

"This is my Son, the Beloved.  
Follow Him."



**Prayer for Living  
Daily Reflections for  
Liturgical Year A**

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# **PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR A**

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**Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> January, Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God.  
Numbers 6:22-27, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:16-21**

*The shepherds hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds said to them. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told. When the eighth day came and the child was to be circumcised, they gave him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given him before his conception.*

**Mary treasured and pondered**

"As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart". In today's gospel, Mary was amazed at what the shepherds proclaimed, which was the same message told to them by the angels, "Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger". She treasured and pondered the good news of God becoming human, the good news of God becoming vulnerable and fragile in a baby.

Often, we take for granted the gospel and cease to be amazed by God and His love. Let us open the door of this new year by asking Mother Mary to help us to have her same attitude of prayerful wonderment before God and a renewed appreciation of the good news of His loving presence among us.

**Reflective question:**

How do I want to live in 2023?

**Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, SS. Basil the Great & Gregory of Nazianzen.  
1 John 2:22-28, John 1:19-28**

*This was the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He declared, he did not deny but declared, 'I am not the Christ.' So they asked, 'Then are you Elijah?' He replied, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer*

*to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So he said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight!' Now those who had been sent were Pharisees, and they put this question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the Prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptise with water; but standing among you -- unknown to you- is the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandal.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.*

### Going to the core of our human identity

"Who are you?"- The Jewish leaders posed this fundamental question to John the Baptist. Have you ever asked yourself this same question? If you ever ask this key question, "*Who am I?*", we will know that it is not easy to answer because it demands knowing and accepting ourselves as we are and going beyond the level of saying "*I am a teacher*", "*I am an engineer*". In the gospel, John the Baptist knew who he was by His relationship with Jesus. He was neither the Christ, Elijah nor the Prophet. John the Baptist knew that he was just a voice that cried out in the desert, preparing the way for the Lord to come and was happy to be the witness pointing others to Jesus.

As we begin this new day in this new year, let us allow our friendship with Jesus to shape and form our identity. When we grow to become like Christ, we will truly become who we are.

### Reflective question:

Who am I?

## **Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, The Most Holy Name of Jesus.**

### **1 John 2:19-3:6, John 1:29-34**

*The next day, seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. It was of him that I said, "Behind me comes one who has passed ahead of me because he existed before me." I did not know him myself, and yet my purpose in coming to baptise with water was so that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John declared, 'I saw the Spirit come down on him like a dove from heaven and rest on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The*

*man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptise with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.'*

Look, there is Jesus!

"...seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God'. John the Baptist's life mission was to point the right direction for others to go to Jesus so that they could come to know and follow Him. He even pointed Jesus out to his own disciples and directed them to become Jesus' followers. Thus, John the Baptist is a model of a humble and passionate witness who dedicated his life to lead others to Jesus.

In this time of prayer, we recall the people who have pointed Jesus out to us and have led us to go the right way in life. Let us give thanks to God for them. At the same time, we also recognise that God calls us to be like John the Baptist by pointing others to Him through our words and actions. However, to be authentic witnesses of Christ, we first must be drawn to Jesus and develop a deeper friendship with Him. Therefore, let us never stop going to Jesus and renewing our relationship with Him.

Reflective question:

How can I grow more in my relationship with Jesus and be an effective witness who brings others to Him?

**Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> January, Weekday of Christmas Time.**

**1 John 3:7-10, John 1:35-42**

*As John stood there again with two of his disciples, Jesus went past, and John looked towards him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' And the two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi' -- which means Teacher -- 'where do you live?' He replied, 'Come and see'; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour. One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother and say to him, 'We have found the Messiah' -- which*

*means the Christ- and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' -- which means Rock.*

What do you want? Come and see

In the gospel today, the two disciples heard John the Baptist saying, "*Look, there is the Lamb of God*". John the Baptist opened the way for them to go to Jesus and follow Him. In different moments in our lives, even in our golden years, we can meet a John the Baptist who guides us to a deeper experience of a loving relationship with God. May we, like the two disciples, be ready to allow God to draw close to us.

When Jesus saw that these two men were following him, he turned and asked them, "*What do you want?*" In response to His question, they asked Him, "Where do you live?", which revealed their desire to be with Jesus and know Him more. Today, Jesus asks us the same question, "*What do you want?*". Is our deepest desire the same as the two disciples? Do we want to grow in our relationship with Him? Jesus never gets tired of inviting us, "*Come and see. Come and stay with Me*".

Reflective question:

What is Jesus' personal message to me today?

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> January, Weekday of Christmas Time.**

**1 John 3:11-21, John 1:43-51**

*After Jesus had decided to leave for Galilee, he met Philip and said, 'Follow me.' Philip came from the same town, Bethsaida, as Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'From Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?' Philip replied, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.' Nathanael asked, 'How do you know me?' Jesus replied, 'Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree.' Nathanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.' Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see*

*greater things than that.' And then he added, 'In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.'*

### "Come and see"

In today's gospel, Nathanael was sceptical when Philip told him that they had found the Messiah and He was Jesus from Nazareth. His first response was, "*From Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?*". Philip had the choice to walk away from Nathanael, but he did not. Instead, he did not give up on him but continued to invite Nathanael, "*Come and see*". In the end, Nathanael had a personal encounter with Jesus and started his faith journey as His disciple. His faith journey was made possible because of Philip's strong faith in Jesus.

As we start this time of prayer, let us bring to mind the people we try to bring to know Jesus but might be resistant to make the step towards Him. Let us be inspired by Philip, whose faith was grounded in his own friendship with Jesus, and thus, he did not allow the initial response of Nathanael to deter him. May we too be rooted in our friendship with Jesus and never stop inviting people, "*Come and see*".

### Reflective question:

How can I allow Jesus to use my life to draw people to encounter Him?

### **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> January, Weekday of Christmas Time.**

#### **1 John 5:5-13, Mark 1:7-11**

*In the course of his preaching John said, 'After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. And at once, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'*

### You are my beloved child

"*You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you*". Today, God looks at us with love and continues saying the same to us, "*You are my child, the beloved; my favour rests on you*". In this time of prayer, let us sink into these words and find rest in them. Many times, we focus on our imperfections and failures. We wonder, "*How can I be a beloved child of God? How is it possible that His favour rests on me?*"

God never ceases to address these words personally to us. Listen to Him, allow His words to reverberate in our hearts, and live with this truth. When we anchor ourselves in the reality that we are God's beloved children, we can live each day with peace and joy.

### Reflective question:

How can I root myself in this reality that I am God's beloved child and His favour rests on me?

### **Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> January, St. Raymond of Penyafort.**

#### **1 John 5:14-21, John 2:1-11**

*There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. And they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the feast had all been used, and the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. Then he said to them, 'Draw some out now and take it to the president of the feast.' They did this; the president tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from -- though the servants who had drawn the water knew -- the president of the feast called the bridegroom and said, 'Everyone serves good wine first and the worse wine when the guests are well wined; but you have kept the best wine till now.' This was the first of Jesus' signs: it was at Cana in Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.*



### No more wine

"The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited". Let us pause and reflect on the reality that Jesus was present at the couple's wedding in Cana. He was not aloof or indifferent to the joys and sorrows of the people around Him. Today, Jesus is also present in our daily realities of joy and sorrow. Once again, we find peace in His presence.

Mary was also present at the wedding feast. She noticed that the wine had run out. In the same way, Mary is also present in our lives. Being our Mother, she is attentive to our needs and the situations that cause us to run out of wine. A failure cause us to run out of hope. The grief of losing a loved one makes us run out of joy. A heavy workload drains our energy. In many ways, we can run out of wine. Mary brings our problems to Jesus. We need to trust that in His time and ways, Jesus works in us and transforms our lack into an abundance of grace.

### Reflective question:

What is the message of Jesus to me today?

### **Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> January, Epiphany of the Lord.**

#### **Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6, Matthew 2:1-12**

*After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'At Bethlehem in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.' Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared and sent them on to Bethlehem with the words, 'Go and find out all about the child, and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight*

*of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were given a warning in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.*

### Follow the star

In the gospel, the astrologers, the wise men, while studying the stars, noticed a new star in the sky. They knew that it pointed them to the birth of the infant king of the Jews. They started the journey of following it. As they arrived in Jerusalem, they encountered Herod and the chief priests and scribes, who became obstacles in their search for Jesus. When the wise men finally found the child with the help of the star, they worshipped Him and gave Him valuable gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Today, we are invited to look attentively to the stars, to the guiding lights God sends along our way that lead us to Him. The stars can be the events we experience and the people we encounter daily. Along our journey, we will meet "Herods", obstacles which can draw us away from the true paths to God. Our comfort is that God commits Himself to guide us in the journey towards more of Him. When we encounter Jesus, like the wise men, we are called to place our greatest gifts of time, talent and resources in service of His mission.

### Reflective question:

What gifts will I offer Jesus?

### **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January, The Baptism of the Lord.**

#### **Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7, Acts 10:34-38, Matthew 3:13-17**

*Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him, with the words, 'It is I who need baptism from you, and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands.' Then John gave in to him. And when Jesus had been baptised he at once came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove*

*and coming down on him. And suddenly there was a voice from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'*

### Jesus is in solidarity with us

*"John tried to dissuade him, with the words, 'It is I who need baptism from you, and yet you come to me!'"*. John the Baptist recognised that Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Messiah, did not need baptism. Thus, he struggled with, *"You should be the one baptising, not me!"*. However, when Jesus told him to do it, John the Baptist gave in and did what Jesus said. The invitation for us is that we need to be like John the Baptist. When Jesus speaks, we trust and obey, even when we do not see the full picture or understand the "why".

Jesus waited in line and entered the River Jordan with the Jews to show that He was in solidarity with those who regarded themselves as sinners. He identified Himself with their desire to grow closer to God and their struggles of failures and imperfections. In the same way, Jesus is never indifferent to us but identifies with us in our joys and sorrows, in our successes and brokenness. Jesus enters the rivers of our life and walks with us in our journey towards more God.

### Reflective question:

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

## **Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

### **Hebrews 2:5-12, Mark 1:21-28**

*Jesus and his disciples went as far as Capernaum, and at once on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority. And at once in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit, and he shouted, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked it saying, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking one another what it all meant, saying, 'Here is a teaching that is new, and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' And his*

*reputation at once spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.*

### To live a consistent life

In today's gospel, the people were impressed with Jesus and His teaching because they recognised that He, unlike the scribes, taught them with authority. The man with an unclean spirit (In the time of Jesus, many sicknesses were attributed to evil spirits), recognised the authority of Jesus.

Jesus had authority because His words and actions were coherent and consistent. He lived out what He taught to others. What about us? It is easy to advise others, but it is sometimes hard to put our words into action. As parents, teachers, aunts/uncles, godparents, friends, etc., do we have this inner authority in which we live out what we tell others? Today, let us ask Jesus to have His same authority so that others can see God in our words and actions.

### Reflective question:

Are my words and actions consistent?

## **Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

### **Hebrews 2:14-18, Mark 1:29-39**

*On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed and feverish, and at once they told him about her. He went in to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to serve them. That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was. In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you.' He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can proclaim the message there too, because that is why I came.' And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out devils.*

## Solitude with God

In today's gospel, Jesus actively stayed with the people and healed the sick. However, He also went to a lonely place to seek solitude with God. This gives us a glimpse of where His inner strength and peace came from, i.e. His interior life with God. What does Jesus want to tell us with His two actions of active mission and prayerful silence? Prayer should be the source of our active service and work. Yet, we often tend to allow the busyness of doing to overshadow our need to pray.

The call is to find time and space to pray, listen to Him and be with Him. Staying in the presence of God, we are renewed and strengthened to live each day with meaning and to do every action with love.

### Reflective question:

Is prayer necessary for me?

## **Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

### **Hebrews 3:7-14, Mark 1:40-45**

*A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees saying, 'If you are willing, you can cleanse me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said to him, 'I am willing. Be cleansed.' And at once the skin-disease left him and he was cleansed. And at once Jesus sternly sent him away and said to him, 'Mind you tell no one anything, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your cleansing prescribed by Moses as evidence to them.' The man went away, but then started freely proclaiming and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but stayed outside in deserted places. Even so, people from all around kept coming to him.*

### Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the leper

In the time of Jesus, lepers were the untouchables and had to keep their distance from the rest. In today's gospel, when the leper asked Jesus for healing, He not only healed the sick man by means of His words but also through drawing close to him and touching him. This

was the extent of Jesus' love for the people, even those regarded as the untouchables.

Today, let us seek comfort in the depth of Jesus' love for humanity and each of us. He is a God who is not far away from us. He is a Friend who never fails to love us. He touches our lives, even in our brokenness and misery, to bring us to the fullness of life and love. In this time of prayer, let us go to Jesus and, like the leper, to tell Him, "Lord, if you willing, you can cleanse me. You can give me your peace, joy, and life".

Reflective question:

What strikes me most as I pray with this gospel passage?

**Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> January, St. Hilary.**

**Hebrews 4:1-5, Mark 2:1-12**

*When Jesus returned to Capernaum, some time later word went round that he was in the house; and so many people collected that there was no room left, even in front of the door. He was preaching the word to them when some people came bringing him a paralytic carried by four men, but as they could not get the man to him through the crowd, they stripped the roof over the place where Jesus was; and when they had made an opening, they lowered the stretcher on which the paralytic lay. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'My child, your sins are forgiven.' Now some scribes were sitting there, and they thought to themselves, 'How can this man talk like that? He is being blasphemous. Who but God can forgive sins?' And at once, Jesus, inwardly aware that this is what they were thinking, said to them, 'Why do you have these thoughts in your hearts? Which of these is easier: to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven" or to say, "Get up, pick up your stretcher and walk"? But to prove to you that the Son of man has authority to forgive sins on earth' -- he said to the paralytic-'I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home.' And the man got up, and at once picked up his stretcher and walked out in front of everyone, so that they were all astonished and praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'*

### An active faith

“*Seeing their faith*”- The faith of the paralytic’s friends was active and life-giving, showing care and love. They heard about Jesus and the healings He did. They knew that only Jesus could help their sick friend. Thus, they carried their friend and made their journey to where He was. However, there was a huge crowd around Jesus, and they could not bring their friend near Him. They were determined, however, to see Jesus and thus, this led them to be creative. They climbed to the roof, made an opening and lowered their friend to where Jesus was. Jesus saw their faith and was impressed by what He saw. As a result, he forgave the man’s sins and healed him.

Each of us needs to have an active and creative faith that leads us to help others around us who are in need. We can bring our friends and family members to hear God’s life-giving word, encounter Him and experience His loving goodness.

### Reflective question:

How does this gospel passage relate to my life today?

### **Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Hebrews 4:12-16, Mark 2:13-17**

*Jesus went out to the shore of the lake; and all the people came to him, and he taught them. As he was walking along he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. When Jesus was at dinner in his house, a number of tax collectors and sinners were also sitting at table with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many of them among his followers. When the scribes of the Pharisee party saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard this he said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'*

### Jesus in the company of sinners

“*Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?*”. The Jewish leaders could not comprehend the action of Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. In their eyes, these people were morally flawed, and it would be best to keep themselves far apart from them. Jesus, the

revelation of God's love, entered into communion with sinners to bring them to encounter God's mercy and goodness. He knew that God's love would transform them.

Today, Jesus comes to us and desires to enter into communion with us. Our failings and mistakes do not diminish His love for each of us. His presence transforms us and gives us life. Regardless of where we are in life, let us go to Jesus and allow His merciful love to embrace us.

Reflective question:

Do I believe there is always a place for me in God's heart?

**Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Isaiah 49:3,5-6, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, John 1:29-34**

*Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. It was of him that I said, "Behind me comes one who has passed ahead of me because he existed before me." I did not know him myself, and yet my purpose in coming to baptise with water was so that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John declared, 'I saw the Spirit come down on him like a dove from heaven and rest on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptise with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.'*

Living the mission of pointing Jesus

As we enter into the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, let us reflect on today's gospel and ask ourselves, "*Have I been a courageous witness of Christ? Does the way I live and speak point others to Jesus?*" John the Baptist recognised Jesus as the "*Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world*", and he did not keep the good news to himself but pointed Him to others and shared the good news with his own disciples. His main goal was to lead others to Jesus.

Jesus calls us to bring him to others by living the gospel values of truth, justice and peace and speaking life-giving words of mercy and love. He needs us to be the John the Baptist of today. How will people come to know, love and follow Him if we do not point Him to them? Before living



as Christ's witness, we first need to be His disciples. We need to encounter Jesus daily so we can be ready to show others the way to Him. Today, let us give ourselves time and space to be with Jesus and listen to Him calling us to follow Him.

Reflective question:

How can I be a John the Baptist to someone today?

**Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Hebrews 5:1-10, Mark 2:18-22**

*One day when John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a fast, when some people came to him and said to him, 'Why is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?' Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's attendants cannot fast while the bridegroom is still with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then, on that day, they will fast. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse. And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins too. No! New wine into fresh skins!'*

Jesus, the bridegroom and the new wine

In today's gospel, Jesus identified Himself as the bridegroom. Today, He presents Himself to each one of us as the bridegroom whose presence brings us complete joy. This is the reason of our Christian joy: Christ is with us and is in love with us. Pope Francis, in his homily, said, "*The Christian is joyful in heart, even in trials; he is joyful because he is close to Jesus: it is He who gives us joy*" (13<sup>th</sup> December 2020). Jesus is our faithful bridegroom. Let us stay close to Him and open our hearts to receive His presence which brings joy to us.

Jesus is also the new wine who brings newness to our lives. We sometimes think we know many things about our faith, and few things would surprise us. However, Jesus, the Word of God, is always new and speaks to the realities we live here and now. We are called to be new wineskins, ready to accept the newness that Jesus brings us.

Reflective question:

Am I open to receiving Jesus and all He wants to bring to me today?

**Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December, St. Anthony, Abbot.**

**Hebrews 6:10-20, Mark 2:23-28**

*One Sabbath day Jesus was taking a walk through the cornfields, and his disciples began to make a path by plucking ears of corn. And the Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing something on the Sabbath day that is forbidden?' And he replied, 'Have you never read what David did in his time of need when he and his followers were hungry- how he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the loaves of the offering which only the priests are allowed to eat, and how he also gave some to the men with him?' And he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is master even of the Sabbath.'*

Following the Master of the Sabbath

In today's Gospel, the Pharisees were concerned that Jesus and His disciples were not upholding the religious law. His disciples were picking ears of corn on a Sabbath day, which went against the law of the Sabbath. For Jesus, law, including religious law, must always serve the good of the people and help them meet their basic needs. As Christians, the question to ask ourselves is: what is the point of following rules and regulations, like abstaining and fasting on certain days, but our hearts are unloving and our minds are judging others?

*"The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath"*- For Jesus, the human person, his dignity and needs take precedence over rules and regulations. He always has compassion for those in need. Let us not live our faith in a pharisaical way but follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the Master of the Sabbath.

Reflective question:

Am I free to live as Jesus lived?

**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17, Mark 3:1-6**

*Jesus went into the synagogue, and there was a man present whose hand was withered. And they were watching him to see if he would*

*cure him on the Sabbath day, hoping for something to charge him with. He said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and stand in the middle!' Then he said to them, 'Is it permitted on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?' But they said nothing. Then he looked angrily round at them, grieved to find them so obstinate, and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and began at once to plot with the Herodians against him, discussing how to destroy him.*

### The priority of loving and doing good

In today's gospel, Jesus did a good and loving deed. He healed the man whose hand was withered. Yet, despite doing good, Jesus faced opposition from religious leaders. They openly challenged His action and even gathered at the end to plan how to get rid of Him. Yet, we know that Jesus never allowed the negativity of others to stop Him from staying faithful to His work of bringing God's love to the people.

Today, this gospel passage calls us always to stand firm in choosing and doing acts of goodness and love because it is what God wants us to do so. Our words and actions can bring healing to those around us. Let us choose to love even in the face of challenges.

### Reflective question:

What is Jesus' message for me in this time of prayer?

### **Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Hebrews 7:25-8:6, Mark 3:7-12**

*Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lakeside, and great crowds from Galilee followed him. From Judaea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea and Transjordan and the region of Tyre and Sidon, great numbers who had heard of all he was doing came to him. And he asked his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, to keep him from being crushed. For he had cured so many that all who were afflicted in any way were crowding forward to touch him. And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and shout, 'You are the Son of God!' But he warned them strongly not to make him known.*

### Needing Jesus in my life

*"...all who were afflicted in any way were crowding forward to touch him".* People from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, Transjordan, Tyre and Sidon went to Jesus because they needed Him because they were suffering in one way or another. They knew that Jesus could help them and heal them from their brokenness.

Today, let us ask an important question, *"Am I aware of my own need and do I go to Jesus with it?"* In this time of prayer, let us go to Jesus with the same hope and confidence as the great crowds in the gospel. We go to Him because we know that we need Him and that He is our strength in our frailty, our peace in our experiences of crisis and our hope in times of disappointment. Jesus waits for us and is always ready to be with us.

### Reflective question:

Do I need Jesus?

**Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> January, St. Fabian, St. Sebastian.**

**Hebrews 8:6-13, Mark 3:13-19**

*Jesus went up onto the mountain and summoned those he wanted. So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to proclaim the message, with power to drive out devils. And so he appointed the Twelve, Simon to whom he gave the name Peter, James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Boanerges or 'Sons of Thunder'; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, the man who was to betray him.*

### Call to be contemplative and active

In today's gospel, Jesus chose the Twelve to be His companions and sent them out to bring the good news of God's love to others. Likewise, He also calls each of us to be with Him and sends us out to preach the good news with our words and life. Our Christian life consists of these two fundamental dimensions: prayer and action. From being with Jesus, listening to what He has to say to us and allowing Him to nourish our lives, we go out to live His mission of bringing His presence to others.

Jesus chose and called each of His disciples personally. However, we know that in the end, Peter denied Him, Judas betrayed Him, and the rest ran away from Him. Each of them was free to choose how they wanted to live out their discipleship. Today, Jesus calls us by name. He calls, and we are free to respond. He never forces us to respond to His call. Let us strive to be faithful to Jesus because He is the first who is always faithful to us.

Reflective question:

How can I live out the Christian dimensions of prayer and mission?

**Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, St. Agnes.**

**Hebrews 9:2-3, 11-14, Mark 3:20-21**

*Jesus went home again, and once more such a crowd collected that they could not even have a meal. When his relations heard of this, they set out to take charge of him; they said, 'He is out of his mind.'*

Remaining faithful to God

In today's gospel, Jesus was misunderstood by His family members. They heard about all that Jesus was doing and teaching and decided He was "*out of His mind*". Like us, Jesus experienced tensions in His family. Thus, He can identify our personal struggles with our family members because He Himself has been there. In these moments, He stays with us and accompanies us in these painful moments.

We will meet opposition from people, especially those closest to us, as we strive to live the Gospel values of honesty, truth, love, justice and peace. When we find ourselves rejected or judged for the gospel's sake, we are invited again to look at Jesus. He did not do what His family wanted Him to do because He chose to remain faithful to God's purpose for Him. Thus, we too are called to imitate Jesus and stay true to walk the path of God.

Reflective question:

Do I have the courage to follow Jesus and His ways even when I find myself in conflict with those dearest to me?

**Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, Sunday of the Word of God.**

**Isaiah 8:23-9:3, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17, Matthew 4:12-23**

*Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus withdrew to Galilee, and leaving Nazara he went and settled in Capernaum, beside the lake, on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea beyond Jordan. Galilee of the nations! The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a country of shadow dark as death a light has dawned. From then onwards Jesus began his proclamation with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.' As he was walking by the Lake of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast into the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Come after me and I will make you fishers of people.' And at once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. And at once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him. He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and illness among the people.*

God is in our midst

Today, we celebrate the Sunday of the Word of God. We rejoice that Jesus is the Word of God who comes into our lives to bring the great light of His presence in our darkness. He brings the good news that "*the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand*". The kingdom of Heaven does not refer to a place but a person, God Himself. He is in our midst and not far away from any of us. His presence brings us true happiness and peace. This is good news for us because it means we are never alone in this journey of life. Jesus tells us that we need to make a change in our lives and open our hearts to make room for God to be with us.

In today's gospel, Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Him and shine the light of God's presence for all. Likewise, Jesus, the great light, calls us to follow Him because He needs us to be

His light bearers and shine His presence in our world. May we respond generously to His call.

Reflective question:

What is my response to Jesus' call to follow Him?

**Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Hebrews 9:15, 24-28, Mark 3:22-30**

*The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, 'Beelzebul is in him,' and, 'It is through the prince of devils that he drives devils out.' So Jesus called them to him and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last. And if a household is divided against itself, that household can never last. Now if Satan has rebelled against himself and is divided, he cannot last either -- it is the end of him. But no one can make his way into a strong man's house and plunder his property unless he has first tied up the strong man. Only then can he plunder his house. In truth I tell you, all human sins will be forgiven, and all the blasphemies ever uttered; but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin.' This was because they were saying, 'There is an unclean spirit in him.'*

To see and rejoice

Moved constantly by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was doing good deeds of love by healing people and touching the lives of many. In today's gospel, the scribes from Jerusalem said that that "Beelzebul" was in Jesus. They closed their hearts to recognise any goodness in Him and refused to see the hand of God in all His works. Yet, the simple and humble crowd around Jesus could see the wonders of God through His actions of Jesus.

What about us? Are we blind like the scribes? Do we perceive God's presence and actions in the lives of others and even in our own lives? Today, let us have eyes of faith to see and recognise His presence of love and goodness in us and around us.

Reflective question:

Am I open to seeing the signs of God's presence today?

**Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, St. Francis de Sales.**

**Hebrews 10:1-10, Mark 3:31-35**

*The mother and the brothers of Jesus arrived and, standing outside, sent in a message asking for him. A crowd was sitting round him at the time the message was passed to him, 'Look, your mother and brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.' He replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those sitting in a circle round him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother.'*

### Belonging to God's family

In today's gospel, Jesus' mother and brothers came looking for Him. He looked at the crowd around Him who listened to His teaching and identified them as His mother and brothers. By doing so, Jesus redefined and broadened the understanding of family and relationships. For Jesus, those who listen to Him and do God's will are His true family.

We are members of Jesus' family today. As we go about our daily routines, let us find comfort in the reality that we are God's beloved sons and daughters and are also brothers and sisters to one another. Within this family, we seek to do God's will, which is to live according to the gospel value of love, mercy, justice, honesty and peace.

### Reflective question:

What is God's will for me today?

**Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January, The Conversion of St. Paul.**

**Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22, Mark 16:15-18**

*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.'*



### Go and proclaim

Today, we celebrate an important feast day, the Conversion of St. Paul. In the first reading, St. Paul said, "*I even persecuted this Way to the death, and sent women as well as men to prison in chains...*". Zealous Pharisee as He was, he did many harmful things to the early Christians. However, a personal encounter with the Risen Jesus along the road to Damascus radically transformed his life. From a persecutor of the early Christians, he became a zealous preacher of Christ's good news and apostle to the pagans. St. Paul's story gives us hope that God never gives up on anyone. He desires always to encounter us and give us the task of sharing the good news of His love with many people.

In today's gospel, Jesus tells us, "Go!". We go because we know He will accompany us as we go and proclaim God's love to those around us with our words and actions.

### Reflective question:

How am I responding to Jesus' call to go and proclaim the good news of God's love to others?

### **Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> January, SS. Timothy and Titus.**

#### **2 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5, Luke 10:1-9**

*The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting. And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting. Start off now, but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Take no purse with you, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you."*

### God needs us to be His labourers

Saint Timothy and Saint Titus were close companions of St. Paul and missionaries who dedicated their lives to spreading the Good News of Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus told His disciples to ask God, the Lord of the harvest, to send labourers to His harvest. While alive, St. Timothy and St. Titus responded to the call to be labourers for Jesus because they recognised God needed their “Yes”.

God still needs people willing to use their talents and gifts to be His labourers today. He still calls people, young and old, to serve His mission and make His Kingdom of love, peace, justice and truth alive and visible.

### Reflective question:

What prevents me from stepping out of my comfort zone and entering into the mission of God?

**Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> January, St. Angela Merici.**

**Hebrews 10:32-39, Mark 4:26-34**

*Jesus said to the crowd, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, at once he starts to reap because the harvest has come.' He also said, 'What can we say that the kingdom is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which, at the time of its sowing, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.' Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He would not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples when they were by themselves.*

### God comes in the ordinary and the littleness

Today's gospel consists of two parables. In the first parable, Jesus speaks of a farmer who does the sowing and then goes on to do his other daily affairs. As time goes on, the soil seeds start to sprout and grow. The farmer does not know how it happens because there is

something more going on beyond his work of sowing the seeds. Likewise, we do the work of planting God's goodness and love in the lives of others through our words and actions. We do our part and God is the one doing the rest. He is the one who makes our works of love grow and bear fruit.

In the second parable, Jesus speaks of the mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds. However, once planted, it becomes the biggest shrub of all. Jesus calls us to appreciate the small acts of love we do. Doing God's will is not about doing big things. Instead, it is sowing small, faithful efforts of love. God is the one working and making these small acts life-giving.

Reflective question:

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

**Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> January, St. Thomas Aquinas.  
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19, Mark 4: 35-41**

*With the coming of evening that same day, Jesus said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him. Then it began to blow a great gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are lost!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and there followed a great calm. Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? Have you still no faith?' They were overcome with awe and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'*

Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?

"Master, do you not care? We are lost!". The words of the disciples express their great fear as they faced the threatening storm. We, like the disciples, when face with challenges in life, we wonder, "Lord, don't you care that I am suffering?". In this time of prayer, we are invited to contemplate Jesus sleeping with his head on the cushion in the storm. Jesus' sleeping in the storm reflects His deep trust in God, which gave Him inner peace. After he calmed the storm, Jesus turned to His

disciples and asked, “*Why are you so frightened? Have you still no faith?*”

In our own storms, we need to have faith that perceives God’s loving presence with us. With Him, we can walk on with peace.

Reflective question:

Do I allow fear or faith to lead me, especially when I face the storms in life?

**Sunday, Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Matthew 5:1-12**

*Seeing the crowds, Jesus went onto the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance. Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness: they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.’*

Jesus and the Beatitudes

In today’s gospel, Jesus presents us with a radical and demanding way of life; yet, those who follow Him in living this way of life are truly blessed and authentically happy. Looking at the Beatitudes, we are looking at Jesus because He was the first who lived them out in His life. He was poor in spirit by depending fully on God. He was gentle and unselfishly reached out to those in need. He mourned and longed for justice and peace to reign in the lives of humanity. He hungered and thirsted for what was right by actively working for the truth to prevail. He was pure in heart by dedicating Himself fully to God and His mission. He was a peacemaker who worked for peace and

reconciliation. He was persecuted for being a man for God and for others.

Jesus calls us to live the Beatitudes and become like Him. It is not an easy path to follow. However, we can count on the help of the Holy Spirit in us to empower and strengthen us to live them.

Reflective question:

Do I want to travel the same path of the Beatitudes as Jesus did?

**Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Hebrews 11:32-40, Mark 5:1-20**

*Jesus and his disciples reached the territory of the Gerasenes on the other side of the lake, and when he disembarked, a man with an unclean spirit at once came out from the tombs towards him. The man lived in the tombs and no one could secure him any more, even with a chain, because he had often been secured with fetters and chains but had snapped the chains and broken the fetters, and no one had the strength to control him. All night and all day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he would howl and gash himself with stones. Catching sight of Jesus from a distance, he ran up and fell at his feet and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God? In God's name do not torture me!' For Jesus had been saying to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit.' Then he asked, 'What is your name?' He answered, 'My name is Legion, for there are many of us.' And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the district. Now on the mountainside there was a great herd of pigs feeding, and the unclean spirits begged him, 'Send us to the pigs, let us go into them.' So he gave them leave. With that, the unclean spirits came out and went into the pigs, and the herd of about two thousand pigs charged down the cliff into the lake, and there they were drowned. The men looking after them ran off and told their story in the city and in the country round about; and the people came to see what had really happened. They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there -- the man who had had the legion in him -- properly dressed and in his full senses, and they were afraid. And those who had witnessed it reported what had happened to the demoniac and what had become of the pigs. Then they began to implore Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man*

*who had been possessed begged to be allowed to stay with him. Jesus would not let him but said to him, 'Go home to your people and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for you.' So the man went off and proceeded to proclaim in the Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed.*

What do you want with me, Jesus?

The man shouted, "*What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God?*" He was afraid of what Jesus would do with him. Would he lose his 'freedom' living among the tombs? Would he lose what he was so used to after so many years? Like this man in the passage, we tend to fear changes. Changes imply that we try to leave behind our old ways by giving up the "*demons*" of bad habits and unhealthy obsessions that we have somehow become used to.

When we draw close to Jesus, He invites us to let go and let Him bring us to walk the path of living life to the fullest. We are never alone in this journey because Jesus is with us. We can place our lives in His loving hands with trust. He is here to love us, not to harm us.

Reflective question:

Am I afraid to allow Jesus to work in my life?

**Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, St. John Bosco.**

**Hebrews 12:1-4, Mark 5:21-43**

*When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered round him and he stayed by the lake. Then the president of the synagogue came up, named Jairus, and seeing him, fell at his feet and begged him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and lay your hands on her that she may be saved and may live.' Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him. Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years; after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any the better for it; in fact, she was getting worse. She had heard about Jesus, and she came up through the crowd and touched his cloak from behind, thinking, 'If I can just touch his clothes, I shall be saved.' And at once the source of the bleeding dried up, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint. And at once aware of the*

power that had gone out from him, Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' His disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is pressing round you; how can you ask, "Who touched me?" ' But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. 'My daughter,' he said, 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free of your complaint.' While he was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the president of the synagogue to say, 'Your daughter is dead; why put the Master to any further trouble?' But Jesus overheard what they said and he said to the president of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only have faith.' And he allowed no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So they came to the house of the president of the synagogue, and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping and wailing unrestrainedly. He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep.' But they ridiculed him. So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and mother and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay. And taking the child by the hand he said to her, 'Talitha kum!' which means, 'Little girl, I tell you to get up.' The little girl got up at once and began to walk about, for she was twelve years old. At once they were overcome with astonishment, and he gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.

### Living in the present moment

In today's gospel, Jairus, the synagogue president, approached Jesus and pleaded with Him to come to his daughter, who was seriously sick. Sensing the urgency, Jesus went with him to his house. However, on the way there, Jesus stopped. He knew that someone in the crowd had touched Him and had been healed because of it. He asked, "*Who touched my clothes?*". Despite the urgency of going to Jairus' house, Jesus wanted to personally meet the person who had the trusting faith to touch Him. When the woman came forward, Jesus spoke tenderly to her and affirmed her faith. Jesus wanted a personal encounter with her that would permanently impact her life, not just a passing and transitory one. Jesus invites us not to be afraid of disruptions and interruptions

because such moments might be spaces where God wants us to be present and become a channel of love, peace and comfort to others.

Today, let us be love-driven, not task-driven! In unexpected moments, God can use our lives to channel His life-giving presence to others.

Reflective question:

Am I open to paying attention to the interruptions that come my way?



