayer that we make is wasted. God answers our prayers, even if we do not receive the outcomes in the way we wanted.

The challenge for us is to bring our worries and concerns to God our Father without telling Him what to do but simply leaving them in His loving hands. May we let go of being in control and trust!

Question for reflection:

Knowing that God is my Father who loves me, how can I place my prayers in His hands with trust?

Sunday, 16th May, 7th Sunday of Easter.

Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26, 1 John 4:11-16 John 17: 11-19

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: ‘Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us. While I was with them, I kept those you had given me true to your name. I have watched over them and not one is lost except one who was destined to be lost, and this was to fulfill the scriptures. But now I am coming to you and I say these things in the world to share my joy with them to the full. I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world. I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil One. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake, I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth.’

Jesus prays for us

In the gospel of today, Jesus prayed for His disciples and for all of us who are His disciples in this present moment. Isn't it that we so often ask people to pray for us because we trust that their prayers will help us in our journey of life? Let us rejoice and stay in this reality that in the passage, Jesus prayed for us and continues to pray for us today! He prays for our faithfulness to God. Let us also not take for granted the value of praying for others which is a way to express our love for others.

In the gospel passage, Jesus prays to the Father not to withdraw us from the world because He knows that each of us has a purpose in this world, i.e. to reveal God's merciful love to the world. For this, we have been consecrated and empowered to be His presence of love. May we live each day with this intimate union with God and follow Jesus into mission and love.

Questions for reflection:

Have I ever thanked Jesus for His prayer and concern for me? How do I experience this being sent into the world for a mission?

Monday, 17th May, 7th week of Easter.

Acts 19:1-8, John 16:29-33

His disciples said to Jesus, 'Now you are speaking plainly and not using veiled language. Now we see that you know everything and need not wait for questions to be put into words; because of this we believe that you came from God.' Jesus answered them: 'Do you believe at last? Listen; the time will come -- indeed it has come already -- when you are going to be scattered, each going his own way and leaving me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me. In the world you will have hardship, but be courageous: I have conquered the world.'

I am not alone, because the Father is with me

Jesus, in the passage, knew that His disciples would leave Him alone and abandon Him at His greatest moment of suffering. Yet, He was also fully aware that though He would be physically alone, He would have the presence of God His Father with Him.

In life, we sometimes find ourselves alone. Yet, Jesus gives us His peace to live such moments by revealing to us that God the Father is with us. He remains faithful to us in good times and in bad times. His presence of love will be stronger than the loneliness and the problems that we face. Thus, we can be courageous because we draw our strength from Him.

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus telling me in this time of prayer?

Tuesday, 18th May, 7th week of Easter, St. John I.

Acts 20:17-27, John 17:1-11

After saying this, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you; so that, just as you have given him power over all humanity, he may give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him. And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. Now, Father, glorify me with that glory I had with you before ever the world existed. I have revealed your name to those whom you took from the world to give me. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now at last they have recognised that all you have given me comes from you for I have given them the teaching you gave to me, and they have indeed accepted it and know for certain that I came from you, and have believed that it was you who sent me. It is for them that I pray. I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All I have is yours and all you have is mine, and in them I am glorified. I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us.'

The essence of eternal life is love

"...he may give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him. And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent". We tend to associate eternal life with life after we die. However, Jesus in today's gospel speaks of eternal life as a present-day reality of knowing God. This "knowing" is not simply intellectual knowledge but is also the knowledge of the heart that comes from being in communion of love with God and Jesus Himself.

The essence of eternal life is to love God and to be one with Him. To be one with Him implies that we are one with others. We can never separate loving God from the need to reach out to others in love and be in communion with them. Today, let us have the desire to live eternal life here and now by being one and one with others.

Question for reflection:

How can I live eternal life today?

Wednesday, 19th May, 7th week of Easter.**Acts 20: 28-38, John 17:11-19**

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: ‘ Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us. While I was with them, I kept those you had given me true to your name. I have watched over them and not one is lost except one who was destined to be lost, and this was to fulfill the scriptures. But now I am coming to you and I say these things in the world to share my joy with them to the full. I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world. I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil One. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth.’

May we be one!

“so that they may be one like us”: This is Jesus’ prayer and desire for all of us. He wants us to be one, not divided; to build bridges, not walls.

Often, our self-interest and selfish indifference take the place of working for the common good and we end up looking at others as different from us. Thus, we harbour feelings of suspicion, contempt and fear. We need to understand that unity does not mean uniformity or having everyone in the family or the group to the same manner of thinking. Instead, it implies listening to each other, accepting differences of the other and respecting the other as a brother and sister. This is the step to build bridges with others. Today, let us stay with this prayer of Jesus and make it to be our prayer as well as the aim of our lives: “*Lord, may we be one!*”

Question for reflection:

How can I play my part in working for unity?

**Thursday, 20th May, 7th week of Easter, St. Bernardine of Siena.
Acts 22:30, 23:6-11, John 17:20-26**

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'I pray not only for these but also for those who through their teaching will come to believe in me. May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognise that it was you who sent me and that you have loved them as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see my glory which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Father, Upright One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them.'

The fruit of God's love in us is unity

We look at the divisions in the world, in the church, in our family, in our workplace: people not speaking to each other, competing to be the best, treating others with discrimination, gossiping to destroy the reputation of others, etc. Today, Jesus looks at the divisions around us and prays for oneness and communion: "*May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you...*".

The communion that Jesus prays for comes from us having first a loving relationship with God Himself. This is because it is the love of God in us that will bring us to be in communion with others, especially those who are different from us. We need to take note that unity does not mean that we have to get along all the time and that we need to agree all the time. Rather, God's love unites us to be one human family, one Christian community whether we like one another or not, whether we agree with one another or not. It is through our unity that will reveal God's love to the world.

Question for reflection:

How can I grow in my communion with God so as to be one with others?

Friday, 21st May, 7th week of Easter, SS. Christopher Magallanes and Companions.

Acts 25:13-21, John 21: 15-19

Jesus showed himself to his disciples, and after they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He replied, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Look after my sheep.' Then he said to him a third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt that he asked him a third time, 'Do you love me?' and said, 'Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. In all truth, I tell you, when you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you liked; but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and somebody else will put a belt round you and take you where you would rather not go.' In these words he indicated the kind of death by which Peter would give glory to God. After this, he said, 'Follow me.'

Yes, Lord, I love you!

In the past, Peter denied Jesus three times out of fear. Now, out of love, Jesus offered Peter the gift of His friendship. For Jesus, the past is always the past, and it is the present, the now that matters more. Today, Jesus personally comes to us and asks us, “*Do you love me?*” He does not walk away from us just because of our unfaithfulness and failures. Today and each day, He gives us a new opportunity to renew our love for Him.

Jesus loves us so much that He never ceases to trust us with the mission of taking care of His people. In the same way that He commissioned Peter to share in His work of feeding His sheep, He also entrusts us with the same mission. Today, we are shepherds to our friends, family members, colleagues, and even those with whom we cannot get along, by serving them, accompanying them to grow to know God and love Him more, feeding them with God's love. However, we can only do so if we are in a relationship of love with Jesus our Good Shepherd. Today, Jesus asks us again, “*Do you love me?*”, and waits for our response.

Question for reflection:

How can I concretely express my love for Jesus today?

Saturday, 22nd May, 7th week of Easter, St. Rita of Cascia.

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31, John 21:20-25

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them -- the one who had leant back close to his chest at the supper and had said to him, 'Lord, who is it that will betray you?' Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, 'What about him, Lord?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come, what does it matter to you? You are to follow me.' The rumour then went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus had not said to Peter, 'He will not die,' but, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come.' This disciple is the one who vouches for these things and has written them down, and we know that his testimony is true. There was much else that Jesus did; if it were written down in detail, I do not suppose the world itself would hold all the books that would be written.

You are to follow me

Jesus had just given Peter the mission of feeding His flock. In the passage today, Peter turned around, looked at “*the disciple that Jesus loved*” and became curious about what Jesus had in mind for him. Peter asked, “*What about him, Lord?*” Jesus patiently drew Peter back once again to the essential, i.e. to fix his eyes on Jesus and follow Him. We too in our following of Jesus must always focus on Him and not be distracted by comparing ourselves with others or worrying about others’ opinions.

Looking at Peter and “*the disciple that Jesus loved*”, we can see that each of them had a unique role to play in the mission field. Peter was tasked with pastorally taking care of the Early Church. The other disciple was given the task of causing the gospel to be written. Likewise, we have our own gifts and talents which we can help to play a part in proclaiming and testifying the Good News of God’s loving action and presence. Thus, Jesus calls us again, “*You are to follow Me... feed my sheep*”.

Question for reflection:

Do I allow Jesus to write His gospel of love in my life so that others will come to know and encounter Him?

Sunday, 23rd May, Pentecost Sunday.

Acts 2:1-11, Galatians 5:16-25, John 15:26-27, 16:12-15 (2nd Reading and Gospel from Year B)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning. I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you to bear now. However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking of his own accord, but will say only what he has been told; and he will reveal to you the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine.'

The Spirit, our advocate

Today, as we celebrate the Feast of the Pentecost, let us give thanks to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Though we cannot see the Spirit, we can, however, see the impact of His presence in our lives as well as in the lives of others. In the 2nd reading, St. Paul states that the Holy Spirit always brings the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control to those who allow Him to lead and guide them. Do we allow the Spirit to work within us to bear fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, etc, in our day-to-day life?

In the gospel, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "Advocate" which means the Helper, the Counselor or the one who is alongside a person to support, push forward and encourage. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in us that gives us the courage to live a life centered on love so as to bear witness to Jesus, His values and His life. Today, on this Feast of Pentecost, let us pray and ask the Spirit to come upon us and fill us with the grace of His presence. Come, Holy Spirit, come!

Question to reflect:

Do I see the effects of the Holy Spirit working in my life?

Monday, 24th May, Our Lady, Mother of the Church.**Genesis 3:9-15,20 or Acts 1: 12-14, John 19:25-34**

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed and, so that the scripture should be completely fulfilled, he said: 'I am thirsty' A jar full of sour wine stood there; so, putting a sponge soaked in the wine on a hyssop stick, they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the wine he said, 'It is fulfilled'; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit. It was the Day of Preparation, and to avoid the bodies' remaining on the cross during the Sabbath -- since that Sabbath was a day of special solemnity -- the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they saw he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water.

Mother Mary, our Mother

In 2018, Pope Francis placed this Memorial of Our Lady, Mother of the Church in the liturgical calendar to be celebrated on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday. He did so in order to remind all of us that Mary is the Mother of Jesus as well as the Mother of each one of us, who are the disciples of Jesus. In today's gospel, as Mary stood at the foot of the cross, Jesus gave Her to the care of the disciple whom He loved as well as gave the disciple to the care of His mother. The nameless disciple represents all of us. Today, Jesus tells us, "*Here is your Mother*" and to Mary, He says, "*Here is your son, your daughter*". The nameless disciple took Mary into his home. Today, we are invited to take Mary as our spiritual Mother into our home, into our lives. She, as our Mother, is with us, praying for us, accompanying us, helping us as we journey through

the ups and downs of life. Her primary role is always to guide and lead us to Jesus, Her Son, who is our Lord and God, our Friend and Master.

Question for reflection:

Does Mother Mary have a special place in my home and in my life?

Tuesday, 25th May, 8th week of Ordinary Time, St. Bede the Venerable, St. Gregory VII, St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi.

Ecclesiasticus 35:1-15, Mark 10:28-31

At that time Peter began to tell Jesus, 'What about us? We have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'In truth, I tell you, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times as much, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land -- and persecutions too -- now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life. Many who are first will be last, and the last, first.'

The cost and reward for following Jesus

Peter, in today's gospel, wanted to know what he gained by giving up walking a comfortable and easy path to follow Jesus. The honest question that he asked might resonate with us. This is because by saying "Yes" to Jesus, we need to say "No" to our pride, our comfort, our selfishness, our love for material wealth, etc. We sometimes want to know if going the extra mile for someone is worth it, or if forgiving a person seventy-seven times does us any good, if giving up pursuing a materialistic life has value, etc. We, like Peter, would want to know if all our efforts of living the gospel values and following Jesus would benefit us because it seems easier to walk the less demanding paths.

Jesus assures us with a "Yes! *It is worth it*". This is because in this life and in the life to come, we will get even more than what we give up. We will receive a richness that this world and its easy ways can never satisfy us. Many times, the hundredfold we receive is the inner sense of joy, peace and contentment. Today, let us trust that God is generous and nobody can ever surpass Him in generosity.

Question for reflection:

What does it mean for me to follow Jesus?

**Wednesday, 26th May, 8th week of Ordinary Time, St. Philip Neri.
Ecclesiasticus 36:1,4-5, 10-17, Mark 10:32-45**

The disciples were on the road, going up to Jerusalem; Jesus was walking on ahead of them; they were in a daze, and those who followed were apprehensive. Once more taking the Twelve aside he began to tell them what was going to happen to him, 'Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man is about to be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the gentiles, who will mock him and spit at him and scourge him and put him to death; and after three days he will rise again.' James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him. 'Master,' they said to him, 'We want you to do us a favour.' He said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I shall drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I shall be baptised?' They replied, 'We can.' Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I shall drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I shall be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted.' When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the gentiles those they call their rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

To serve and not to be served

James and John asked Jesus to grant them the places of honour. The rest of the disciples were upset with their request because they too harboured the same desire for power. However, Jesus told His disciples, "Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all." For Jesus, to be in authority means to be the one who serves.

Today, Jesus invites us to look within ourselves and examine how we understand and live authority- as a parent, a friend, a leader, an employer, a spouse, an aunt/uncle, etc. Often, we associate authority in terms of how the world exercises it, i.e., the one in power is the one who is respected, has the final say in everything, is served and obeyed by the rest, etc. Yet, let us look at Jesus' life and the way He lived His authority. He embodied the authority of loving service by seeking to promote others and serving their needs. Today, let us follow Jesus and walk the path of love with Him and for Him.

Question for reflection:

How is Jesus inviting me to follow Him today?

Thursday, 27th May, 8th week of Ordinary Time, St. Augustine of Canterbury.

Ecclesiasticus 42:15-25, Mark 10:46-52

As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus - that is, the son of Timaeus -- a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and cry out, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me.' And many of them scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, 'Son of David, have pity on me.' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him here.' So they called the blind man over. 'Courage,' they said, 'get up; he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'Rabbuni, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you.' And at once his sight returned and he followed him along the road.

Lord, I want to see again!

Jesus asked Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?", and Bartimaeus answered by presenting Him the greatest desire he had, "Rabbuni, let me see again". In prayer, Jesus comes to us each day and asks us, "What do you want me to do for you?" What would our response be?

Though we might not be physically blind like Bartimaeus, our sight can be limited. As the crowd in the passage today, we can look at others as

an annoyance. The way we see them can lead us to speak and treat them unkindly. On the other hand, Jesus looked at Bartimeaus as a fellow human person who needed help, and thus, He reached out to help Bartimeaus. Today, Jesus calls us to look at others with new sight, i.e. to see people through His eyes. May we tell Jesus, “*Lord, let me see again. Let me see those around me, especially the poor and the needy, and regard each of them as a fellow brother and sister.*”

Question for reflection:

What is Jesus’ message to me in this time of prayer?

Friday, 28th May, 8th week of Ordinary Time.

Ecclesiasticus 44:1,9-13, Mark 11:11-26

After he had been acclaimed by the crowds, Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple; and when he had surveyed it all, as it was late by now, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve. Next day as they were leaving Bethany, he felt hungry. Seeing a fig tree in leaf some distance away, he went to see if he could find any fruit on it, but when he came up to it he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season for figs. And he addressed the fig tree, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard him say this. So they reached Jerusalem and he went into the Temple and began driving out the men selling and buying there; he upset the tables of the money changers and the seats of the dove sellers. Nor would he allow anyone to carry anything through the Temple. And he taught them and said, 'Does not scripture say: My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples? But you have turned it into a bandits' den.' This came to the ears of the chief priests and the scribes, and they tried to find some way of doing away with him; they were afraid of him because the people were carried away by his teaching. And when evening came he went out of the city. Next morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered to the roots. Peter remembered. 'Look, Rabbi,' he said to Jesus, 'the fig tree that you cursed has withered away.' Jesus answered, 'Have faith in God. In truth I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, "Be pulled up and thrown into the sea," with no doubt in his heart, but believing that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. I tell you, therefore, everything you ask and pray for, believe that you have it already, and it will be yours. And

when you stand in prayer, forgive whatever you have against anybody, so your Father in heaven may forgive your failings too.'

Faith in God leads us to bear fruit of love

Jesus drove the merchants and money-changers out from the Temple because it was meant to be a sacred space where people could encounter God but now the Jews had turned it into a bandits' den. They were putting their faith in money more than God Himself. The passage also speaks of the barren fig tree which is a reflection of the faith of the Jewish leaders and the people, i.e. fruitless and unproductive.

Therefore, the key message of this gospel passage for us is the words that Jesus told His disciples: "*Have faith in God*". Our faith in God must allow Him to be the center of our lives so that we can bear fruit of His love. One essential fruit that comes from a life where God is in the center is forgiveness. In the passage, Jesus ended by saying: "*And when you stand in prayer, forgive whatever you have against anybody, so your Father in heaven may forgive your failings too*". Today, let us pray and ask Jesus, "*Lord, increase my faith! May my life be a reflection of my relationship with You!*"

Question for reflection:

What is the key message that I get from praying with this passage?

Saturday, 29th May, 8th week of Ordinary Time, St. Paul VI.

Ecclesiasticus 51:12-20, Mark 11:27-33

Jesus and his disciples came to Jerusalem, and as Jesus was walking in the Temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, 'What authority have you for acting like this? Or who gave you authority to act like this?' Jesus said to them, 'And I will ask you a question, just one; answer me and I will tell you my authority for acting like this. John's baptism, what was its origin, heavenly or human? Answer me that.' And they argued this way among themselves, 'If we say heavenly, he will say, "Then why did you refuse to believe him?" But dare we say human?' -- they had the people to fear, for everyone held that John had been a real prophet. So their reply to Jesus was, 'We do not know.' And Jesus said to them, 'Nor will I tell you my authority for acting like this.'

Do we see God?

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus, “*What authority have you for acting like this? Or who gave you authority to act like this?*” Jesus did not reply to their questions because He knew that their hearts were closed to Him, and no matter what He said, they would have found some faults against Him. Thus, they were prejudiced against Jesus and could not see God’s presence in all that He did and said. However, for those who came to believe in Jesus and followed Him, they had no doubts that Jesus was a man of God whose words and actions were the reflection of God’s authoritative presence.

Like the Jewish leaders, we too might close our hearts towards God’s active presence in situations, events and people. Today, may we open our hearts and see God in every event, hear Him in every person, welcome Him in every situation.

Questions for reflection:

What prevents me from seeing God’s presence in good and bad experiences, in pleasant and unpleasant people? Am I open to hear Him speak to me through the daily experiences of life?

Sunday, 30th May, Trinity Sunday.

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40, Romans 8:14-17, Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’

Living always in a relationship of love with the Trinity

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity, let us remember that the faith that we profess is Trinitarian. We believe in God the Father who is the origin and the destination of our life. He is our Father who loves us with His merciful and unconditional love. We believe in Jesus the Son who has come to reveal the true face of God the Father. He, God in

human form, lived His life on earth by loving to the end, and thus, He showed us the way for us to live our identity as children of God. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the love between God the Father and Jesus the Son, who is now present in our lives. He works in us so that we can live a life of love and guides us always towards God. We believe and thus, we live this reality with joy.

The Good News that we must never take for granted is that we have been baptised in the name of the Trinity and thus, we are meant to develop a loving, intimate and personal relationship with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are never alone as we travel through life because God is with us!

Question for reflection:

What does it mean for me that my Christian faith is Trinitarian?

Monday, 31st May, The Visitation of Mary.

Zephaniah 3:14-18, Luke 1:39-56

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.' And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. He has used the power of his arm, he has routed the arrogant of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly. He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his faithful love -according to the promise he made to our

ancestors -- of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants forever. Mary stayed with her some three months and then went home.

The sign of being a Christian: serving others

“Serving others is a Christian sign. Whoever doesn’t live to serve other people, doesn’t serve to live. Serving others and being full of joy is the attitude that I would like to underline today. There is joy and also service towards others.” (Pope Francis, 31st May 2016)

As we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation, let us reflect on Mary as she set out quickly to make the journey of love and service to Elizabeth. She did not stay at her house and remained in her comfort zone. What about us? Are we in a hurry to help others? Are we quick to focus on the needs of others and place ourselves at their service? Often, we focus on ourselves and our needs. Let Mary challenge us to go out of our way for others and find joy in serving others, especially those who cannot pay us back. As we serve others, may we find ourselves growing closer to God.

Question for reflection:

How can I learn from Mary to be quick to go out of my comfort zone in order to serve?



verbum dei