

Prayer for Living
Daily Reflections
Liturgical Year B



“ Jesus came near and started walking along beside them... ”

SR. MONIKA PUNAN
VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES

PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR B

**Copyright © 2024 Sr. Monika Punan
All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be
reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the
author's written permission.**

Monday, 1st April, Monday within Easter Octave.

Acts 2:14, 22-33, Matthew 28:8-15

Filled with awe and great joy the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples. And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. "Greetings," he said. And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there." While they were on their way, some of the guard went off into the city to tell the chief priests all that had happened. These held a meeting with the elders and, after some discussion, handed a considerable sum of money to the soldiers with these instructions, "This is what you must say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' And should the governor come to hear of this, we undertake to put things right with him ourselves and to see that you do not get into trouble." The soldiers took the money and carried out their instructions, and to this day that is the story among the Jews.

Meeting the Risen Jesus on the way

The women, the first witnesses of the Resurrection, did not just see the empty tomb and hear the angel's message. Above all, the risen Jesus Himself encountered them on their way. How full must be their hearts, and how their faith must be renewed in that encounter!

Jesus, too, comes to meet us on our way in our daily lives amid doubts, perplexity and fear. He comes to show us that He is truly risen and alive in the present with us. Seeing Him alive, we can let go of fear and be open to the newness that He brings. We become witnesses who are sent, like the women, to spread news of hope and life instead of despair and death to others. Let us meet Jesus on our way today and be sent as witnesses of new life and faith to our sisters and brothers.

Reflective question:

What news of hope and life can we spread this Easter to others?

Tuesday, 2nd April, Tuesday within Easter Octave.

Acts 2:36-41, John 20:11-18

Meanwhile, Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet.

They said, "Woman, why are you weeping?" "They have taken my Lord away," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." As she said this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. Jesus said, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him." Jesus said, "Mary!" She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbuni!" – which means Master. Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

"Mary!"

When, in life, we, like Mary, face devastating moments of loss and grief, the gravity of the situation can overwhelm us and prevent us from recognising Jesus standing near us. Lovingly, Jesus reveals Himself anew to us by calling out our names personally, as He did to Mary in the gospel. Hearing His voice calling her, *"Mary!"*, Mary recognised at once that it was Jesus. The recognition that the Lord was alive changed how Mary faced her situation because it convinced her that all was not lost. Little by little, hope, strength and vitality were restored. With Jesus risen, the tomb of despair was turned into a place of consolation.

Today, let us hear Jesus calling us, opening our eyes to see that He is alive. In our tomb-like moments, His voice consoles and assures us that death is not the last word. *"There is a word that transcends it that only God can speak: it is the word of the resurrection"* (Pope Francis). As we rise with Jesus, may we go to others to bring them the word of Life.

Reflective question:

Do I recognise and realise that the risen Jesus calls me?

Wednesday, 3rd April, Wednesday within Easter Octave.

Acts 3:1-10, Luke 24:13-35

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself

came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, "What matters are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped short, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, "You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days." "What things?" he asked. "All about Jesus of Nazareth," they answered, "who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing." Then he said to them, "You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?" Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. "It is nearly evening," they said, "and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, "Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

Towards new life in Jesus!

In the gospel, the two disciples walked back to Emmaus, away from Jerusalem, in a state of confusion and disappointment. They left behind their hopes and dreams, their community and their life of discipleship.

Yet, their encounter with the risen Lord changed all of the above. When they recognised Him to be alive, their downcast hearts were revived. They regained the courage to return to Jerusalem with a renewed passion to follow Jesus, to be His witnesses in and with the community.

The same happens to us. We also have our Emmaus moments when confusion, disappointments and fear may lead us away from Jerusalem, where Jesus calls us to be. Yet, Jesus does not stay away from us. He comes close to us and gives us clarity, understanding and courage to stop walking on the wrong path. The experience of His love changes our direction and moves us to follow Him once more towards new life. This Easter, may the risen Lord effect a change in our lives. May we follow Him fearlessly to new life!

Reflective question:

What is the new life that Jesus is leading me this Easter?

Thursday, 4th April, Thursday within Easter Octave.

Acts 3:11-26, Luke 24:35-48

The disciples told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread. They were still talking about this when Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes. Then he told them, "This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me, in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, has to be fulfilled." He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this."

You are witnesses to this

As Jesus appeared to the disciples, He showed them His hands and feet. They were asked to touch and see for themselves that He was indeed risen. They needed to experience not just the reality of Jesus' death but also of His Resurrection because only then could they become witnesses of what was written and promised: *"that Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead."*

We, too, have seen and touched the reality of Jesus' Resurrection in our own journey of faith. For example, when we experience a hopeless situation that is turned around miraculously, when our poor effort in love bears much fruit or when, through a challenging life event, we grow deeper in trust, etc. These are the Easter experiences we are now called to proclaim in today's world. In doing so, we give testimony to the power of Jesus' Resurrection. Today, let us go out with gratitude and courage to be witnesses of the Risen Jesus through our words and actions!

Reflective question:

What is my Easter experience that I can share with others?

Friday, 5th April, Friday within Easter Octave.

Acts 4:1-12, John 21:1-14

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." They replied, "We'll come with you." They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night. It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, "Have you caught anything, friends?" And when they answered, "No," he said, "Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something." So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." At these words "It is the Lord," Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak around him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land. As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish you have just

caught." Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, "Who are you?"; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead.

At the shore

The setting of the shore in today's resurrection encounter evokes the memory of when Jesus called the disciples to follow Him. This memory starkly contrasts their abandoning of Jesus during the passion. Yet, the re-encounter happened precisely at the shore because Jesus wanted them to experience His forgiveness and mercy. He needed them to realise that their mistake did not stop Him from choosing and calling them anew to follow Him. Indeed, this was what sharing the meal meant at the shore. The meal symbolised Jesus' self-giving love that brought them back into communion with Him.

At Easter, we are given the same forgiveness and mercy. Jesus' choice and call of us are renewed, and new communion with Him is born. Easter is a time to realise that God's love never fails and knows no end because Jesus is risen. Today, let us be open to Jesus' call to let His warm light of love enter our night of loneliness, fear and doubts. Like the beloved disciple, let us recognise Him with our hearts and proclaim to others, "*It is the Lord.*"

Reflective question:

Do I believe in God's unconditional love for me?

Saturday, 6th April, Saturday within Easter Octave.

Acts 4:13-21, Mark 16:9-15

Having risen in the morning on the first day of the week, Jesus appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils. She then went to those who had been his companions, and who were mourning and in tears, and told them. But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him. After this, he showed himself under another form to two of them as they were

on their way into the country. These went back and told the others, who did not believe them either. Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table. He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy, because they had refused to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation."

Receiving and proclaiming the Good News

In the first reading, it was not easy for the Jewish authorities to believe Peter and John's proclamation of the risen Jesus since they were uneducated and did not belong to the priestly class. In the gospel, it was not easy for the apostles to believe the witnesses given by a woman, Mary of Magdala, and the two disciples who were not part of the Eleven.

Like the apostles, on the one hand, we may find that our incredulity and obstinacy delay us from receiving the Good News of Easter because we dismiss the messengers that God sent to us because they might not be up to our standards. On the other hand, as we proclaim the risen Lord, we may also experience rejection from different people and get discouraged in our mission. Let us ask Jesus for the humility and the perseverance needed so that no one, including ourselves, is excluded from the joy of encountering Jesus alive this Easter!

Reflective question:

What hinders me from receiving or giving the Good News of Easter?

Sunday, 7th April, Divine Mercy Sunday.

Acts 4:32-35, 1 John 5:1-6, John 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you," and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace be with you. "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you." After saying this he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained. " Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, "We have seen the Lord," he answered, "Unless I see the holes that the nails made

in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe." Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, "Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe." Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him: "You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

Peace be with you

Jesus greeted the disciples gathered, "*Peace be with you*" three times. Peace seemed illogical given the situation of their fear of the Jews to the point that they were hiding from them. Yet, Jesus did not come to bring them the superficial external peace of a life without trouble. Instead, as He entered the disciples' lives anew, He brought them the inner peace of His presence.

Today, let us recognise that Jesus is the source of true peace that sustains and guards us in our troubles. To live in His peace, we must constantly encounter Him as our Lord and God, the one who comes looking for us personally, as He did to Thomas. In prayer, let us see Jesus coming to seek and find each of us, not to reproach us but to offer us His peace. May the Easter season give us the experience of being loved by Jesus, awakened to deeper faith and living in His peace.

Reflective question:

Do I experience Jesus looking personally for me to bring me His peace?

Monday, 8th April, Annunciation of the Lord.

Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10, Hebrews 10:4-10, Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the

angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the house of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," the angel answered, "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth also, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God." "I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary, "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her.

Transcendence of Mary's 'yes'

In the light of Easter, the angel's words to Mary, *"for nothing is impossible to God"*, have proven true beyond imagination. God became human in Jesus, and after dying on the cross, He was raised to life. Yet, at the moment of the annunciation, Mary had no proof of the great transcendence of her response to God. She only had God's Word to cling to, and that is what she did. Mary trusted in God. Her "yes" came from her trusting heart, and because of her "yes", God's eternal life came to fill the world.

As we celebrate today's feast with Mary, let us learn from her trust in God. Let us believe in the transcendence of God's work through each of our own "yes" to Him. May we be inspired by our Mother to say our "yes" to God so that through us, His life can bear fruit for the good of others.

Reflection question:

Do I believe that my little daily "yes" to God can give life to others?

Tuesday, 9th April, 2nd Week of Easter.

Acts 4:32-37, John 3:7-15

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows wherever it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit." "How can that be possible?" asked Nicodemus. "You, a teacher in Israel, and you do not

know these things!" replied Jesus. "I tell you most solemnly, we speak only about what we know and witness only to what we have seen and yet you people reject our evidence. If you do not believe me when I speak about things in this world, how are you going to believe me when I speak to you about heavenly things? 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."

Born from above

As with Nicodemus, Jesus invites us to be born from above, born of the Spirit- i.e. to live our lives according to the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit leads us, He renews our ways of seeing, thinking, and acting, not according to our human inclinations but the inclinations of God's love. We see this in the first reading when the first Christians' eyes of faith were opened to see everyone as a brother and sister in Christ. Thus, one person's need became everyone's concern and a spirit of true generosity was born in each heart.

What about ourselves and our Christian community? Are our eyes, minds and hearts enlightened to see one another as brothers and sisters in Jesus, especially those we find difficult to love? Today, let us be inspired and encouraged by the testimony of the first Christian community. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us open our eyes to see the needs of others and to move our hearts to reach out to them.

Reflective question:

Concretely, what does it mean for me to be born from above?

Wednesday, 10th April, 2nd Week of Easter.

Acts 5:17-26, John 3:16-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may 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. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced that

though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God."

Loving and not condemning

Who is God for us? What is the image of God deep down in our hearts? Does He instil in us fear and reproach or love and welcome? Let us listen again to what Jesus says in today's gospel: *"God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that...the world might be saved."* This is our God, the God who saves through love. He calls us to believe in His love, shown to us through the gift of His Son, who gave His life out of love for us.

Remembering the gift of Jesus in our lives, God calls us to live in the conviction that, come what may, we are infinitely loved. Let us allow the Word of God to speak to our hearts today and strengthen our conviction of His love for us. May we increasingly recognise Him as the God who loves and does not condemn. In recognising Him as such, may we be guided to reflect this same image of God to others who come into contact with us.

Reflective question:

What image do I have of God?

Thursday, 11th April, St. Stanislaus.

Acts 5:27-33, John 3:31-36

John the Baptist said to his disciples: "He who comes from above is above all others; he who is born of the earth is earthly himself and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven bears witness to the things he has seen and heard, even if his testimony is not accepted; though all who do accept his testimony are attesting the truthfulness of God, since he whom God has sent speaks God's own words: God gives him the Spirit without reserve. The Father loves the Son and has entrusted everything to him. Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life, but anyone who refuses to believe in the Son will never see life: the anger of God stays on him."

Listening with full attention

“Obedience to God comes before obedience to men...” (1st reading). At its root, the word ‘obedience’ means to listen with full attention. This is the central invitation of today’s passages. In the first reading, the apostles urged the Jews to listen attentively to God. In the gospel, John the Baptist invited his disciples to listen to the one who comes from above, Jesus Himself.

Do we listen to God first among the many things we listen to during the day? After the Resurrection, the apostles' priority of being attentive to God gave them the passion, courage, and joy needed to continue proclaiming the Good News. Today, let us we desire the same ears of faith that seek to listen attentively to Jesus. He is the one who speaks God’s own words to us: words of love that revive us and bring us to live with Him throughout the day.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus' message for me today?

Friday, 12th April, 2nd Week of Easter.

Acts 5:34-42, John 6:1-15

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover. Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, "Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?" He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, "Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, "There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?" Jesus said to them, "Make the people sit down." There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, "Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted." So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from

the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, "This really is the prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

A valuable offering

In this familiar passage, Andrew and Jesus reacted differently to the boy's offering of five loaves and two fish. Andrew reacted with doubt and scepticism, whereas Jesus took the loaves and the fish, gave thanks, and used them to feed the hungry crowd. In Jesus' eyes, no sincere offering is too little or too insignificant; in fact, it is necessary. The unnamed boy became Jesus' partner to feed the people.

The same is asked of us: to offer our five loaves and two fish to Jesus with great trust that *"he himself knew exactly what he was going to do."* In this manner, we become Jesus' partners of today. With Jesus beside us, let us not be afraid to recognise the hungry people around us who need friendship, comfort, and peace. With humble hearts, we turn to Jesus to say, *"Lord, this is the little bread (of physical strength, patience, compassion, vision, etc) that I have today. Help me to offer it to you in the faith that you will multiply it to feed those who need it today."*

Reflective question:

Do I believe that my little offering to Jesus is valuable and necessary?

Saturday, 13th April, 2nd Week of Easter.

Acts 6:1-7, John 6:16-21

In the evening the disciples went down to the shore of the lake and got into a boat to make for Capernaum on the other side of the lake. It was getting dark by now and Jesus had still not rejoined them. The wind was strong, and the sea was getting rough. They had rowed three or four miles when they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming toward the boat. This frightened them, but he said, "It is I. Do not be afraid." They were for taking him into the boat, but in no time it reached the shore at the place they were making for.

"It is I. Do not be afraid."

In the gospel, the disciples were frightened to see Jesus walking toward them because they did not recognise Him. They may have been too

fixated on their worry and concern about the growing storm. Similarly, we may experience fear as we face turbulent storms of sickness, financial difficulties, failures, etc., that cloud our vision from clearly recognising Jesus.

The disciples' fears were calmed when they heard Jesus' comforting words, "*It is I. Do not be afraid*". Through His words, He revealed Himself as a caring and tender Companion. As we go through the inevitable storms of life, Jesus never gets tired of walking toward us and drawing us close to Him. Let us be as untiring in our listening to His words, for through them, He constantly reveals to us His presence and friendship.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus revealing Himself to me through His words today?

Sunday, 14th April, 3rd Sunday of Easter.

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19, 1 John 2:1-5, Luke 24:35-48

The disciples told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread. They were still talking about all this when he himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes. Then he told them, "This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, has to be fulfilled." He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this."

Experiencing Jesus alive

In their state of alarm and fright, the disciples could not see and believe that Jesus was real and alive. They needed Jesus to show them that He was truly risen. Patiently, He brought them to experience Him living and present in their midst: *"Look at my hands and feet...Touch me and see for yourselves."* He opened their minds to understand His words and actions: *"...the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead..."*.

With the same patience, Jesus never stops bringing us to experience Him alive and present, reassuring us that we are not alone as we walk through life. In moments of suffering, Jesus accompanies us as someone who knows by experience what suffering means. We feel His closeness through the acts of love from those around us and in the Eucharist. His Word lights our way so we can follow Him with faith and understanding. Let us then be strengthened to give witness through how we walk in hope with the risen Jesus.

Reflective question:

How have I experienced Jesus alive today?

Monday, 15th April, 3rd Week of Easter.

Acts 6:8-15, John 6:22-29

Jesus had fed the five thousand, his disciples saw him walking on the water. Next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side saw that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that the disciples had set off by themselves. Other boats, however, had put in from Tiberias, near the place where the bread had been eaten. When the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into those boats and crossed to Capernaum to look for Jesus. When they found him on the other side, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered: "I tell you most solemnly, you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat. Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life, the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you, for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do if we are to do the works that God wants?" Jesus gave them

this answer, "This is working for God: you must believe in the one he has sent."

Being aware of our spiritual hunger

"...you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat. Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life, the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you." In the gospel, the crowd merely sought Jesus to satisfy their physical hunger. Seeing this, Jesus entered into a dialogue with the people and awakened in them their spiritual hunger. He led them to look and recognise their more profound need for spiritual food that could feed their deeper hunger in life.

What about us? Do we sense our spiritual need, or are our senses distracted and dulled by the countless offers of physical food, material things, travel trips, etc., around us? Today, Jesus invites us to enter into dialogue with Him and not be afraid to recognise our deeper need for peace, true contentment, inner strength, joy and love. Let us receive our spiritual nourishment from Him with faith.

Reflective question:

Am I aware of my spiritual hunger and need?

Tuesday, 16th April, 3rd Week of Easter.

Acts 7:51-8:1, John 6:30-35

The people said to Jesus: "What sign will you give to show us that we should believe in you? What work will you do? Our fathers had manna to eat in the desert; as scripture says: He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus answered: "I tell you most solemnly, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, it is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven, the true bread; for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "give us that bread always." Jesus answered: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst."

I am the bread of life

Bread's primary function, as the most basic food, especially in Jesus' context, is a form of nourishment. In this life-giving symbolism of bread,

Jesus revealed Himself as the bread of life that nourishes us spiritually. *“Jesus reveals Himself as bread, that is the essential, what is necessary for everyday life, without Him it does not work. Not one bread among many others, but the bread of life”* (Pope Francis). Do we appreciate Jesus, our bread of life and see the need to be nourished by Him?

The fullness of life comes from Jesus. Thus, our relationship with Him is not just one of many; it is *the* relationship of our lives. When we relate with Him, we find ourselves accepted and loved as we are. In our relationship with Jesus, we are taught to love selflessly. Selfless love becomes the direction that guides our daily decisions in life. Today, let us be grateful for Jesus, who comes to nourish us with His life-giving love. With eagerness, let us welcome the Bread of Life into our hearts!

Reflective question:

What does it mean for me when Jesus says, *“I am the bread of life”*?

Wednesday, 17th April, 3rd Week of Easter.

Acts 8:1-8, John 6:35-40

Jesus said to the crowd: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst. But, as I have told you, you can see me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I shall not turn him away; because I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of the one who sent me. Now the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, and that I should raise it up on the last day. Yes, it is my Father’s will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and that I shall raise him up on the last day.”

The Father’s gifts

“...the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me....” Indeed, this is precisely what Jesus did in the resurrection accounts. He went personally to find each disciple lost in their fear and disappointment because He saw each person as a gift given to Him by the Father. In Jesus’ love, all were found and received new life. As such, the Father’s will was fulfilled.

We have been given concrete persons in our care, from those we know to strangers we meet. Do we recognise that each person is a gift God has entrusted us? Do we realise that we are doing God's will when we lead them to experience Him and find themselves loved by Him? At times when it is challenging to perceive the other as a gift, let us remember that Jesus is always at our side. May we receive from Jesus the patience, sensitivity and creativity we need in caring for those around us, especially those "lost" in stress and disappointment of life.

Reflective question:

Do I consider the people entrusted to me as gifts from God?

Thursday, 18th April, 3rd Week of Easter.

Acts 8:26-40, John 6:44-51

Jesus said to the crowd: "No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets: They will all be taught by God, and to hear the teaching of the Father, and learn from it, is to come to me. Not that anybody has seen the Father, except the one who comes from God: he has seen the Father, I tell you most solemnly, everybody who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead; but this is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a man may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

Self-giving love

"Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh." In offering His flesh as bread, Jesus offers Himself as food for each person. He does so because He loves us and wants to nourish us in our daily lives. In the same way, He repeated to His listeners that He is the bread of life, He is doing the same to us. He wants us to be aware of our inner hunger for a love that lasts forever, for eternal life with God the Father that begins already in our here and now.

In this time of prayer, let us listen attentively to Jesus as He presents to us as our bread of life and be aware of how blessed we are to have God who is so close to us and never gets tired of feeding us with His life and love. May we draw close to Jesus and let Him be our living bread.

Reflective question:

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

Friday, 19th April, 3rd Week of Easter.**Acts 9:1-20, John 6:52-59**

The Jews started arguing with one another: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they said. Jesus replied: "I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever." He taught this doctrine at Capernaum, in the synagogue.

The call to be loved by Jesus

Jesus continues to invite all to come to Him to be nourished and satisfied: *"For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink."* His selfless love, which asks for nothing in return, is the real food and drink each person needs and searches for. Yet, often, we do not go to Jesus to find the love we need, i.e., the affirmation, companionship, meaning and purpose in life, etc. We wander around, trying to find them elsewhere.

Jesus calls us to cease running in vain, searching to satisfy our hunger in material possessions, our ego, others' opinions, etc. He calls us to come to Him to be loved not for what we have done but simply for who we are to Him. We are His beloved friends. Today, let us stop running and come to Jesus. Let us find the rest we long for in being loved by Him. *"For you have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You"* (St. Augustine).

Reflective question:

Have I eaten and drank and found my rest in Jesus' love today?

Saturday, 20th April, 3rd Week of Easter.

Acts 9:31-42, John 6:60-69

After hearing his doctrine, many of the followers of Jesus said, "This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?" Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, "Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the outset those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. He went on, "This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows him." After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him. Then Jesus said to the Twelve, "What about you, do you want to go away too?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God."

Total trust in Jesus

In today's gospel, Jesus' teaching of Him being the bread of life was too much for some of His followers. The challenging words of Jesus demanded His listeners to depend on Him and not on earthly bread, not on created things that could not give them the fullness of contentment and peace. Upon hearing all He said, many were scandalised and chose to walk away from Him.

We sometimes struggle to depend on God as we seek to fill our lives with material security and comfort. In moments like these, we hear Jesus asking us, *"What about you? Do you want to go away too?"* Let us remember His great love for us—a love that seeks only our good and happiness. Seeing His genuine love for us, let us be moved to trust Jesus and express that trust by responding as Peter did: *"Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe."*

Reflective question:

In my life now, how is Jesus inviting me to trust and depend on Him?

**Sunday, 21st April, 4th Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday.
Acts 4:8-12, 1 John 3:1-2, John 10:11-18**

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father."

The Good Shepherd's heart

Today's gospel contrasts the attitude of the shepherd's and a hired man towards the sheep. *"The good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep"* because they are his own, while the hired man *"has no concern for the sheep"* since they do not belong to him. Unlike the hired man, who places his well-being above the sheep, the shepherd cares for his sheep more than himself, even to the point of giving up his life for them.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, not a hired man. Let us give thanks for being loved by Jesus as His sheep and for having Him as our Good Shepherd. We also remember with gratitude the human shepherds that God has placed in our lives, such as our mentors, parents, religious, priests, etc., who continue to reflect the Good Shepherd's self-giving love to us. We pray for those in positions of authority, especially in the Church, and for ourselves that we may grow in selfless love so that our hearts become more and more like Jesus.

Reflective question:

How can I imitate Jesus, the Good Shepherd?

Monday, 22nd April, 4th Week of Easter.

Acts 11:1-18, John 10:1-10

Jesus said: "I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way, is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers." Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them. So Jesus spoke to them again: "I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."

God for all

The first reading tells us of an early encounter between Christians of Jewish descent and their Gentile counterparts. Coming from different backgrounds, cultures, and worldviews, it took time and great openness from both sides to understand that God calls everyone to live a life of faith in Him. No one, no matter who they are, is excluded from the abundance of life and love that Jesus brings, for He Himself has come "so that they may have life and have it to the full."

Do we believe that God's love is for all? Are we convinced that everyone is equally fit to be loved deeply by God? Do our prejudices or fears make us narrow-minded and exclude others from living fully in Jesus? Today, we ask the Holy Spirit to remove all that hinders us from being open to God and His ways. Humbly, we realise with joy how wide and long, how high and deep Jesus' love for each person is (cf. Eph 3:18).

Reflective question:

Who are those I tend to judge and close the door of God's love to them?

Tuesday, 23rd April, 4th Week of Easter.

Acts 11:19-26, John 10:22-30

It was the time when the feast of Dedication was being celebrated in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the Temple walking up and down in the Portico of Solomon. The Jews gathered around him and said, "How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus replied: "I have told you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name are my witness; but you do not believe, because you are no sheep of mine. The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from me. The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone, and no one can steal from the Father. The Father and I are one."

Listen to my voice

"The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." Belonging to Jesus starts from the simple act of listening to His voice. When we listen to Him, we begin to relate with the Person of Jesus and discover more and more what it means to be known and deeply loved by Him. In being loved by Jesus, we are then moved to follow Him in love.

Today, let us place aside all unnecessary noises and voices and enter into the silence of our hearts. In the quiet, we listen for the voice of our Shepherd, who always tells us that we are His beloved sheep who belong to Him alone. Let us not hesitate to rise and follow Him when we hear His voice.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus telling me today in prayer?

Wednesday, 24th April, 4th Week of Easter.

Acts 12:24-13:5, John 12:44-50

Jesus declared publicly: "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in the one who sent me, and whoever sees me, sees the one who sent me. I, the light, have come into the world, so that whoever believes in me need not stay in the dark any more. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them faithfully, it is not I who shall condemn him, since I have come not to condemn the world, but to save the world: he who

rejects me and refuses my words has his judge already: the word itself that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For what I have spoken does not come from myself; no, what I was to say, what I had to speak, was commanded by the Father who sent me, and I know that his commands mean eternal life. And therefore what the Father has told me is what I speak."

Light of Christ

"I, the light, have come into the world, so that whoever believes in me need not stay in the dark anymore." Jesus likened His presence in the world to the presence of light in the midst of darkness. Through our faith in Him, our paths in life are enlightened and guided by His light. *"Those who believe, see; they see with a light that illuminates their entire journey, for it comes from the risen Christ, the morning star which never sets"* (Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* 1).

Are there areas in our lives where we need the guidance of Jesus' light? For example, in difficult moments of pain and suffering, in life's decision-making moments, in relationship matters, etc. In these situations, let us turn to Jesus, the Light of the World. We ask Him to speak His word, which illuminates our minds so that we can see the next step to take with greater clarity. We ask for the assurance of His love that gives our hearts the calm and confidence needed to act with faith. Let us trust that we are not alone in the journey, for Jesus is leading us.

Reflective question:

Is my life illuminated and guided by Jesus?

Thursday, 25th April, St. Mark the Evangelist.

1 Peter 5:5-14, Mark 16:15-20

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

working with them and confirming the word by signs that accompanied it.

Proclaim Jesus

As Jesus sent the Eleven in the gospel, we are sent in the same mission of proclaiming the gospel to our contemporary world. Therefore, let us hear Jesus addressing us personally, *“Go...proclaim the Good News.”* As a community of believers, we proclaim Jesus in the different places God has placed us in and to the various people we find ourselves with daily. We do this through diverse ways and means according to the talents and charisms God has given us. For example, some proclaim Jesus through charitable acts, some through genuine friendship with people, and others through spoken and written words like St. Mark the Evangelist. None is better than the other, for all ways and means, big and small, are necessary for people to encounter the Person of Jesus.

Celebrating today's feast, we give thanks for St. Mark's passion and hard work in proclaiming Jesus out of love for God and others. May his example inspire us to joyfully and faithfully bring Jesus to others, as we trust that the Lord Himself is working and accompanying us in our mission.

Reflective question:

How can I proclaim Jesus to others today?

Friday, 26th April, 4th Week of Easter.

Acts 13:26-33, John 14:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Trusting in our Father

"You are my son: today I have become your father" (1st reading). This is what the apostles understood and proclaimed because, in Jesus, the Son, we all have become children of God. This is why Jesus told the disciples, *"Trust in God still, and trust in me."* We can trust God because He is our loving Father. The reality of God as our Father and we as His children becomes the great and deep security of our lives. We are never alone because we are safe in God's loving embrace.

This is how Jesus lived, in the truth that He was loved unconditionally by His Father. He calls us to live the same way: in the deep certainty of our permanent identity as the Father's beloved children. Thus, our joy in life springs from our relationship with the Father. In the quietness of our hearts, let us find God waiting to embrace us in love. In response, let us live today as children who trust unconditionally in God the Father.

Reflective question:

How can I live trusting God today?

Saturday, 27th April, 4th Week of Easter.

Acts 13:44-52, John 14:7-14

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied." "Have I been with you all this time, Philip," said Jesus to him, "and you still do not know me?" "To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, 'Let us see the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason." "I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask for anything in my name, I will do it."

Recognising God's works

In the gospel, we see how patiently Jesus explained and led his disciples to open their eyes of faith again to see and believe God's presence through His works. For in Jesus, the evidence of God's many works is seen, for instance, when He healed the sick, cured the lame and the blind, fed the hungry crowd, welcomed the outcasts and marginalised, defended and forgave sinners, spoke the truth with love, encouraged and praised the great faith of humble people, raised the dead, etc. God's work is seen each time Jesus gave Himself in love to others.

What about us? Can we see the evidence of God's work in and around us? Let us take time today to remember our journey thus far and ponder on what Jesus has done for us and the people around us. In contemplating His work in our lives, we realise with wonder and joy that God is truly living. He is present and active in our lives. Behind each act of love, we see the our loving God working in the world.

Reflective question:

When and where have I seen God working?

Sunday, 28th April, 5th Sunday of Easter.

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

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away – he withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples."

Connected to Jesus

The image of the vine and the branches highlights the natural fact that branches must be connected to the vine for them to live, thrive and bear fruit. Likening Himself to be the vine and us to be the branches, Jesus reminds us of the real connection between Him and us. Jesus is connected to each of us. His connection to us is essential for our existence, growth, and fruitfulness. When we are apart from Him, we simply exist but are not living fully.

Looking at us with love, He tells us, *“Make your home in Me as I make mine in you.”* Home is where essential connections are built, renewed and strengthened. Jesus has already made His home in us and is always connected to us. On our part, it is a choice that we need to make and renew each day. Today, let us choose to remain at home with Him. During the day, when we find ourselves disconnected from Him, let us hear Him calling us gently to return home and take the necessary steps to listen and remain united to Him.

Reflective question:

Am I connected to Jesus?

Monday, 29th April, St. Catherine of Siena.

Acts 14:5-18, John 14:21-26

Jesus said to his disciples: "Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him." Judas – this was not Judas Iscariot – said to him, "Lord, what is all this about? Do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him. Those who do not love me do not keep my words. And my word is not my own: it is the word of the one who sent me. I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you."

Keeping Jesus' commandment of love

“Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me.” What is Jesus' commandment? In John 13:34, He tells

us, *"You must love one another as I have loved you."* By loving our neighbour, our love for Jesus becomes real and concrete. To keep His commandment, then, is to love the other person in the same way that Jesus loves, i.e. a love that always goes beyond feelings and is based on the decision to look always for the good of the other, even at the expense of oneself.

Sometimes, we find that Jesus' self-giving love goes against the selfish love we experience in ourselves and the world. Yet, He reminds us that we are not alone in our efforts to love like Him because He gives us the Holy Spirit, the Helper who never tires of teaching and giving us the grace we need to love like Jesus. With the Holy Spirit's help, we are encouraged to keep Jesus' commandment of love today and always. Let us hope that our little acts of love bring others, in turn, to know and love Jesus.

Reflective question:

How can I keep Jesus' commandment today?

Tuesday, 30th April, 5th Week of Easter.

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

Jesus said to his disciples: "Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me say: I am going away, and shall return. If you loved me you would have been glad to know that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe. I shall not talk with you any longer, because the prince of this world is on his way. He has no power over me, but the world must be brought to know that I love the Father and that I am doing exactly what the Father told me."

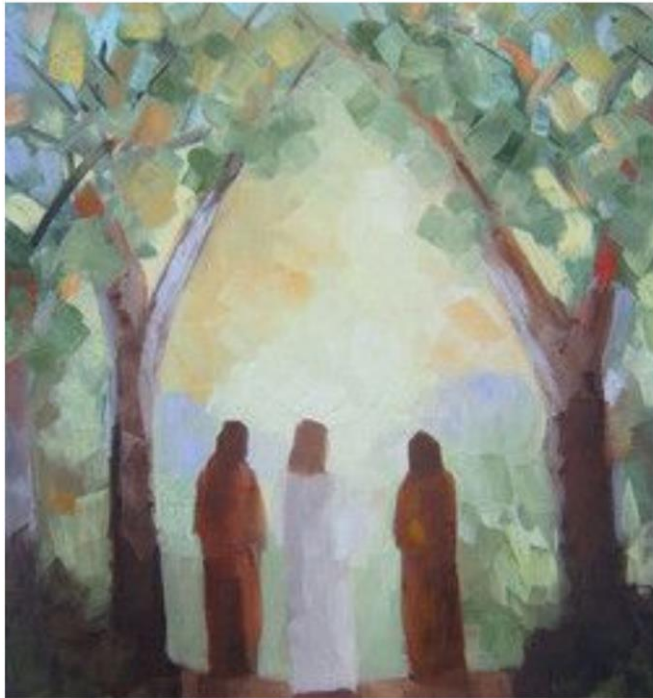
Decided determination

Today's gospel shows us Jesus' quiet determination to continue doing the Father's will. His determination came from the firm decision made out of love. Jesus' deep love for His Father was the ultimate motivation and source of His determination to go on even in the face of the inevitable suffering and loneliness He would experience.

In our journey of faith and life, there will be times when we need to choose and make a decision that will result in us facing challenges and opposition from others. Let us find our love for Jesus as the motivation that keeps us going with decided determination. When the fear of opposition and loneliness threatens to overwhelm us, let us ask Jesus for the gift of His own peace – the peace that comes from knowing that we never walk alone because we have a faithful God in Jesus who is always with us.

Reflective questions:

What is the word/phrase that strikes me in prayer? Why?



By: Mike Moyers

