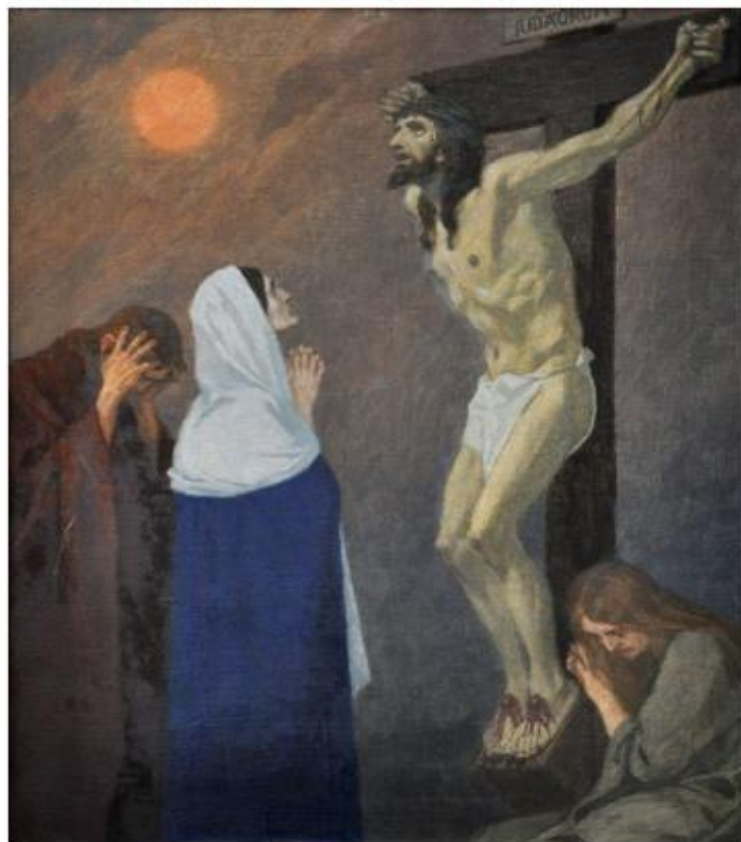


"WOMAN, HERE IS YOUR SON"



PRAYER FOR LIVING

DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR
LITURGICAL YEAR C~
SEPTEMBER 2022

Sr. Sandra Seow

PRAYER FOR LIVING YEAR C

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

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 at the water's edge. The fishermen had got out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats -- it was Simon's -- and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' Simon replied, 'Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled both boats to sinking point. When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely awestruck at the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is people you will be catching.' Then, bringing their boats back to land they left everything and followed him.

"If you, Lord, say so..."

In today's gospel, Jesus called Simon in the context of everyday life when he was cleaning his nets after a night of futile labour. When Jesus asked him to push his boat out into deeper water and pay out his nets once more for a catch, Peter obliged even though he acknowledged that he had failed to catch any fish. Let us pause today at the response of Peter to Jesus, "...*but if you say so, I will pay out the nets*", which reveals his faith in Jesus and trust in His words. His faith did not disappoint because Peter soon caught so many fish that the nets began to tear, and others had to come to help him.

Like Peter, we also sometimes experience tiredness and disappointment from failing to fulfil our expectations, projects that come to nothing, relationships that slip away, etc. As we read today's gospel passage, let us reflect if we truly trust in Jesus' words or if we allow failures to overwhelm us. Jesus' presence in our lives always draws new hope and life out of loss and disappointment. Thus, we say to Him, "*Lord, if you say so, I trust. I will not be afraid*".

Reflective question:

Do I trust Jesus, even in hard times?

Friday, 2nd September, 22nd Week in Ordinary Time.**1 Corinthians 4:1-5, Luke 5:33-39**

The Pharisees and the 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 when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then, in those days, they will fast.' He also told them a parable, 'No one tears a piece from a new cloak to put it on an old cloak; otherwise, not only will the new one be torn, but the piece taken from the new will not match the old. 'And nobody puts new wine in old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and run to waste, and the skins will be ruined. No; new wine must be put in fresh skins. And nobody who has been drinking old wine wants new. "The old is good," he says.'

Joy and freedom of living in God's presence

The Pharisees and the scribes were scandalous because Jesus and His disciples were not following the traditional fasting requirements. In the gospel, Jesus presented Himself as the bridegroom and His disciples as attendants in the wedding feast. This was because Jesus wanted the people to understand that faith in God should bring joy and freedom. Today, Jesus again opens us to look at our faith in God as a joyful matter and to live it, no longer as heavy burdens of completing observances but with the freedom to love God and serve our brothers and sisters. We can rejoice because we know that God is with us, and He is a God whose love for us is unconditional and faithful.

We are the new wineskins that contain the new wine of God's loving presence. Therefore, our lives must reflect the joy and freedom of having God's presence in our lives.

Reflective question:

How can I open my heart to the new wine of God's presence today?

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

1 Corinthians 4:6-15, Luke 6:1-5

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

God is obsessed, not with rules, but with loving

In today's gospel, the Pharisees were upset that Jesus' disciples were picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands and eating them. For them, doing what the disciples did on a Sabbath was illegal. Unfortunately, they were so busy scrutinising the wrongdoings of others that they forgot the real message of the Sabbath. Do we also tend to judge others and quickly point out their mistakes?

Jesus, however, defended the disciples against the Pharisees' criticisms. Their basic human needs should precede the following of traditions and religious regulations. Today, let us ask Jesus to give us a compassionate heart to look at the needs of others and place ourselves to be at the service of their well-being. This is what truly matters. It is not about being nitty-gritty with rules and regulations but making the happiness of others to be our central concern.

Reflective question:

How can I have the same compassionate heart of God?

Sunday, 4th September, 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Wisdom 9:13-18, Philemon 9-10, 12-17, Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. 'Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, cannot be my disciple. No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple. 'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, anyone who saw it would start making fun of

him and saying, "Here is someone who started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple without giving up all that he owns.'

Love God and He will enhance our love for others

"Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother...cannot be my disciple...". Jesus is not advocating for us to hate our family members but to place God in the centre of our entire existence and love Him above others. As important as our families and friends are, they cannot occupy the first place in our hearts. God, our loving Creator and Father, is our primary love. When we love God with our whole heart, mind and strength, He empowers us to love others more. Thus, to follow Jesus implies entering into the dynamism of constantly dying to ourselves, i.e. our pride, selfishness, indifference, etc., to love God and to give ourselves freely to others.

Jesus is honest about what it means to be His disciples, and He knows that it is not easy for us to live this radical way of life. Therefore, we need to have God as our centre because He is the one who gives us the daily strength and courage to forget ourselves in order to follow Him in His way of love.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus asking from me today?

Monday, 5th 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 present, and his right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him to see if he would cure somebody on the Sabbath, hoping to find something to charge him with. But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and stand out in the middle!' And he came forward and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, 'I put it to you: is it permitted on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it?' Then he looked round at them all and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and

his hand was restored. But they were furious and began to discuss the best way of dealing with Jesus.

If I am without love, I am nothing

"Then Jesus looked round at them all and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was restored". Jesus is the first who always stretches out His hands to help others who are in need. Today, Jesus also invites us to stretch out our hands and open our hearts to those who need our help, especially the poor and the weak. We live out our identity as His disciples when we make space for others in our hearts. We are also called to stretch our hands out with confidence and hope to Jesus and ask Him to give us strength and courage so that we can give ourselves to others with joyful freedom.

The scribes and the Pharisees had no love for the man in their hearts. They were more concerned with the rule of law rather than the rule of love. Do we practice our religion by fulfilling obligations but fail to put love into practice? May we ask Jesus to help us to have His compassionate heart, especially when we face the sufferings of others.

Reflective question:

What is the message that Jesus wants to tell me today?

Tuesday, 6th September, 23rd Week in Ordinary Time.

1 Corinthians 6:1-11, Luke 6:12-19

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

Prayer: Communion with God

In today's gospel, before choosing whom to call to be part of His inner circle, Jesus spent time in prayer, where He entered into communion with God the Father and received the strength He needed for the task ahead. The disciples chosen by Jesus were not perfect. Peter denied Him, James and John lusted after being the first, Thomas doubted, Judas betrayed Him for thirty silver coins, etc. Was Jesus' prayer ineffective? From prayer, Jesus discerned and chose the twelve. However, though He had great plans for them, Jesus also respected the freedom of each of His disciples. They were free to respond to His call and how they would want to live their discipleship. What was important was that Jesus lived each situation with God and was always rooted in His love and peace.

Prayer is not magical. It does not mean that when we pray, our lives will be problem-free and everything will work out. Instead, prayer leads us to communion with God. When things do not work out as we want, we live those moments with God, whose presence brings us hope, peace and courage.

Reflective question:

What does having a life of prayer mean to me?

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

1 Corinthians 7:25-31, Luke 6:20-26

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

True happiness

"*Fixing his eyes on his disciples...*". Jesus fixes His eyes on us, who are His disciples of today, because the Beatitudes that He presents will be our way of life that defines our identity as His disciples.

Though Jesus declares that the poor, the hungry, the suffering and the rejected are blessed, it is important to note that He is not glorifying poverty and suffering, and they are not blessing in themselves. In fact, Jesus was standing up for the oppressed, bringing hope to the suffering ones, feeding the hungry people, etc. When He says that the poor, the hungry, the suffering and the rejected are blessed is because God is close to them, He identifies Himself with them, and He is always working for their good. Jesus' words in today's gospel should bring comfort to us. In moments when we feel vulnerable and weak, God is with us, and He is ready to help us. In Him, we find true happiness. May we experience that God is on our side in our pain and affliction today.

Reflective question:

How is Jesus inviting me to live the Beautidues?

Thursday, 8th September, The Nativity of the Blessed Mary.

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

A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, Judah fathered Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse; and Jesse fathered King David. David fathered Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, Abijah fathered Asa, Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, Joram fathered Uzziah, Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, Ahaz fathered Hezekiah, Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon, Amon fathered Josiah; and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers. Then the deportation to Babylon took place. After the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah fathered Shealtiel, Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor, Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, Achim fathered Eliud, Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob; and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of

Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ. This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: Look! the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

God walks with us in our history

Today's gospel presents to us the genealogy of Jesus. that reflects the reality that God is the God of time, and God walks with each generation, with each person. While we might not be familiar with some of the names in Jesus' genealogy, we know that some of them are not perfect and are far from following God's ways. Yet, regardless of their faults and brokenness, God uses each person to bring Jesus, His Son, into the world. Likewise, God is with us in our family and personal stories. We might be ashamed of our family history or even our own history that might be far from perfect. Yet, we take comfort that God writes straight with crooked lines.

As we celebrate Mary's birthday, we rejoice with her "Yes" to God. Through her simple and trusting faith, God, in the person of Jesus, is drawn to us in a personal and loving way. May our perhaps broken or simple lives be His instruments so that people can continue to see and encounter His loving presence through us.

Reflective question:

Do I allow God to journey with me?

Friday, 9th September, St. Peter Claver.

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

Jesus told a parable to the disciples, 'Can one blind person guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? Disciple is not superior to teacher; but fully trained disciple will be like teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own?'

How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out that splinter in your eye," when you cannot see the great log in your own? Hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter in your brother's eyes.'

Be merciful

Are we willing to show mercy? Too often, we are quick to focus on the flaws of others and slow to recognise our own faults. To be merciful implies taking the first step to having a healthy awareness that we are not perfect and have made mistakes in our lives. In one of his homilies, Pope Francis said, "...it means acknowledging ourselves to be sinners and not looking to what others have done. And from here, the basic question becomes: 'Who am I to judge this? Who am I to gossip about this? Who am I, who have done the same things, or worse?'" (Homily, March 2014).

Today, Jesus invites us to put merciful love into practice by looking at others with eyes of love and hearts of compassion. We are sinners loved by God. May we strive to be merciful as God has been merciful to us.

Reflective question:

Am I quick to judge others and slow to recognise my own faults?

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

1 Corinthians 10:14-22, Luke 6:43-49

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. Every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. Good people draw what is good from the store of goodness in their hearts; bad people draw what is bad from the store of badness. For the words of the mouth flow out of what fills the heart. 'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say? Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them -- I will show you what such a person is like. Such a person is like the man who, when he built a house, dug, and dug deep, and laid the foundations on rock; when the river was in flood it bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. But someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!'

Jesus, the foundation of our lives

"Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them...". In today's gospel, Jesus presents Himself as the firm foundation for our lives. He calls us to listen to His words and act on them so that we can build our lives on Him, our strong and steady rock. Thus, when we face the inevitable storms of sickness, problems, death, etc., we can stand firm and help others withstand their own storms.

In this time of prayer, let us maintain a close and intimate friendship with Jesus by listening attentively to Him and putting His words into practice. It is our communion with Him that helps us to face the difficulties in life. Let us hold onto Him, our faithful God who never let us down. When He is our solid foundation, He will help us become solid rocks where others can find the strength they need to stand tall in good and bad times.

Reflective question:

How can I build my life on Jesus and allow Him to be my strong foundation?

Sunday, 11th September, 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Luke 15:1-32

The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to Jesus, and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you with a hundred sheep, if he lost one, would fail to leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine upright people who have no need of repentance. Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found the drachma I lost." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.' Then he said, *'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that will come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country*

where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch; so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled himself with the husks the pigs were eating but no one would let him have them. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's hired men have all the food they want and more, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired men." So he left the place and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we will celebrate by having a feast, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate. Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. The servant told him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the calf we had been fattening because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out and began to urge him to come in; but he retorted to his father, "All these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed any orders of yours, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property -- he and his loose women -- you kill the calf we had been fattening." The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found." '

Love as God loves

"Each of us, each one of us, is that little lost lamb, the coin that was mislaid; each one of us is that son who has squandered his freedom on false idols, illusions of happiness, and has lost everything. But God does not forget us, the Father never abandons us. He is a patient father, always waiting for us!" (Pope Francis, 15th September 2013). This is our

Good News today! We have God who constantly searches for us and will never let us go even when we wander away from Him.

Jesus is also inviting us to identify, not just with the lost sheep, coin or the prodigal son in the parables, but with the shepherd, the woman and the father. We sometimes find it challenging to open the doors of our hearts to the "lost sheep", "lost coin", the "lost son" in our lives. It is easier for us to remain in our anger and annoyance like the elder son. However, the call of Jesus is for us to become more like God by loving as He loves. Let us choose to walk on this path of love.

Reflective question:

Is there someone with whom I struggle to be more loving and forgiving?

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

1 Corinthians 11:17-26, 33, Luke 7:1-10

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

A great faith

"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith as great as this". Jesus was amazed at the Roman Centurion's faith in today's gospel. When his beloved servant fell sick, the Roman Centurion sent some Jewish leaders to request that Jesus go to his house to heal him. Later, he sensed that Jesus, a Jew, might not want to go to the home of a pagan.

He sent some people to ask Jesus to heal his sick servant simply by His word. His message to Jesus was: "*Sir, ...I am not worthy to have you under my roof; and that is why I did not presume to come to you myself; let my boy be cured by your giving the word*". The Roman Centurion trusted in the power of Jesus' word.

What about us? It can be challenging for us because we struggle to trust without reservation. We demand proof and certainty before we dare to put our trust in Jesus' word. Let us learn from this Roman centurion the joy of having deep faith and trust in Jesus.

Reflective question:

How can I exercise my faith in Jesus today?

Tuesday, 13th September, St. John Chrysostom.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31, Luke 7:11-17

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

Moved by compassion

In today's gospel, Jesus was walking into the town called Nain. At the gate, He saw a funeral procession of a young man and His heart was moved with compassion by the mother's grief. This woman was a widow and now had lost her only son. She was completely alone even though she was surrounded by her fellow villagers. Jesus looked at her and saw her pain. In His compassion, He reached out to help her by restoring her son to her, even though she did not ask Him for help. Jesus' heart of compassion manifests to us God's heart of compassion. God is always close to those who suffer. When we suffer, He is there with us.

We all know someone facing a painful tragedy or suffering due to some life crisis. What do we do? In the same way that God is with us in our

suffering, we are also called to be with those who grieve and walk alongside those who are in pain.

Reflective question:

What strikes me in this time of prayer?

Wednesday, 14th September, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Numbers 21:4-9 or Philippians 2:6-11, John 3:13-17

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

God loves so much

As we celebrate the Feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, let us contemplate the unconditional and infinite love God has for us that is beyond our comprehension and ask for the grace to live out the meaning of this Feast in our lives.

"For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life". God loves the world. His love embraces all, even those we struggle to get along with. God's love is shown in the concrete action of giving Jesus His Son to us to be our light, our shepherd, our friend. On our part, it is not enough to intellectually know that God loves us so much that He gives Jesus to us, but we are called to believe in Him. To "*believe*" is more than just adhering to a system of rules and obligations. It is entering into a relationship of loving trust in God. Jesus, God-incarnated, patiently beckons us to ground ourselves in His love. In Him, we find fullness of life.

Reflective question:

What consequences of God's love imply in the living out of faith?

Thursday, 15th September, Our Lady of Sorrows.

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

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

At the cross, there stood Mary

The well-known hymn, Stabat Mater, starts with these words: "*At the cross her station keeping, Stood the mournful Mother weeping, Close to Jesus to the last...*". Mary suffered because she deeply loved Jesus, her son. As we contemplate Mary standing at the foot of the cross, we realise that we, too, have stood at the cross of loved ones and witnessed their pain and suffering. We have suffered alongside them. Thus, "*to love is to suffer and there can be no love otherwise*" (Dostoevsky).

In this journey of loving, we are not alone. "*This is your mother*". Jesus gives us His beloved mother to be our spiritual mother. In our journey of love and suffering, we can look to Mary and ask her to pray for us and help us to dare to accept suffering as a consequence of loving deeply.

Reflective question:

How can I open myself to accept suffering that loving others inevitably brings?

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

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 many others who provided for them out of their own resources.

Proclaiming the kingdom of God

In today's gospel, Luke the evangelist portrayed Jesus as constantly on the move as He went from one town to the next, one village to the next. He went around to preach and proclaim the kingdom of God, which was His deepest conviction and passion that inspired His activities. This message attracted many people because He was not preaching to them

about moral norms and laws but telling them about the good news that the kingdom of God is near, i.e. God is already present and cares for them. Jesus invited the people to believe in the good news. In the passage, Luke the evangelist also mentioned a group of women who believed in Jesus' message and gave up everything to follow Him as His disciples. They listened to His teaching and served Him faithfully to the end.

Today, we are invited to continue sharing the good news of the kingdom of God to those around us. Like the women disciples in Jesus' times, may we give all that we have, for example, our time, our talents, etc., for the sake of the mission.

Reflective question:

Can Jesus depend on me to share the good news of the kingdom of God today?

Saturday, 17th September, St. Robert Bellarmine.

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, Jesus told this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. Now as he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell in the middle of thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into good soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Anyone who has ears for listening should listen!' His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, 'To you is granted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God; for the rest it remains in parables, so that they may look but not perceive, listen but not understand. 'This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up. As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and never produce any crops. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the

word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

The sower, the seed and the soil

In today's passage, the sower goes out to sow seed, but not all bear fruit due to the soil conditions. Relating this parable to our lives, God is the sower who sows the seed of His word in our hearts. It depends on how we respond to His word. Like the first soil, we hear it but walk away. Or, like the second soil, we listen to what God has to say to us but easily fall away when faced with life's demands. Or, like the third soil, we allow the thorns of worries, riches and pleasures of life to choke the word. Or, like the fourth soil, we listen attentively to the word, keep it, and allow it to grow and bear fruit.

We might feel discouraged that we identify with all the soils except the good soil. The good news is that God the sower never gives up on us. He continues sowing the seed of His word and patiently waits for us to take it to heart so that we can start bearing fruit for ourselves and others.

Reflective question:

What are the obstacles that prevent me from responding to God's word?

Sunday, 18th September, 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Amos 8:4-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 16:1-13

Jesus said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes." Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" "One hundred measures of oil," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty." The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.' And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you

friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings. Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great; anyone who is dishonest in little things is dishonest in great. If then you are not trustworthy with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you are not trustworthy with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own? No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

A good lesson from the dishonest steward

In the parable in today's gospel, there was a steward whose responsibilities were to handle the business transactions of his employer. Unfortunately, however, he mishandled the employer's assets and was about to face immediate unemployment. The steward began to take immediate action to secure his future. He went to all his employer's debtors and reduced the amounts they owed. By doing so, he hoped to gain their friendship and find employment with one of them. Interestingly, his dishonest action was admired and praised by his employer.

Jesus is not telling us to be dishonest like the steward. Instead, the call is to look at the qualities the steward tapped upon to survive a crisis: his sense of urgency, clear-sightedness and determination. As children of the light and stewards of God's gifts, we too need these qualities to live with God here, now and for eternity, and we do so by using our money, talents, energy, time, intelligence, etc., in the service of others, especially those in need.

Reflective question:

How can I be a good steward of my time, resources, and possessions to the work of the gospel?

Monday, 19th September, St. Januarius.

Proverbs 3:27-34, Luke 8:16-18

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

Shining brightly for Christ

In today's first reading, the book of Proverbs states: "*My child, do not refuse a kindness to anyone who begs it, if it is in your power to perform it. Do not say to your neighbour, 'Go away! Come another time! I will give it tomorrow' if you can do it now..*". The call is for us not to procrastinate in doing good. When we do so, we are allowing Christ's light to shine.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father" (Matthew 5:16). Like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, we are called to reflect the light of Christ's presence. We reflect Jesus' light of love in everyday life and in the simple acts of goodness and words of love, for example, when we take care of a sick family member, when we speak words of encouragement to a friend, when we offer to run errands for an elderly neighbour, etc. This is our commitment as Christians to shine Christ to others.

Reflective question:

Am I aware of my call to reflect Christ's light through my words and works?

Tuesday, 20th September, SS Laurent Imbert, Jacques Chastan; SS. Andrew Kim and Paul Chong & Companions.

Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13, Luke 8:19-21

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

Listen and do

"My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice". Jesus regards those who listen to the word of God and put it into practice as His family. Therefore, we should honestly ask ourselves if we "*hear the word of God and put it into practice*"?

To hear the word of God is not just to allow it to go in one ear and go out the other. We need to listen to God's word in the Bible by prayerfully reading a passage and asking, "*What is the message that God has for me? Is He trying to tell me something through this parable, this phrase?*" It is not for us to skim the surface but to listen with our hearts because God speaks to us personally through His word. Let us also not be content

to merely listen but to put God's word into practice and make it come alive in our lives. May we have the desire to hear His word and the will to put it into practice.

Reflective question:

Do I listen and put the word of God into practice?

**Wednesday, 21st September, St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13, Matthew 9:9-13**

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

Matthew: A forgiven sinner loved by God

Today, as we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthew, we read his conversion story. Matthew was a tax collector, and thus, he was considered to be a public sinner by the rest of the Jews. Yet, Jesus took the initiative to draw close to this public sinner and called him to follow Him. The gaze of merciful love changed Matthew's life forever. Today, we, too, celebrate the reality that we, like Matthew, are forgiven sinners. Jesus always takes the first step to come into our sometimes messy lives to love us unconditionally and calls us to follow Him. The question is: Do we respond, as Matthew did, to His love?

Unlike Jesus, the religious people in the passage were scandalous at Jesus' action of interacting with Matthew and the tax collectors. For them, these people were sinners and did not deserve to be shown mercy. Let us follow the footsteps of Jesus and give others the mercy we have received from Him.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus' message for me as I pray with the gospel passage?

**Thursday, 22nd 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.

Who is this Jesus?

"*Who is this I hear such reports about?*" This was the question that Herod asked. Though he had asked the right question, he did not have the interest to search for the answer. Herod was anxious to see Jesus because He had heard of all He had done and was curious about him. Unfortunately, his curiosity did not lead him to have the desire to learn from Jesus or to follow Him closely.

In our prayer today, let us ask Jesus, "*Who are you?*". We will never fully come to the complete truth of who Jesus is in this earthly life. Thus, we are called to go on this journey of faith of never stopping to search, discover, and learn who Jesus is and what He means to us. There is always more to Jesus for us to know and fall in love with. Let us desire to know Jesus more so as to follow Him more closely and love Him more deeply.

Reflective question:

Do I humble enough to go on this journey of knowing Jesus more?

**Friday, 23rd September, St. Pius of Pietrelcina.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, Luke 9:18-22**

One day Jesus was praying alone, and his disciples came to him and he put this question to them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?' And they answered, 'Some say John the Baptist; others Elijah; others again one of the ancient prophets come back to life.' 'But you,' he said to them, 'who do you say I am?' It was Peter who spoke up. 'The Christ of God,' he said. But he gave them strict orders and charged them not to say this to anyone. He said, 'The Son of man 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.'

Jesus, the suffering Messiah

Today, Jesus wants us to respond to the same question that He asked His disciples, "*Who do you say I am?*" He does not want a theoretical or intellectual answer from us but from our personal experiences of Him in our lives.

From all what He saw and heard from Jesus, Peter sensed that Jesus was more than just a prophet. Thus, he proclaimed, "*The Christ of God*". The common Jewish understanding of the Christ or Messiah would be a king who would gain victory over Israel's enemies. However, Jesus was not to be that kind of Messiah. Instead, he declared Himself to be the Christ who would be rejected, suffered and died by the Jewish authorities. By doing so, Jesus, God in human form, would reveal a God who is not indifferent to human suffering, but He is with us in our crosses of life. Today, we are invited to find God in our brokenness and fragility and come to know Him as God who is with us.

Reflective question:

Do I perceive God's presence with me in the darkness of my suffering?

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

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 mind: The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.' But they did not understand what he said; it was hidden from them so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

Driven to do God's will

In today's gospel, Jesus was not affected by human praises. He knew that the purpose of His coming was to do God's will, not to seek pleasure in the admiration of human beings. He came to reveal, through His words and actions, that God is love. Because of His radical message, the Jewish authorities felt threatened by Him. He kept doing God's will even though He knew it would lead Him to His death. Jesus invites us not to work for human approval but to be motivated by the desire to do God's will and live in harmony with His purpose for our lives, even if this path leads us to rejection and suffering.

The disciples did not understand what He meant about being delivered into the power of men. They were afraid to know its meaning. We too are afraid sometimes to stand at the threshold of suffering. Yet, we know that we are not alone in our suffering and fragility because God is with us and His love sustains us.

Reflective question:

What motivates me to do what I do- to have the admiration of others or to please God?

Sunday, 25th September, World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

Amos 6:1, 4-7, 1 Timothy 6:11-16, Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees: 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. And at his gate there used to lie a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with what fell from the rich man's table. Even dogs came and licked his sores. Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into Abraham's embrace. The rich man also died and was buried. 'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his embrace. So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames." Abraham said, "My son, remember that during your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to prevent those who want to cross from our side to yours or from your side to ours." 'So he said, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too." Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them." The rich man replied, "Ah no, father Abraham, but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." Then Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead."

Our giving can make a difference

In today's gospel, the rich man lived in his own world and did not even bother to look towards the poor beggar, Lazarus, who was at the gate of his house. Lazarus was not seeking a luxurious meal but simply scraps that fell from rich man's table. Those scraps meant nothing to the rich man, but they would make a big difference for poor Lazarus.

We are surrounded by people everyday, but due to our busyness and indifference, we fail to notice them and allow a great abyss to form between us and others. Jesus is challenging us to open the eyes of our hearts, look attentively at others, and open our hands to give them what they need. Often, it is the small gestures of love and kindness that matters. Giving ourselves in small ways can make a huge difference to someone today.

Reflective question:

What is Jesus' invitation to me as I pray with this parable?

Monday, 26th September, St Paul VI; SS Cosmas and Damian.

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 whom he set by his side and then he 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. The least among you all is the one who is the greatest.' John spoke up. 'Master,' he said, 'we saw someone driving out devils in your 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.'

Call to be simple like a child

In today's gospel, the disciples started to argue which one of them was the greatest. Knowing their ambitious thoughts, Jesus took a little child and said, "*Anyone who welcomed 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.*" The message for Jesus for all of us is that the key to greatness is to be simple and humble as a little child. This is the path of Jesus, and this too must be ours.

In the second part of today's gospel, John told Jesus to stop an outsider from healing in Jesus' name because he was not part of the community. Jesus responded, "*You must not stop him, anyone who is not against you is for you*". Jesus calls us, His disciples of today, to recognise with joy that God's power cannot be limited. He can do good work through people who are not part of the faith community, i.e. the church.

Reflective question:

How can I learn to be simple and allow Jesus to be the one directing my thoughts, words and actions?

Tuesday, 27th September, St. Vincent de Paul.**Job 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23, Luke 9: 51-56**

As the time drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out, and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?' But he turned and rebuked them and they went on to another village.

Taking the same path of Jesus

Jesus' *resolutely* travelled, not the easy road of life, but the difficult road to Jerusalem, even though He knew what would await Him there. He did so for the sake of the mission. He knew that God would want Him to proclaim to the people in Jerusalem that the kingdom of God is close at hand, i.e. God is here and that He cares for them. There are also difficult roads that we need to take in our lives which might cause us to face rejections and confrontations, but we walk on because we want to remain faithful to God's purpose. In this journey, Jesus is our companion who walks alongside us, and His presence empowers us to walk on with determination.

Jesus entered a Samaritan village on the way to Jerusalem, but they rejected Him. James and John wanted to seek vengeance on the Samaritans for their rejection. Jesus, however, rebuked the two and chose to walk on instead. Today, let this be a lesson for us. When we face rejections from others, let us not react with anger but respond with peace.

Reflective question:

How can I become more Christ-like in my attitudes?

Wednesday, 28th September, St. Wenceslaus; SS Lawrence Ruiz & Companions.**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.'*

Follow Me

In today's gospel, three people were willing to follow Jesus. To the first person, Jesus presented the reality that following Him would be demanding. The second person requested to have time to bury his father first. His father was likely still alive, but he wanted to wait until his father passed on, and then he would follow Jesus. To this person, Jesus told him not to wait but to get on with spreading the good news of the Kingdom. The last person wanted to say goodbye to his family. Jesus reminded him of the need to remain focused and not to keep looking back at what he had left behind.

The message for us is that the call of Jesus to follow Him, in whatever path it takes, is never easy. As His disciples, we need to answer His call to follow Him by living His values, getting involved in the urgent work of the Kingdom, making God's love present to others, etc. Though we might be tempted to procrastinate or remain indifferent, Jesus never stops calling us to follow Him.

Reflective question:

Do I find the call of Jesus to follow Him too challenging?

Thursday, 29th September, The Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel & Raphael.

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

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.' Nathanael asked, *'How do you know me?'* Jesus replied, *'Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree.'* Nathanael answered, *'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.'* Jesus replied, *'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see greater things than that.'* And then he added, *'In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven*

open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.'

The angels of today

In today's passage, Jesus used an Old Testament image of "*heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending*" (Genesis 28:10-22). Christian tradition has always understood that angels are God's messengers. Today, Jesus wants to remind us that He is the one on whom the angels of God are ascending and descending. Jesus, the Word made flesh, is the ultimate messenger that reveals the true face of God. He is the supreme link between heaven and earth, God and humanity.

Today, as His disciples, Jesus sends us to be God's messengers, His angels to the people we encounter daily. We need to be aware that our words and actions can bring people to God. Thus, let us fix our eyes on Jesus and allow Him to lead us into deeper intimacy with Him so that we can be empowered and strengthened to communicate God's love. Through us, may we bring heaven to earth.

Reflective question:

How can I be God's messenger and reveal His presence to the people I will meet today?

Friday, 30th September, St. Jerome.

Job 38:1, 12-21; 40: 3-5, Luke 10:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples, "Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. And still, it will not go as hard with Tyre and Sidon at the Judgement as with you. And as for you, Capernaum, did you want to be exalted high as heaven? You shall be thrown down to hell. Anyone who listens to you listens to me; anyone who rejects you rejects me, and those who reject me reject the one who sent me.'

Jesus comes

The cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were the three cities where Jesus frequently visited and where He spoke to them about God's love for them and did many good works. Yet, despite witnessing the miracles of Jesus, they were not moved to change their lives. Despite hearing His teachings, the people were unresponsive to His message.

Today, are we like the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum? Jesus continues coming to our lives. However, we too can be unresponsive to Jesus' presence in our daily life. The invitation for us today is to have the faith to recognise Jesus' presence in us and among us, and respond to Him with open hearts. In the passage, Jesus ended by saying, "*Anyone who rejects you rejects me, and those who reject me reject the one who sent me*". Jesus continues to entrust His mission to us. He continues to come to the lives of the people through us. Let us rejoice that Jesus identifies Himself with us, and we are not alone in this mission of bringing God's love to others.

Reflective question:

Are there times when I am blind and deaf to His coming?

