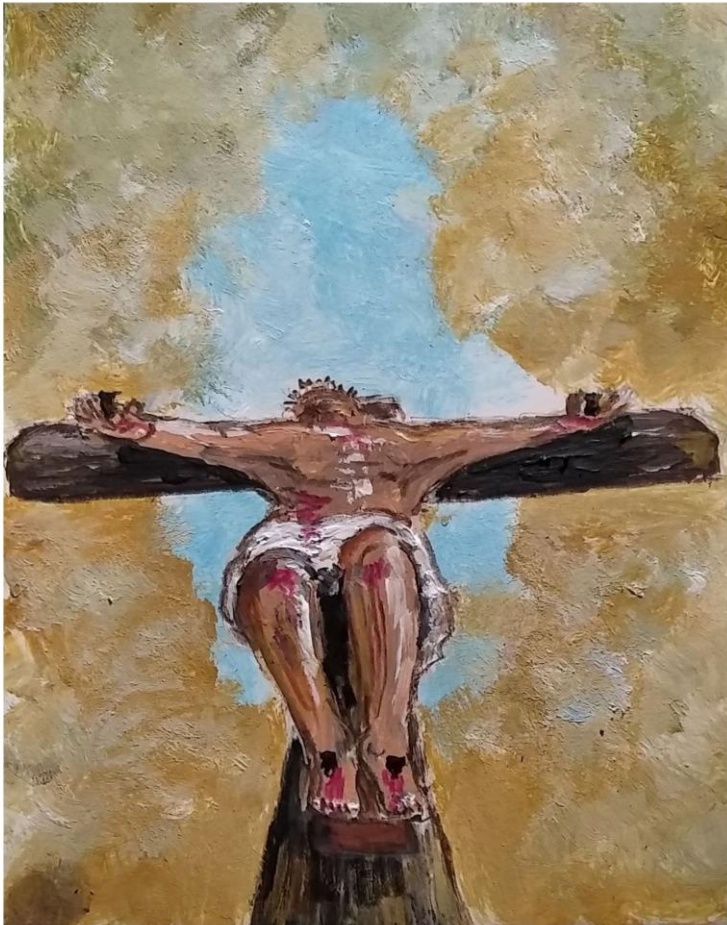


PRAYER FOR LIVING

**“God loved the world so much that
He gave His only Son.”**

SEPTEMBER
YEAR A



BY SR SANDRA SEOW
VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES

PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR A

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Tuesday, 1st September, 22nd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 2:10–16, 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 he spoke with authority. In the synagogue there was a man who was possessed by the spirit of an unclean devil, and it shouted at the top of its 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 said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the devil, throwing the man down in front of everyone, went out of him without hurting him at all. Astonishment seized them and they were all saying to one another, 'What teaching! He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority and power and they come out.' And reports of him went all through the surrounding countryside.

Knowing The Depth Of God

In today's first reading, St. Paul states, "*The Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.*" The Holy Spirit fully knows the heart, mind, and plans of God. Out of love, God gives us the gift of His Spirit every day so that we may understand the depth of His love and mercy for us - things that human logic and reasoning alone cannot uncover or comprehend. The Spirit opens our hearts, allowing us to look beyond surface appearances, fear, distractions and worldly values in order to encounter God. This encounter enables us to experience the relationship He desires with us, so that we can live in the fullness of His grace and love.

In the Gospel, the people who listened to Jesus were amazed because He taught with authority. His words had the power to heal and bring freedom to others. Today, we are invited to trust in the powerful Word of Jesus, which can bring us life, restoration, and hope. While life is full of struggles and difficulties that we cannot avoid, we find security in Jesus, who offers us His presence during these challenges.

Reflective question:

Do I invite the Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts, decisions, and relationships, and do I believe that Christ's Word still has power in my life today?

Wednesday, 2nd September, 22nd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 3:1–9, Luke 4:38–44

Leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever and they asked him to do something for her. Leaning over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got up and began to wait on 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, howling, 'You are the Son of God'. But he rebuked 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 preaching in the synagogues of Judaea.

An Undivided Heart

In the first reading, St. Paul addressed the Christian community in Corinth, which was experiencing division among its members. Some said, “*I am for Paul*” and others said, “*I am for Apollos*.” Paul reminded the community that neither he nor Apollos should be their focus; rather, only God should be the centre. They were merely instruments who planted and watered the seed of faith, but it was God alone who gave the growth. A single-minded life of service begins when we make God our centre, secure in the reality that we belong to Him.

In the Gospel, Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law and many others who came to Him. After a tiring day, Jesus withdrew to a quiet place to pray. Although the crowds tried to keep Him from leaving, Jesus did not allow popularity or others' opinions to define His mission. He knew that God wanted Him to proclaim the Good News in other places too. Today, let us be rooted in prayer, so that our hearts can be completely centred on God, rather than on self-importance, popularity, or the pressure to please others. From this single focus, our lives of love and service will flow.

Reflective question:

What distractions keep my heart from loving and serving God with undivided love?

Thursday, 3rd September, St. Gregory the Great.

1 Corinthians 3:18–23, 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 close to the bank. The fishermen had gone 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'. 'Master,' Simon replied '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 signaled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two 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 overcome by 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 men you will catch'. Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

If You Say So

In the Gospel, Simon Peter had spent a long night fishing but caught nothing, leaving him tired and disappointed. Then, Jesus asked him to put out into deep water and lower his nets again. This request seemed unreasonable. Yet, Peter responded, *"Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets."* Peter's reply to Jesus is one of the most beautiful statements of faith in the Gospel. He put down his nets into deep water not because the situation made sense, but because he trusted Jesus, the Person who spoke to him.

Today, Jesus asks us to enter again into the *"deep water"*, which may represent different challenges for each person, such as forgiveness, taking on a tough responsibility, or loving someone who is hard to love.

We may not fully understand why He calls us to do so, but we can say with Peter, *"If you say so, I will lower the nets."* Let us trust in Jesus, for He is faithful and always close to us.

Reflective question:

What "deep water" is Jesus asking me to enter again?

Friday, 4th September, 22nd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 4:1–5, Luke 5:33–39

The Pharisees and scribes said to Jesus, 'John's disciples are always fasting and saying prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees too, but yours go on eating and drinking'. Jesus replied, 'Surely you cannot make the bridegroom's attendants fast while the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come, the time for the bridegroom to be taken away from them; that will be the time when they will fast.' He also told them this parable, 'No one tears a piece from a new cloak to put it on an old cloak; if he does, not only will he have torn the new one, but the piece taken from the new will not match the old. 'And nobody puts new wine into old skins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and then run out, and the skins will be lost. No; new wine must be put into fresh skins. And nobody who has been drinking old wine wants new. "The old is good" he says.'

Openness To God's Presence

St. Paul in the first reading wrote, *"People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God."* We are reminded that we are stewards of God's message; this is our identity. However, we often act as judges, forming conclusions about others' choices and weaknesses, but only God knows what is in each person's heart. St. Paul reminds us to avoid judging based on appearances. Let us ask for the grace to be humble and approach each individual with compassion and understanding.

In the Gospel, the religious leaders questioned Jesus about His disciples not fasting. Jesus answered that His presence is like a bridegroom bringing joy, and therefore it is not a time for the wedding guests to fast. In Jesus, God has lovingly come close to His people. His disciples were to rejoice in the gift of being with Him. Jesus spoke about the need for new wineskins for new wine, reminding us to remain open to the new

things that God is doing. May we never allow fear or our attachment to familiar routines to prevent God from bringing newness, renewal and transformation in our hearts.

Reflective question:

What is holding me back from letting God work in my life for my own good?

Saturday, 5th September, St. Teresa of Calcutta.

1 Corinthians 4:6–15, Luke 6:1–5

One Sabbath Jesus happened to be taking a walk 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, took the loaves of offering and ate them and gave them to his followers, loaves which only the priests are allowed to eat?' And he said to them, 'The Son of Man is master of the Sabbath.'

Embracing A Heart of Gratitude And Love

In the first reading today, St. Paul calls us to strive for humility by saying, *"What do you have that was not given to you?"* God is the source and giver of everything we are and everything we have. The question is not to diminish us, but to free us from pride and the need to compare ourselves with others, allowing us to live in gratitude. With a heart filled with gratitude, we can then turn to God and ask. *"Lord, how do you want me to use what you have given me today?"*

In the Gospel, religious leaders criticised Jesus' disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath. Jesus did not dismiss the Sabbath. Rather, He revealed its deepest purpose. It was meant as a time for rest and for deepening one's relationship with God. For Jesus, religious observances and rules must always be guided by love. Otherwise, we may follow outwardly while missing the heart of God. Today, Jesus calls us to live with a heart of gratitude and allow our love for God to shape how we live our faith.

Reflective question:

Do I recognise my gifts, achievements, and faith itself as gifts received from God?

Sunday, 6th September, 23rd Sunday in 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, is 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: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any 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 pagan or a tax collector. 'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven. 'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

Love Your Neighbour

Today's second reading reminds us that there is one debt we must never stop paying: the debt of love. St. Paul teaches that every commandment can be summed up in: "*Love your neighbour as yourself.*" The love that God calls us to have is not just a nice feeling or a good intention. Instead, it is a conscious decision to seek the other person's good and to avoid causing them harm. Let St. Paul's words lead us to take steps to practice patience, forgiveness, honesty and compassion, especially when we face difficult challenges in life.

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us how to handle conflict. Too often, we allow resentment to build up in our hearts and talk about others behind their backs. Instead, Jesus calls us to approach the person directly and speak with them clearly and honestly. Our goal should be to help the other person return to what is good. Even if it becomes necessary to involve others in the reconciliation process, we must always show respect and love for the individual, while remaining faithful to the truth. Let us place love at the centre of our relationships, always striving for unity instead of division.

Reflective question:

Do my words and actions seek the good of others?

Monday, 7th September, 23rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 5:1–8, Luke 6:6–11

On the Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him to see if he would cure a man on the Sabbath, hoping to find something to use against him. But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man with the withered hand, 'Stand up! Come out into the middle.' And he came out and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, 'I put it to you: is it against the law 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 better. But they were furious and began to discuss the best way to deal with Jesus.

Do Good Always

In today's Gospel, Jesus entered the synagogue and noticed a man with a withered hand. He knew that the religious leaders were watching Him closely, eager to see if He would do anything that contradicted the Sabbath law. Despite knowing their thoughts, He asked the man to come forward and asked the religious leaders a question: "*Is it against the law on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it?*" By saying this, Jesus wanted them to understand that God's law was not meant to prevent them from loving others. The religious leaders were so focused on following rules to the letter that they could no longer see the suffering person in front of them. In contrast, Jesus placed compassion first. He refused to let religious rules become more important than human need.

Today, Jesus invites us to put the needs of others first, which may mean spending time with someone who is lonely, helping a friend who is facing difficulties, reaching out to someone whom others ignore. May we ask Jesus for compassionate hearts that always choose to do good, even when it is inconvenient or misunderstood.

Reflective question:

What small act of love might God be asking of me today?

Tuesday, 8th September, The Nativity of Mary.

Micah 5:1–4 or Romans 8:28–30, Matthew 1:1–16, 18–23

(Short version): *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 a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when 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 the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means ‘God-is-with-us’.*

Nothing Is Wasted

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Mary. Mary was born in a village to a simple family. Her birth was ordinary and hidden, and without any public recognition. Yet God chose her for a unique mission: to become the Mother of His Son. As we reflect on today’s feast, let us remember that God often begins His greatest work in hidden and ordinary ways. At times in our lives, we might feel insignificant and question the purpose of our existence. The daily things we do seem small, like working, doing household chores or helping someone in need. Yet, when we do these things with love for God and others, nothing is wasted. Like Mary, God has created us to make Him present and carry His love in the world through our words and actions.

In the Gospel, the Angel revealed to Joseph that Jesus would be called Emmanuel, meaning “*God is with us.*” Indeed, He is with us in every part of our lives. Because God is with us, our acts and words of love are never insignificant, as they become signs of His presence to others.

Reflective question:

When I feel small and unimportant, can I trust that God is with me and is working through me?

Wednesday, 9th September, 23rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 7:25–31, Luke 6:20–26

Fixing his eyes on his disciples, Jesus said: 'How happy are you who are poor: yours is the kingdom of God. Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied. Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh. Happy 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, for then 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 your fill now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep. Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.'

Blessed Are You

In the Gospel, Jesus calls us to look at life in a very different way from the world's way. The world values individualism, self-importance, status and personal gains. Jesus calls the poor, hungry, sorrowful, and rejected for His sake "*Blessed*", "*Happy*". They are blessed because they are those who place God at the centre of their lives, and learn to depend on Him and trust in Him in their present circumstances.

Jesus warns those who tend to value wealth, comfort, and others' approval. While material possessions, comfort, and appreciation from others are not inherently bad, the danger lies in relying on them for one's sense of security. Those who do so may feel they do not need God and may be indifferent to others' needs. Today, let us allow the words of Jesus to challenge us as we reflect on our lives. May we seek the true happiness that comes from a heart that depends fully on God and seeks to love others.

Reflective question:

What do I rely on most for my security?

Thursday, 10th September, 23rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 8:1–7, 11–13, Luke 6:27–38

Jesus said to his disciples: 'But I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on

one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.'

Love, Do Good, Bless And Pray

Jesus tells us today, *"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who treat you poorly."* His message is challenging to embrace because it is difficult to love those who do not love us in return. Jesus asks us to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who treat us badly. This does not mean that we must accept wrongdoings done against us or ignore injustice. We need to set healthy boundaries and seek justice. Yet, Jesus invites us not to let hatred or bitterness rule our hearts.

To love our enemies does not mean we must feel affection for them; rather, we choose to love them by being patient instead of anger, forgiveness instead of resentment, and goodness over vindication. Today, may we love beyond what is easy so that we can reflect God's love and mercy.

Reflective question:

How can remembering God's mercy toward me help me become more merciful to others?

Friday, 11th September, 23rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 9:16–19, 22–27, Luke 6:39–42

Jesus told a parable to his disciples, ‘Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother’s eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, “Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye”, when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother’s eye.’

Responsibility To Share The Gospel

In the first reading, St. Paul tells us, *“I do not boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me...it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands.”* For St. Paul, preaching the Gospel is a responsibility entrusted to him by God, and as a result, he strives to lead others to encounter Christ, no matter the cost. Today, we have been entrusted by God with the responsibility to share the Gospel through our words, smiles, honesty, service and the way we relate with others. Let us not keep the Good News of God’s love to ourselves, but use our lives to bring others closer to Him.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us not to judge others while failing to recognise our own faults. He asks, *“Why do you observe the splinter in your brother’s eye and never notice the plank in your own?”* Jesus wants us to look at ourselves before we point out others’ shortcomings and mistakes. Let us take a moment in this time of prayer to examine our own hearts and make love our top priority so that our witness may become credible.

Reflective questions:

Does my life reflect the Gospel that I want others to know? Does it help them to encounter Christ?

Saturday, 12th September, The Most Holy Name of Mary.

Galatians 4:4-7 or Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12, Luke 1:39-47

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard

Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.' And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour."

Abba, Father

Today's first reading, St. Paul tells us, "*When the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman...to enable us to be adopted as sons.*" Because of Jesus in our lives, we live with freedom as children of God, calling God "*Abba, Father.*" This is a great gift that we have not just today, but every single day of our lives. God is our Father, and we are His beloved children. He is not a God who is far away from us, but one who always welcomes us into His heart, giving us the dignity to live with freedom and joy.

In the Gospel, Mary was rooted in her identity as God's child. As the Beloved of God, she visited Elizabeth. Carrying Jesus within her, Mary's presence brought joy not only to her cousin but also to the child she was carrying. Like Mary, we are called to be rooted in who we are for God. By doing so, we can welcome Christ into our lives and share His presence of love and peace with others.

Reflective questions:

Do I truly believe that I am a beloved child of God? How does this reality influence the way I live each day?

Sunday, 13th September, 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Ecclesiasticus 27:30–28:7, Romans 14:7–9, Matthew 18:21–35

Peter went up to him 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; but 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. "Give me time" he said "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. "Pay what you owe me" he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time 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 him. "You wicked servant," he said "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.'

The courageous act of forgiving

In the first reading of Ecclesiasticus, it states, *"If a man nurses anger against another, can he then demand compassion from the Lord?"* The invitation reminds us that we should always be ready to forgive those who have wronged us, just as God is always prepared to forgive us for our sins. When we hold onto resentments, we fill our hearts with bitterness and anger, which prevent us from experiencing peace and joy. It is essential to acknowledge that wrongs have occurred and that we can seek truth and justice. However, this means we choose not to let hatred and resentment control our hearts. We place the situation and the person who has hurt us before God and ask Him for the strength we need each day to move forward.

In the Gospel, Jesus shares a parable about an unforgiving servant who refuses to forgive a fellow servant for a small debt, even after being forgiven by his master for a much larger amount. This parable invites us to show mercy to others because we have received so much mercy from God. God does not want us to become prisoners of our anger, but to allow His love to give us the courage to take steps toward forgiveness.

Reflective question:

When I remember God's mercy toward me, does it make me more patient and compassionate with others?

Monday, 14th September, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.**Numbers 21:4–9, 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 who is in heaven; and the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved."

God So Loved...

The heart of the Gospel is revealed in today's Gospel: "*God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.*" God's constant response to us despite our brokenness and messy lives is not condemnation but closeness. In Jesus, He draws near to us to love us, even in our darkest moments. As we celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, we come to grasp that the cross is not a place of failure and hopelessness but a sign of God's unconditional and faithful love. On the cross, Jesus entered into human pain, rejection, suffering and even death, so that we do not need to suffer alone.

This comforting truth changes the way we approach our own crosses. When we feel anxious, misunderstood or lonely, we look to Christ, knowing that He understands our struggles and shares in our suffering. Today, let us bring our concrete pain and suffering to Jesus, and pray, "*Lord, stay with me and help me to carry this cross with patience and hope.*" May we remember that Jesus is not indifferent to our suffering. He is with us, giving us strength when our own fails.

Reflective question:

Do I truly believe that God is with me during moments of struggle and suffering?

Tuesday, 15th September, Our Lady of Sorrows.

1 Corinthians 12:12–14, 27–31, John 19:25–27 or Luke 2:33–35

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 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 moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.

Mary, Mother Of Sorrows

At the foot of Jesus' cross, Mary, His mother, stood with steadfast love, silent courage and deep trust in God. She watched her Son suffer rejection, humiliation and death. As a mother, she experienced pain beyond words. Yet Mary did not turn away; she stood firm and continued to believe that God's love was still at work, even when everything seemed lost.

Today, let us reflect on Mary's presence at the foot of the cross. This is what faithful love looks like. Although she could not take suffering and death away from Jesus, she stood to stay close to her beloved Son. Mary, Mother of Sorrows, continues to stand with us as we face the crosses of our lives. She lends us her strength when we find it hard to go on, and reminds us always to look at her Son, whose love will never fail us, and whose Resurrection shows us that love always has the final word.

Reflective question:

Is there a sorrow in my life that I can place in Mary's loving care?

Wednesday, 16th September, SS. Cornelius & Cyprian.

1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13, Luke 7:31–35

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

Growing In Love And Wisdom

In today's first reading, St. Paul speaks to us about the way of love. We may have impressive gifts and talents, but without love, these gifts lose their deepest meaning and purpose. Today, let us prayerfully reflect on St. Paul's description of what love is: it is patient, kind, never jealous, never boastful, never rude or selfish, and it does not bear grudges. Instead, it rejoices in truth, bears with others, hopes and perseveres. We are invited to choose love, and in doing so, we participate in God's own life.

In the Gospel, the people rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus because they did not agree with their lifestyles; one was too rigid and the other too liberated. Their hearts were closed, dismissing God's message because it did not come in the way they expected. These two readings challenge us to a more mature faith. We are called not just to admire love, but to live it; not merely to hear God's message, but to receive it with open hearts. Today, let us root our lives in Christ so that He can help us to grow in love and wisdom.

Reflective question:

What one concrete act of love can I offer today?

Thursday, 17th September, St. Robert Bellarmine or St. Hildegard of Bingen.

1 Corinthians 15:1–11, Luke 7:36–50

One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee's house and took his place at table, a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is that is touching him and what a bad name she has'. Then Jesus took him up and said, 'Simon, I have something to say to you'. 'Speak, Master' was the reply. 'There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. They were unable to pay, so he pardoned them both. Which of them will love him more?' 'The one who was pardoned more, I suppose'

answered Simon. Jesus said, 'You are right'. Then he turned to the woman. 'Simon,' he said 'you see this woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she would not have shown such great love. It is the man who is forgiven little who shows little love.' Then he said to her, *'Your sins are forgiven'.* Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, *'Who is this man, that he even forgives sins?'* But he said to the woman, *'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'*

Showing Great Love

When the woman with a bad reputation entered the house where Jesus was dining, Simon the Pharisee looked at her with condemnation. She then began washing Jesus' feet, and Simon judged Jesus as well. He thought that if Jesus were truly a prophet, He would not allow such a woman to touch Him. Simon could not see the love in her actions or the compassion in Jesus' response. Yet the woman had the courage to do what love compelled her to do. She brought a jar of ointment, wept at Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. Unconcerned by the judgment around her, she simply wanted to love the One who had shown her mercy. Jesus knew what Simon and the other guests were thinking. Through a parable, He taught them that true love flows from a heart that has received forgiveness.

Today, Jesus invites us to recognise our need for God's mercy and to receive His forgiveness again and again. When our hearts are touched by God's love, we become less concerned with judging others and more ready to love them.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus inviting me to change in the way I love today?

Friday, 18th September, 24th Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 15:12–20, Luke 8:1–3

Jesus 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 several others who provided for them out of their own resources.

Risen Christ, Our Hope

In today's first reading, St. Paul states that Christ's Resurrection is at the very heart of Christian hope: *"If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is useless, and your believing is useless."* Christian hope is rooted in the Person of Jesus Christ, whose resurrection shows that suffering, failure, sadness and death do not have the final word. In our difficult moments, such as facing an illness, loss, or uncertainty about the future, we can trust that God can bring goodness and life from situations that seem hopeless and dead.

The Gospel shows us that several women followed Jesus as He travelled from place to place. They used their own resources to support Him in His mission. Though they did not fully understand everything, they remained faithful in their following. Their perseverance reflects their hope in Jesus. Today, let us follow Jesus, not only in moments of enthusiasm but also in the ordinary moments of life. As His disciples, we are people of hope, not because life is free from problems, but because the risen Jesus walks with us. Let us place our hope in Him.

Reflective question:

How can I be a sign of hope to others today?

Saturday, 19th September, St. Januarius.

1 Corinthians 15:35–37, 42–49, Luke 8:4–15

With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, he used this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. 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 amongst thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into rich soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!' His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, The mysteries of the kingdom of God are revealed to you; for the rest there are only parables, so that they may

see 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 do not reach maturity. 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.'

The Patient Sower

In today's Gospel, Jesus spoke to a large crowd and told the parable of the Sower. He invited them to become more committed followers by listening to His Word and putting it into practice. Likewise, Jesus calls us to examine our own hearts because He wants us to commit ourselves as His faithful disciples rather than engage only at a superficial level.

As we honestly look at our own hearts, we may discover that at different times we are like the hardened path, closed to God's Word; the rocky ground, eager at first but quick to lose the joy when faced with troubles; or the thorny ground, where worries and distractions slowly overpower God's Word. Yet Jesus never gives up on us. He calls us to become good soil, hearts that are open to receive and live by His Word. Let us allow Jesus, our Sower, to work in our lives so that we can bear the fruit of His love. We are His committed disciples who choose to stay close to Jesus and live out His Word each day.

Reflective question:

Which kind of soil am I at this point in my life?

Sunday, 20th September, 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

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 round, 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. "The men who came last" they said "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 last comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?" Thus the last will be first, and the first, last."

For Me, Life Is Christ

In today's second reading, St. Paul displayed the depth of his trust in Jesus. He said, *"Christ will be glorified in my body, whether by my life or by my death. Life to me, of course, is Christ."* St. Paul did not centre his life on worldly comforts, material possessions or achievement. He was certain that his life belonged to Christ, and therefore, he gave his time on earth to serving others. Today, let us echo St. Paul's words with conviction: *"Life to me is Christ."* Therefore, we too should live in a manner that pleases Christ alone.

In the Gospel, Jesus shared a parable about a landowner who paid every worker the same wage, regardless of the hours they worked. Even those who arrived at the last hour received the same amount as those who worked all day. The workers who worked all day felt resentment as they compared their efforts to those who worked only briefly. However, the landowner explained that he had not acted unjustly, rather, he had chosen to be generous to all. The message for us is that God's mercy is limitless. His heart has a place for everyone, whether they have served

Him for many years or have come to faith late in life. We need to live for God and work faithfully in His vineyard, not out of rivalry or a desire for recognition, but out of gratitude.

Reflective questions:

Can I say the words of St. Paul, “Life to me is Christ”? What would that look like in my life now?

Monday, 21st 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 by the customs house, and he said to him, ‘Follow me’. And he got up and followed him. While he was at dinner 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: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice. And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners.’

The Call To Follow Jesus

Today, we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthew. The Gospel tells us of Matthew’s encounter with Jesus, which completely changed his life. Jesus saw him sitting at his tax collector’s office and simply said, “*Follow me.*” Jesus called Matthew despite his occupation as a tax collector, which was regarded with suspicion and contempt because he exploited the people and collaborated with the Romans. This is the heart of mercy: Christ looks at us with love and calls us always to stand up and leave behind all that diminishes us, such as our fears, bad habits, and unhealthy attachments, and begin a new life with Him.

St Paul, in the first reading, describes what this new life in Christ should be: it is a life of patient and selfless love. When rooted in Christ, we use our talents and abilities to build up the body of Christ. Today, let us hear the words of Jesus, “*Follow me,*” and respond to Him with love, just as St. Matthew did.

Reflective question:

What would it mean for me today to follow Jesus?

Tuesday, 22nd September, 25th Week in Ordinary Time.

Proverbs 21:1–6, 10–13, Luke 8:19–21

Jesus' mother and brothers came looking for him, but they could not reach 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'.

Belonging

In the Gospel, Jesus was told that His mother and relatives were standing outside and wanted to see Him. He said, *"My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice."* It might sound harsh, as it seems like Jesus is distancing Himself from His family. However, Jesus was not rejecting them. Instead, He wanted to take this opportunity to reveal a deeper kind of family, one formed not by blood ties or social connection, but by hearing God's Word and allowing it to shape one's life.

Today, we are part of God's family by virtue of our faith and baptism. This belonging is a gift. We belong to God, not because we are perfect or successful, but because we are His beloved daughters and sons. Belonging to God changes the way we see and treat others. No one is a rival or a liability. Each person is loved by God. We are called to love others by overcoming divisions caused by hurts, personal preferences, and misunderstandings, fostering unity and compassion in our communities.

Reflective question:

Is there someone I struggle to see as a brother or sister in God's family?

Wednesday, 23rd September, St. Pius Pietrelcina.

Proverbs 30:5–9, 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 let none

of you takes a spare tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there; and when you leave, let it be from there. As for those who do not welcome you, when you leave their town, shake the dust from your feet as a sign to them.’ So they set out, going from village to village, proclaiming the Good News and healing everywhere.

Trust

Jesus’ whole life revealed His complete trust and surrender to God His Father. In His journeys, in preaching, in healing the sick, and even in facing rejection and the Cross, Jesus remained confident in His Father’s love and care. In today’s Gospel, Jesus sent the Twelve out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. In His instructions to them, He told them what they had to leave behind. He said, *“Take nothing for the journey: neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money; and let none of you takes a spare tunic.”* Jesus told His disciples to travel lightly, not because these things were bad, but because He wanted them to discover where their true securities lay. They were to depend on God’s providence and on the hospitality of those to whom they were sent.

We may not be called to leave home without money or food, but we are asked to let go of what we cling to as our security: the need to control situations, the fear of having little, or the need for others’ approval. Today, let us follow Jesus with love, trusting that He who calls us also accompanies and sustains us.

Reflective question:

What must I leave behind in order to trust God more today?

Thursday, 24th September, 25th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ecclesiastes 1:2–11, 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.

Into A Deeper Meaning And Freedom

In the first reading, the writer of Ecclesiastes cried out, “*Vanity of vanities. All is vanity!*” He looked at the cycles of life: generations that came and went, the sun that rose and set, and the rivers flowing into the sea, which was never full. People kept looking for something new to satisfy them, yet their hearts remained restless. The message for us today is to reflect on the emptiness of building our lives on things that cannot last. Success, material things, comfort and praise cannot give us the ultimate meaning and joy that our hearts truly seek.

The Gospel reveals that Jesus is the only one who can fulfil the longings of our hearts. Herod heard reports about Jesus and wanted to see Him. However, Herod’s interest came from curiosity and confusion rather than a desire to know Jesus more and seek conversion. Today, Jesus wants us to know that He is here with us and continues to speak to our hearts through His Word, prayer, the people around us, and the events of our daily lives. He does not come merely to satisfy our curiosity or offer quick solutions to every problem. He comes to reveal the Father’s love and to invite us into a deeper relationship with God.

Reflective question:

What message is God asking me to receive and live today?

Friday, 25th September, 25th Week in Ordinary Time.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–11, Luke 9:18–22

One day, when Jesus was praying alone in the presence of his disciples, he put this question to them, ‘Who do the crowds say I am?’ And they answered, ‘John the Baptist; others Elijah; and others say one of the ancient prophets come back to life’. ‘But you,’ he said ‘who do you say I am?’ It was Peter who spoke up. ‘The Christ of God’ he said. But he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone anything about this. ‘The Son of Man’, he said, ‘is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.’

A Time For Every Purpose

In the first reading, the writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that life goes through various seasons of joy and sorrow, planting and uprooting, speaking and silence, grieving and dancing. Nobody is in control of these

seasons of life, which can leave us feeling uncertain and insecure. Yet the writer states, “*All that God does is apt for its time.*” Thus, even when we cannot understand the whole picture, we trust that His wisdom is greater than our understanding and that His love never abandons us.

In the Gospel, Jesus asked His disciples, “*Who do you say I am?*” Peter replied, “*The Christ of God.*” Immediately, Jesus moved on to say that His mission would involve suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection. This sudden change shows that Jesus wanted His disciples and us today to know that we would all go through seasons of faith where we would encounter answered prayers and peaceful relationships. However, there would also be seasons of pain, confusion and loss. Following Jesus does not mean we will be free from the cross. Instead, His constant assurance is that He is with us and will lead us to courage and hope.

Reflective question:

Do I let Jesus be with me and strengthen me in times when I carry my cross?

Saturday, 26th September, SS. Cosmas & Damian.

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:8, 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 your mind: The Son of Man is going to be handed over into the power of men’. But they did not understand him when he said this; it was hidden from them so that they should not see its meaning, and they were afraid to ask him about what he had just said.

Remember Your Creator

In the first reading, the writer of Ecclesiastes speaks about youth, joy and ageing. One line that stands out in the passage is, “*And remember your creator in the days of your youth.*” This does not imply that only young people should remember God, but it emphasises that all of us, no matter our age, should remember Him. The writer simply wants to stress the importance of living a God-centred life without delay, as we often believe that there will always be more time. Yet, the reality is that life is fleeting and precious. The call for us is to remember God by placing Him at the centre of our choices, work, desires and relationships, and

following His ways. Today is the time again to remember, love and live with our Creator.

In the Gospel, people admired Jesus for His good works, yet Jesus did not bask in their admiration. Instead, He spoke of the reality that He would soon be handed over to human hands. By saying this, Jesus wanted His disciples to know that true greatness is not found in success, popularity, or strength, but in self-giving love. He invites us to live our lives fully and not superficially. We are called to remember God and allow Him to guide us in living a purposeful life.

Reflective question:

How can I “*remember my Creator*” today and live today as He wants me to?

Sunday, 27th September, 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Ezekiel 18:25–28, Philippians 2:1–11, Matthew 21:28–32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, ‘What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, “My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today”. He answered, “I will not go”, but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, “Certainly, sir”, but did not go. Which of the two did the father’s will?’ ‘The first’ they said. Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.’

Living Out Our Faith

In the first reading, God said, “*When an upright man renounces his integrity to commit sin and dies because of this, he dies because of the evil that he himself has committed. When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and honest, he deserves to live...*” This clearly shows that we are responsible for the choices we make. God does not force us to choose love and goodness. Instead, He gives us the freedom to turn away from sin or to return to Him. When we decide to turn back to God, He welcomes us with mercy and gives us the strength to begin again.

In today's Gospel. Jesus spoke about the parable of the two sons. The first initially refused to go to the vineyard to work, but later changed his mind. The second son said, "Yes, sir," but did not go. Jesus asked an important question, "*Which of the two did the father's will?*" The answer is clearly the one who took action. Our faith is not just about saying words of love and making promises to do good, but it is about making the Gospel values visible in the way we live. Let us ask for the grace to turn to God and be open to doing His will today.

Reflective question:

What is one concrete step that I can take today to do God's will?

Monday, 28th September, St. Wenceslaus, SS. Lawrence Ruiz & Companions.

Job 1:6–22, Luke 9:46–50

An argument started between them about which of them was the greatest. Jesus knew what thoughts were going through their minds, and he took a little child and set him by his side and then said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For the least among you all, that is the one who is great.' John spoke up. 'Master,' he said 'we saw a man casting out devils in your so name, and because he is not with us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said to him, 'You must not stop him: anyone who is not against you is for you.'

Embracing Trust And Service

In the first reading, Job, a righteous man, suffered the loss of his possessions and children. He expressed his deep grief by tearing his gown, shaving his head, and falling to the ground. In the midst of his suffering, he prayed to God, saying, "*Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I shall return. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken it back. Blessed be the name of the Lord!*" Job recognised that everything he had- his loved ones, his possessions, even his life- was a gift from God. In his pain, he did not abandon God. In life, whether we face good or bad experiences, we are called to trust in God, even when we do not understand.

In the Gospel, the disciples clung to their desire to be important and successful. Jesus reminded them that greatness in God's kingdom is

defined by humility and willingness to serve, without needing to be noticed. Today, Jesus calls us to follow Him on this path of humble love and service. He does not promise a life free from difficulties. What He does promise is His faithful presence, which will never leave us.

Reflective question:

Can I say, *“Blessed be the name of the Lord”* with trust and freedom?

**Tuesday, 29th September, SS. Michael, Gabriel & Raphael.
Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14 or Revelations 12:7–12, John 1:47–51**

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, he said of him, 'There is an Israelite who deserves the name, incapable of deceit'. 'How do you know me?' said Nathanael 'Before Philip came to call you,' said Jesus '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. so You will see greater things than that.' And then he added 'I tell you most solemnly, you will see heaven laid open and, above the Son of Man, the angels of God ascending and descending.'

Known And Loved

In the Gospel today, Jesus told Nathanael, *“There is an Israelite who deserves the name, incapable of deceit.”* Jesus recognised that Nathanael was an honest man who did not hide behind pretences. He did not try to impress anyone, not even God, by pretending to be more faithful and certain than he was. He came to Jesus as he was, with his doubts about whether anything good could come from Nazareth, as well as his genuine desire for truth.

Jesus sees beyond our outward appearance and understands us completely. He knows the doubts we carry, the dreams we have, the hurts we endure and even the hidden moments that go unnoticed by others. Knowing us deeply, He does not reject us. Nathanael did not talk to Jesus, but Jesus already knew him. In the same way, we do not need to prove ourselves to God, earn His love or be perfect before coming to Him. The truth is that we are always and forever known and loved by Jesus. Let us go to Jesus with an honest and sincere heart today.

Reflective question:

How does it comfort me to know that Jesus sees me, knows me and loves me fully?

Wednesday, 30th September, St. Jerome.

Job 9:1–12, 14–16, Luke 9:57–62

As Jesus and his disciples travelled along they met a man on the road who said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go'. Jesus answered, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'. Another to whom he said, 'Follow me', replied, 'Let me go and bury my father first'. But he answered, 'Leave the dead to bury their dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God'. Another said, 'I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say good-bye to my people at home'. Jesus said to him, 'Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Putting Christ First

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that to follow Him means placing Him above all else. The first person promises to follow Jesus, but Jesus replies that the Son of Man has no place to lay His head. This means that we must be ready to leave behind our comforts and anything that distracts us from the mission of sharing God's love. The second person wants to follow Jesus, but only after his father passes away. Jesus' response shows us that we cannot delay God's call to give our lives to love. The time to be His disciples is today, not someday in the future. The third person wants to say goodbye to his family. Jesus knows that his heart is still deeply attached to what he is leaving behind. We too can be tied to old habits and familiar ways. However, Jesus continues to call us to fix our eyes on Him and move forward in faith.

The call to follow Jesus is for each one of us, regardless of age or circumstances. Let us make Jesus our first priority and renew our commitment once more to follow Him with a determined and faithful heart, without distraction, without excuses, and without looking back.

Reflective question:

How can I make Jesus a greater priority in my daily life?

