

"If you love others,  
you will never do them wrong"



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

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# **PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR A**

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**Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Matthew 25:1-13**

*Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of Heaven will be like this: Ten wedding attendants took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones, though they took their lamps, took no oil with them, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him." Then all those wedding attendants woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other attendants arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "In truth I tell you, I do not know you. So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour."*

Do not be afraid of holiness

*"...we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants...What God wants is for you all to be holy" (1<sup>st</sup> reading). We often misunderstand the true meaning of "holiness". To be holy is not about achieving moral perfection, rigidly following rules or living apart from the world. God wants all of us to walk the path of holiness by living a life of love in the concrete places where we are and to the tangible people we meet each day. We strive for holiness when we make time to show care for others in the simplest gestures. This implies a daily commitment to prayer where we experience His presence of love that quiets our fears and renews our strength to love.*

The gospel reminds us that we need to keep the lamps of our faith burning bright by feeding it constantly with the oil of love expressed through our good works to our fellow brothers and sisters.

**Reflective question:**

How is God calling me to live this day?

**Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:9-11, Matthew 25:14-30**

*Jesus told his disciples this parable: "It is like a man about to go abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one, each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out on his journey. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now a long time afterwards, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness." Next the man with the two talents came forward. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness." Last came forward the man who had the single talent. "Sir," said he, "I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you had not sown and gathering where you had not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back." But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have got my money back with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."*

Love one another

*"As for loving our brothers, there is no need for anyone to write to you about that, since you have learnt from God yourselves to love one*

*another...*" (1<sup>st</sup> reading). God Himself has taught us how to love through Jesus. Thus, we look to Him and learn from Him how to live a life of love. St. Paul further explained what Christian love looked like when he urged the Thessalonians to live quietly and attend to their own business. To love is to live quietly and not to make a display of ourselves when we do good deeds for others. Instead, like Jesus, we give of ourselves quietly without seeking attention and praise. To love is to attend to our business by not meddling in what others are doing. Again, like Jesus, we love by being there for others, especially in their needs.

In the gospel, Jesus has given us His love so that we can pass His love to others. Love is not to be hidden and kept, like the servant with the one talent, but to be given away to benefit others.

**Reflective question:**

How can I show my love for God and others today?

**Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Jeremiah 20:7-9, Romans 12:1-2, Matthew 16:21-27**

*Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to rebuke him. 'Heaven preserve you, Lord,' he said, 'this must not happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because you are thinking not as God thinks but as human beings do.' Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will anyone gain by winning the whole world and forfeiting his life? Or what can anyone offer in exchange for his life? For the Son of man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his behaviour.'*

Living for God's Kingdom

*"What, then, will anyone gain by winning the whole world and forfeiting his life?"* Jesus tells us clearly that our lives are not meant for winning

and gaining power, status, or prestige. As His followers, we follow His footsteps by losing, giving our lives for a greater cause and making a difference in the lives of others. We no longer conform to the ways of the world that fight to have domination and power over others. As St. Paul states in the second reading, we are to offer ourselves as a pleasing sacrifice to God by dedicating ourselves to bringing His Kingdom of love, peace and service to our family, parish, faith community and society. In the first reading, the Prophet Jeremiah remained faithful to speaking against the corruption and injustice in Israel despite being attacked and rejected. Indeed, the path of discipleship is not easy. Are we ready to embrace it, as the Prophet Jeremiah did?

As we pray with today's readings, let us examine our commitment to follow Jesus and accept the demands of being His disciples. May we have the courage and faithfulness to transform the places where we are to be reflections of God's Kingdom.

**Reflective question:**

What does it mean for me to live as Jesus' disciple?

**Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Luke 4:16-30**

*Jesus came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?' But he replied, 'No doubt you will quote me the saying, "Physician, heal yourself," and tell me, "We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own country." ' And he went on, 'In truth I tell you, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country. 'There were many*

widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a town in Sidonia. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many suffering from virulent skin-diseases in Israel, but none of these was cured -- only Naaman the Syrian.' When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him off the cliff, but he passed straight through the crowd and walked away.

### Sent by God to others

"The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives..." In the gospel today, Jesus recognised that it was God His Father, who was the one who sent Him to mission. Out of love for His Father, Jesus preached the Good News to those who needed to know about God's love, opened the eyes of the blind to see God's active presence in the world and gave freedom to those burdened with sin. Even though He faced rejection, He remained faithful to God's mission to the end.

Today, let us know that God also sends us on a mission. Each of us has the task of making a difference in the lives of the people around us. Our words can heal the wounds of people. Our acts of service can help others in their needs. Our sickness can bring life to others. Let us humbly ask Jesus to enkindle in us the joy of being sent as His instruments.

### **Reflective question:**

Am I aware that God has made me for a mission?

**Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11, Luke 4:31-37**

*Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because his word carried authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean devil, and he shouted at the top of his voice, 'Ha! 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 devil, throwing the man into the middle, went out of him without hurting him at all. Astonishment seized them and they were all saying to one another, 'What is it in his words? He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority and power and they come out.' And the news of him travelled all through the surrounding countryside.*

### To be people of authority

*"...his teaching made a deep impression on them because his word carried authority" and "What is it in his words? He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority and power and they come out".* The word "authority" appears twice in today's gospel. What makes Jesus a person of authority? Jesus is a person of authority because He is filled with the Holy Spirit. Anointed and strengthened by the Spirit of God, He makes people to be free. By living in freedom, they can grow and be alive with God's life and love within them.

We often wrongly associate authority as the power to control people and make them do what we want. Let us look at Jesus and how He exercises His authority. He liberates us from constant fear, self-centredness, anger and resentment. Instead, He empowers us to grow as persons. Today, we are called to do the same. May we, filled with the Holy Spirit, have the authority to enable those around us to live abundantly.

### **Reflective question:**

Do I exercise my authority by enriching the lives of those around me?

### **Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Colossians 1:1-8, Luke 4:38-44**

*Leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in the grip of a high fever and they asked him to do something for her. Standing over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got up and began to serve them. At sunset all those who had friends suffering from diseases of one kind or another brought them to him, and laying his hands on each he cured them. Devils too came out of many people, shouting, 'You are the Son of God.' But he warned them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. When daylight came he left the house and made his*



*way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him leaving them, but he answered, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do.' And he continued his proclamation in the synagogues of Judaea.*

### Appointed and sent

*"From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus..." (1<sup>st</sup> reading). St. Paul recognised that it was God who appointed him as an apostle and not because of his capabilities and character that made him an apostle sent to proclaim the Good News of His love. He kept His sight on God, who called and sent Him.*

In today's gospel, the people were happy with Jesus' work of healing their sick and wanted Him to stay on. However, Jesus knew that God sent Him to go and preach the Good News to others and touch more lives. He was clear with the mission He received from God His Father. Jesus' clarity of what He was supposed to do sprung from His prayer, His time alone with God. Today, let us enter into silence and pray. Through prayer, we know that God has sent us on a mission. We are in this world not to live aimlessly but to be instruments of His love.

### **Reflective question:**

Am I aware of the mission that I have?

### **Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Colossians 1:9-14, Luke 5:1-11**

*Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats at the water's edge. The fishermen had got out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats -- it was Simon's - - and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' Simon replied, 'Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come*

*and help them; when these came, they filled both boats to sinking point. When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely awestruck at the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is people you will be catching.' Then, bringing their boats back to land they left everything and followed him.*

### God of abundance

In today's gospel, Simon did not catch anything despite fishing all night. When Jesus told him to push his boat to deeper water, he and his companions caught so many fish that the nets began to tear. What does the image of the large catch speak to us? It gives us the security of knowing that God cares for us and gives us abundantly what we need, materially and spiritually. He gives us so that in turn we can give ourselves for the good of others.

Having experienced the generosity of God, Jesus called Simon to become a fisher of people by leading and serving them. Responding to the call, Simon, James and John left everything they had to their catch, boat and all to follow Jesus, who truly captivated their hearts. In our lives, God provides for all that we need. More than material things, God gives us His very presence of love. We need to go to Him with open hands and receive the gift of Himself that brings us peace. May we also listen to His call to be part of His mission of bringing people to His Kingdom.

### **Reflective question:**

What is Jesus' message to me today?

### **Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, The Nativity of Mary.**

#### **Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 1:18-23**

*This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David,*

*do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: Look! the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.*

### Nativity of Mother Mary

God did not choose the rich or the influential to be the Mother of God. Instead, He chose a lowly and ordinary woman from a village in Nazareth to be the one to bear the Messiah. Out of love, she responded to Him by dedicating her life to the mission of being a mother to Jesus. She bore Him, took care of Him, nurtured Him and followed Him as His disciple faithfully right to the cross.

Ordinary as we are, God has chosen us to be His beloveds and His disciples, just as He had chosen Mary. We are present in our families and communities and among our friends and colleagues to bearers of God's love and truth, and we are called to help them grow closer to Him. This is our calling as Christians. Today, as we celebrate the birthday of Mary, let us ask our Mother to guide us to be faithful to God and help us to make our words and actions bring life to those we encounter each day.

### **Reflective question:**

Am I willing to live my life for God by being the bearer of God's life to the people I meet today?

**Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> September, St. Peter Claver.**

**Colossians 1:21-23, Luke 6:1-5**

*One Sabbath Jesus was walking through the cornfields, and his disciples were picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands and eating them. Some of the Pharisees said, 'Why are you doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath day?' Jesus answered them, 'So you have not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry- how he went into the house of God and took the loaves of the offering and ate them and gave them to his followers, loaves which the priests alone are*

*allowed to eat?' And he said to them, 'The Son of man is master of the Sabbath.'*

### God is love

Jesus and His disciples were walking through the cornfields, and the hungry disciples picked ears of corn and ate them. Immediately, the Pharisees judged them for breaking the Sabbath law. Though these religious people were careful to adhere to a set of beliefs and regulations, they failed to live up to the heart of their faith, i.e. loving as God loves. Instead, they judged harshly and lacked compassion for others. What about us? Do we tend to judge rather than show compassion the way God is?

Jesus calls us back to what truly matters. As Christians, we have the duty to obey the law of love by building bridges, not walls; by looking at the ordinary needs of the people, not sticking to structures and norms; by forgiving and uniting, not condemning and finger-pointing. Today, let us be loved by God and to share that love joyfully with those around us.

### **Reflective question:**

Do I tend to judge people harshly?

### **Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time.**

#### **Ezekiel 33:7-9, Romans 13:8-10, Matthew 18:15-20**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: whatever the misdemeanour, the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain the charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a gentile or a tax collector. In truth I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'*

### Fraternal correction

All three readings of today speak of the need to correct another person. Often, we find it easier to point out the mistakes of others behind their back. Yet, Jesus calls us to practice fraternal correction. As Prophet

Ezekiel points out in the first reading, it is our responsibility to each other that we reach out and work for the good of our brothers and sisters. We must never correct others out of pride and the eagerness to show others their wrongdoings in order to demonstrate our superiority. Correction should be founded in love. The purpose is to show our genuine love for our brothers and sisters and help them grow closer to God and others.

To correct others implies that we are open to being corrected by others. As Jesus said, "*Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?*" (Matthew 7:3). Let us humbly recognise our brokenness and lack of love in us first so that we can truly love others in their limitations. "*Love is the only thing that cannot hurt your neighbour*" (2<sup>nd</sup> reading). Let love lead us.

### **Reflective question:**

Do I recognise that fraternal correction is an act of love?

### **Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Colossians 1:24-2:3, Luke 6:6-11**

*On the Sabbath he went into the synagogue and began to teach, and a man was present, and his right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him to see if he would cure somebody on the Sabbath, hoping to find something to charge him with. But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and stand out in the middle!' And he came forward and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, 'I put it to you: is it permitted on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it?' Then he looked round at them all and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was restored. But they were furious and began to discuss the best way of dealing with Jesus.*

#### Always choose to love and do good

In today's gospel, Jesus rebuked the religious leaders who were so attached to the law that they were blinded to the needs of the man with the withered hand. In their hardened hearts, compassion did not exist. Jesus felt compassion for the man and chose to heal and restore him to total health. Seeing the good that Jesus did, the scribes and the Pharisees became enraged and plotted His death.

May we have compassionate hearts to look at people in need and may we have the courage to draw close to them and help them. In our mission to do what is good and loving, we might face opposition from others. Let us follow Jesus' example and always choose to walk the path of love.

**Reflective question:**

What strikes me from today's gospel?

**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, The Most Holy Name of Mary.**

**Colossians 2:6-15, Luke 6:12-19**

*Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.*

Pray

"*Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God*". Jesus spent time in prayer because He needed to make an important decision. Often, we sought advice from friends, read self-help books, etc. Do we spend time in silence, talk to God about our situations and listen to what He has to say to us?

"*When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them...*". After spending time in prayer, Jesus decided and picked twelve people to be part of His inner circle of followers. His choice of the twelve apostles was the fruit of prayer. Yet, when we look at these people that Jesus chose, we see their imperfections. In fact, Judas was the key person who betrayed Jesus for thirty silver coins. Does prayer help us make perfect decisions? Prayer does not guarantee that our choices will

be faultless and all our problems will be solved. Instead, we pray to enter into a deeper relationship of love with God and find our daily strength and peace in Him.

**Reflective question:**

Do I treasure my daily prayer with God?

**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> September, St. John Chrysostom.**

**Colossians 3:1-11, Luke 6: 20-26**

*Fixing his eyes on his disciples he said: How blessed are you who are poor: the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are hungry now: you shall have your fill. Blessed are you who are weeping now: you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, look!-your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets. But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now. Alas for you who have plenty to eat now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who are laughing now: you shall mourn and weep. Alas for you when everyone speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.'*

Eyes raised to heaven and feet rooted in the ground

"...you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth..." (1<sup>st</sup> reading). St. Paul is not advocating that the spiritual realm is better than the material world. Instead, his main message is to remind us to set our minds on the Risen Christ and live our lives here and now for Him. How?

Jesus, in the gospel, tells us how. We need to make a difference in the lives of others around us. To be a Christian is not to live for ourselves and be indifferent to the suffering of others. Today, let us dare to be with the marginalised and work for their good by sharing our resources, treating them with dignity, etc. Let us open our eyes to see that many people are poor because they have no one to love and care for them. We draw close to them and bring God's comforting presence. By doing so, we find true joy that will never fade away.

**Reflective question:**

How can I live this day for God and others?

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.****Numbers 21:4-9 or Philippians 2:6-11, John 3:13-17**

*Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man; as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.'*

Look at Jesus

"*On the way through the wilderness the people lost patience...*" (1<sup>st</sup> reading, Numbers 21:4). The Israelites travelled through the waterless desert without seeing any sign of the Promised Land. Thus, they became discouraged and impatient. Let us reflect on our own journey through the wilderness of limitations, difficulties and problems. In moments of trials, we often end up tired and disillusioned. With heads downcast, we forgot to look up towards God. In the passage of Numbers, God told Moses, "*Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. If anyone is bitten and looks at it, he shall live*". Suffering is a reality that we cannot avoid. Yet, God calls us to look at the "*fiery serpent*", who is none other than Jesus Himself. Fixing our eyes on the crucified Jesus with His outstretched arms, we enter into the loving embrace of God's love.

Let us recognise God's greatest gift to us: Jesus. As we journey through life, let us keep looking at Jesus, not with fear but with loving trust. In Him, we find our security, joy and hope.

**Reflective question:**

Do I allow Jesus to illuminate the darkness of my life with His light of joy and hope?



## **Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> September, Our Lady of Sorrows.**

**Hebrews 5:7-9, John 19:25-27**

*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.*

### Mary's faith

Today, let us contemplate Mother Mary as she stood at the foot of the cross. There, at the cross, Mary is an icon of faith. Her faith in God led her to believe that suffering and death would not have the final victory, and thus, she trusted even though her heart was filled with sadness at the sight of her tortured Son. Her faith in God filled her heart with compassionate love. Unlike the rest of Jesus' disciples, she did not run away from Jesus in His moment of anguish. She stayed and suffered with Him.

Today, let us humbly ask Mother Mary to share with us her faith. A faith that continues to trust in God, no matter the sufferings that come our way. A faith that makes us compassionate and draws us close to the people around us as they bear their heavy crosses. Mary, Mother of Sorrows, teaches us that our faith becomes incarnated when we are one with the sufferings of those we love and the people in the world. Today, let us try our best to reach out to someone we know who is suffering and pray for victims of violence.

### **Reflective question:**

How can I imitate Mother Mary's trusting and compassionate faith?

## **Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> September, SS. Cornelius & Cyprian.**

**1 Timothy 1:15-17, Luke 6:43-49**

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. Every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. Good people draw what is good from the store of goodness in their hearts; bad people draw what is bad from the store of badness. For the words of the mouth flow out of what fills the heart. 'Why*

*do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say? Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them -- I will show you what such a person is like. Such a person is like the man who, when he built a house, dug, and dug deep, and laid the foundations on rock; when the river was in flood it bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. But someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!"*

### Solid foundation

We all know that the foundation of a building is essential. A weak foundation will cause it to collapse when it faces a calamity. In the same way, our life of faith needs to have a solid foundation. As we reflect on today's gospel, let us listen to Jesus as He calls us to have our foundation not on sand but rock. God is our rock. Having God as our rock, our foundation, implies that we allow the values of the gospel to mould the way we relate with others, the decisions we make, the habits we have, the words we use, etc. As a result, we become Christ-like to those around us.

Let us anchor our lives on God alone. Grounded firmly on Him, we live as healthy trees bearing good fruits.

### **Reflective question:**

Is God my solid foundation?

### **Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

#### **Ecclesiasticus 27:30-28:7, Romans 14:7-9, Matthew 18:21-35**

*Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times. And so the kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet, with the words, "Be patient with me and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry*

*for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow-servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him, saying, "Pay what you owe me." His fellow-servant fell at his feet and appealed to him, saying, "Be patient with me and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow-servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for the man and said to him, "You wicked servant, I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow-servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'*

### Forgiveness and freedom

Forgiveness is not an easy matter for us. We always think that we are in the right and others are in the wrong. Relationships among families and friends break up because of the inability to forgive. In the first reading, the book of Ecclesiasticus states: "*Resentment and anger, these are foul things, and both are found with the sinner... Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven*". Resentment and anger in us are poisons that can only cause us harm. In order to be liberated from them and to heal ourselves, we must first forgive those who hurt us. Let us remember that forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling. We choose to forgive and not hold onto resentment and vindictiveness.

In the gospel, Peter asked Jesus, "*How often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me?*" Jesus replied, "*Seventy-seven times*", meaning that forgiveness does not have limits. As Christians, we must always forgive by restoring unity. Today, let us think of a person we are angry with or someone we do not like. Let us pray for them.

### **Reflective question:**

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

## **Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

### **1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 7:1-10**

*When Jesus had come to the end of all he wanted the people to hear, he went into Capernaum. A centurion there had a servant, a favourite of his, who was sick and near death. Having heard about Jesus he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him saying, 'He deserves this of you, because he is well disposed towards our people; he built us our synagogue himself.' So Jesus went with them, and was not very far from the house when the centurion sent word to him by some friends to say to him, 'Sir, do not put yourself to any trouble because I am not worthy to have you under my roof; and that is why I did not presume to come to you myself; let my boy be cured by your giving the word. For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, "Go," and he goes; to another, "Come here," and he comes; to my servant, "Do this," and he does it.' When Jesus heard these words he was astonished at him and, turning round, said to the crowd following him, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith as great as this.' And when the messengers got back to the house they found the servant in perfect health.*

#### A person of great faith

Today's passage presents a Roman centurion who cared for his servant who was sick and in great agony. Instead of disregarding the sick servant as a liability, the centurion felt compassion for him. When he heard that Jesus was in town, he sent some people to ask Jesus to heal his servant. Knowing that Jews would usually not like to enter into the house of a Gentile, he sent word to Jesus saying, "'Sir, do not put yourself to any trouble because I am not worthy to have you under my roof...let my boy be cured by your giving the word...". His words reveal the great confidence he had in Jesus. The centurion knew that Jesus' word had the power to heal. Jesus was surprised by the trust displayed by the centurion. He recognised that his faith surpassed what He had ever seen in anyone from Israel.

Today, let us learn from this Roman centurion by approaching Jesus with confident trust and not with doubt or fear. We pray, "*Lord, just say a word.*"

*I trust in the power of your word. You know what I truly need. Just say a word, I will be healed."*

**Reflective question:**

What prevents me from going to Jesus with confident trust?

**Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, St. Januarius.**

**1 Timothy 3:1-13, Luke 7:11-17**

*Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. Now when he was near the gate of the town there was a dead man being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople was with her. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her and said to her, 'Don't cry.' Then he went up and touched the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you: get up.' And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.' And this view of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.*

Don't cry

*"When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her and said to her, 'Don't cry.'"* In today's gospel, Jesus entered a town called Nain and saw a woman crying as her dead son was carried out to be buried. He looked at the woman with compassion and told her, *"Don't cry"*. Jesus looks at us when we suffer from loneliness, grief, disappointment, etc. He is not indifferent to our pain, but offers us His comforting presence. He tells us, *"Don't cry...Don't be afraid... Don't give up."* He knows and feels our pain. This is the tenderness of Jesus, our God who is always with us.

Let us turn to Jesus for comfort and peace whenever we face situations that overwhelm us or when tragedies strike us. Our problems might not go away, and our loved ones who died will not come back to life, but we cling to Jesus, the source of solace. Only He can give us joy where there should be sadness and peace where there should be anguish.

**Reflective question:**

Have I experienced Jesus' comforting presence in times of sadness and loss?

**Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, SS. Laurent Imbert, Jacques Chastan; SS. Andrew Kim Tae-gon and Paul Chong Ha-sang and companions.**

**1 Timothy 3:14-16, Luke 7:31-35**

*Jesus said to the people, 'What comparison, then, can I find for the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children shouting to one another while they sit in the market place: We played the pipes for you, and you wouldn't dance; we sang dirges, and you wouldn't cry. For John the Baptist has come, not eating bread, not drinking wine, and you say, "He is possessed." The Son of man has come, eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.'*

**Missing to see goodness in others**

In today's gospel, Jesus was frustrated with the criticism from the people around Him. The religious leaders criticised John the Baptist for being too radical because he chose to live an aesthetic lifestyle. He wore clothing made from camel hair and ate locusts and wild honey. On the other hand, Jesus focussed His ministry on being one with sinners and outcasts. He ate with them and spoke to them about God's love. They grumbled that He was a glutton and a friend of sinners. Despite their differences, both of them were sent by God. However, the people were not happy with either and rejected them.

Due to our tendency to judge others by how they dress, relate with others, behave, etc., we close ourselves to them. Too often, such an attitude prevents us from perceiving goodness in people. "*Yet wisdom is justified by all her children*". Jesus pointed out that those with the wisdom of God are the ones who truly have eyes to see goodness in others and have hearts open to welcome them into our lives.

**Reflective question:**

Am I open to changing how I look at and relate with others?

**Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.  
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13, Matthew 9:9-13**

*As Jesus was walking on from there he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. Now while he was at table in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice. And indeed I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'*

The gaze of love

Matthew was regarded as a sinner and a traitor in the eyes of the Jews because he collected taxes from them and gave the money to the Romans. One day, Jesus drew close to Matthew and looked at him with love and mercy. The gaze of Jesus moved Matthew to experience himself being loved and forgiven by God, thus setting him free and healing him. At that moment, Matthew did not stay the same because something had changed inside him. Hearing the voice of Jesus calling him, Matthew left his possessions and followed Him.

We are called to recognise that Matthew's story is also ours. Often, we put negative labels on ourselves and burden ourselves with judgements and criticisms that others heaped upon us. Jesus never tires of coming to us and looking at us with His gaze of love. He sees beyond our limitations, failures and appearances. Let us be looked at by Jesus again. Let us open our hearts to listen to His call, "Follow Me". May His merciful love transform us from within.

**Reflective question:**

What strikes me most from this time of prayer?

**Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 24<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**1 Timothy 6:2-12, Luke 8:1-3**

Now it happened that after this he made his way through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of

God. With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their own resources.

### Contentment

*"We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it; but as long as we have food and clothing, let us be content with that. People who long to be rich are a prey to temptation; they get trapped into all sorts of foolish and dangerous ambitions ..."* (1<sup>st</sup> reading). Many of us desire more material things because we think that they can make our lives better. We are also surrounded by advertisements that make us feel discontent and unhappy if we are without a particular item. St. Paul reminds us that we have nothing when we come into the world and will leave everything behind when we leave it. As Christians, we are content in whatever situation we are in because we are certain that God is with us and provides what we need.

In today's gospel, St. Luke speaks of the women disciples of Jesus who accompanied Him on His journey. They *"provided for them out of their resources"*. Instead of accumulating, they gave away their resources for the sake of God's Kingdom. Today, let us make Jesus the centre of our lives, not material things.

### **Reflective question;**

Is Jesus the centre of my life?

**Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, St. Pius Pietrelcina.**

**1 Timothy 6:13-16, Luke 8:4-15**

*With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, Jesus told this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. Now as he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell in the middle of thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into good soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Anyone who has ears for listening should listen!'*



*His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, 'To you is granted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God; for the rest it remains in parables, so that they may look but not perceive, listen but not understand. This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up. As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and never produce any crops. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.*

### Speak. Your servant is listening

Do we pay attention to the Word of God? Or do we pay more attention to the messages on our handphones? Today, Jesus tells us how we fail to take the Word of God seriously and allow it to impact and transform our lives. The ways are like the seeds that fall on the path: Those who hear but do not keep the Word in their hearts; the rock: those who listen but whose faith is too shallow to allow the Word to take root and grow; and the thorns: those who listen, assimilate but the worldly pressures choke the Word. The good soil receives the seeds and allows them to take root and grow. We are called to be like the good soil. Are we?

In the gospel, we have people, like Mother Mary, Matthew, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, etc. They are examples of fertile soils who listened carefully, assimilated fully and implemented effectively all that Jesus said. Today, let us listen to what Jesus has to say to us.

### **Reflective question:**

Which soil am I at this point of my faith journey?

**Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> September, World Day of Migrants and Refugees.  
Isaiah 55:6-9, Philippians 1:20-24, 27, Matthew 20:1-16**

*Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'Now the kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, "You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage." So they went. At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing around, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" "Because no one has hired us," they answered. He said to them, "You go into my vineyard too." In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first." So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. They took it, but grumbled at the landowner saying, "The men who came last have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in all the heat." He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the lastcomer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why should you be envious because I am generous?" Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.'*

Duty to walk with all

*"... for my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways- it is the Lord who speaks "* (1<sup>st</sup> reading). Today, the Church celebrates World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The world tends to exclude the poor and vulnerable, as the more privileged countries exploit the developing countries by emptying their natural and human resources. Often, we are also guilty of being insensitive to the cries of others and indulging ourselves by having a comfortable life, good food and expensive gadgets. In today's first reading, God tells us that His ways and thoughts are not like ours because His heart is always full of love and compassion for the poor.

God is like the owner of the vineyard who goes out searching for the ones who are excluded and not wanted by anyone. God does not forget them. Today, He calls us to help Him build a society where no one is left behind. To be a Christian is not just being concerned with spiritual matters. Our faith should push us to be a neighbour to all and commit to caring for the less privileged.

**Reflective question:**

What is my attitude towards those standing at the periphery of society?

**Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 25<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.**

**Ezra 1:1-6, Luke 8:16-18**

*Jesus said to the crowds: 'No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, it is put on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in. For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be made known and brought to light. So take care how you listen; anyone who has, will be given more; anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has.'*

Listener and doer of the Word

“*So take care how you listen...*”. In life, we tend not to listen attentively to others. Often, we passively hear sounds and words but fail to listen intentionally to the message transmitted by the speaker. In the same way we fail to listen to others, we also fail to listen to God. God does speak clearly to us. However, we sometimes do not take the time to listen and end up not doing what He wants.

We must listen intentionally to God's Word. It is a mistake when we think we are listening as long as we attend mass or listen to online talks. Listening involves giving space for His Word to transform us- from self-centredness to other-centredness, from pride to humility, and from anger to forgiveness. Listening also opens our hearts to the desire to live the Word out in our daily lives and to go out and share it with others. Today, let us allow God's Word to make a difference in our lives so that, through our deeds and words, we can become lights guiding people to God.

**Reflective question:**

Do I intentionally listen to God in prayer, live it out, and share it with others?

**Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, SS. Cosmas and Damian.****Ezra 6:7-8, 12, 14-20, Luke 9:19-21**

*The mother and the brothers of Jesus came looking for him, but they could not get to him because of the crowd. He was told, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to see you.' But he said in answer, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.'*

We belong to God

We belong to God's family when we hear the Word of God and put it into practice. As St. James states in his letter, "*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do*" (James 1:22-25). This is what a true disciple of Jesus does- listen and do.

We listen and do His Word, not as an obligation, but as a privilege, a gift. The more we listen to Him and put His Word into practice, the closer we grow in our relationship with Him. In this time of prayer, let us take joy that we belong to God.

**Reflective question:**

What is Jesus' message that I would want to put into practice today?

**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> September, St. Vincent de Paul.****Ezra 9:5-9, Luke 9:1-6**

*Jesus called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, 'Take nothing for the journey: neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money; and do not*

*have a spare tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there; and when you leave let your departure be from there. As for those who do not welcome you, when you leave their town shake the dust from your feet as evidence against them.' So they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and healing everywhere.*

### Remembering the goodness of God

*"For we are slaves, but God has not forgotten us in our slavery; he has shown us kindness..."* (1<sup>st</sup> reading). In his prayer, Ezra remembered with wonderment the faithfulness of God despite the unfaithfulness of His people. In His goodness, God brought the remnant of Israel back from exile to their own homeland. Though the future was uncertain, Ezra trusted God's faithful love and mercy. This passage invites us to remember with gratitude all God has done for us. The act of remembering is important because we become mindful of God's faithful love for us, even when we have chosen to wander away from Him. It helps us to trust and hope in Him as we journey on through the joys and sadness of life.

In the gospel, Jesus sends us out to bring the Good News that God is faithful love to the people around us. May our words we speak, the options we make, and the gestures we do be signs pointing the way for others to encounter God.

### **Reflective question:**

What are the key experiences of God's love that I have in life?

**Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> September, St. Wenceslaus, SS. Lawrence Ruiz and companions.**

**Haggai 1:1-8, Luke 9:7-9**

*Herod the tetrarch had heard about all that was going on; and he was puzzled, because some people were saying that John had risen from the dead, others that Elijah had reappeared, still others that one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. But Herod said, 'John? I beheaded him. So who is this I hear such reports about?' And he was anxious to see him.*

### To see with faith

In the gospel passage, Herod heard about all the impressive things Jesus did and said. He wanted to see Jesus. Why? It was not because Herod was interested in understanding the God that Jesus came to reveal. Instead, he was curious and treated Jesus as a fascinating spectacle.

What about us? Are we eager to “see” Jesus? Today, let us have eyes of faith to see Jesus in moments of today: in our prayer, our relationships with others and the situations we live in. To see Jesus implies our commitment to follow Him and allow Him to be the centre of our lives.

### **Reflective question:**

Do I have the desire to see Jesus today?

### **Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, The Holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.**

#### **Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 or Revelation 12:7-12, John 1: 47-51**

*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.'*

### God Who Reveals Himself

In today's gospel passage, Jesus saw Nathanael as a man searching for something more in his life and promised him that he would see “*greater things*”. The “*greater things*” that Nathanael would experience was to have a personal relationship with God.

Jesus then used the image of Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28: 12-17 to show us that God desires to enter into a mutual sharing of life and love with His people. The angels coming down represent God descending into our hearts to reveal Himself. The angels ascending to heaven

represent our response to Him as we open and share our life and love with Him. Sometimes, we fail to listen to God's invitation to have a relationship with Him. Today, let us listen attentively to God so that we can come to know the "*greater things*" that He has in store for us.

**Reflective question:**

What prevents me from listening attentively and encountering God today?

**Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, St. Jerome.**

**Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15, Luke 9:43-45**

*At a time when everyone was full of admiration for all he did, Jesus said to his disciples, 'For your part, you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.' But they did not understand what he said; it was hidden from them so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.*

To be faithful to the end

In the gospel, Jesus was not distracted by human approval because He did not base His life on them. Jesus came to live for God and others. In His mission, He knew that there would be people who would oppose Him and reject Him. He was willing to take on the path of suffering as a consequence of staying faithful to His mission. What about us? What drives us to do what we do? May our deep joy come from doing God's will, and not from human approval.

Jesus told His disciples to prepare them for the future ahead. However, they heard His words but could not understand Him when He spoke about rejection, suffering and death. Like the disciples, we do not fully understand the events we live in, especially the experiences of suffering. When a loved one falls sick, when we go through a crisis, when bad things happen to innocent people, etc., we cannot grasp the meaning of it all. Our faith in God helps us trust that He is with us like He was with Jesus on the cross.

**Reflective question:**

What speaks to me in this time of prayer?



By: Mike Moyers