



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

**SEPTEMBER 2024**



**Exaltation of the Cross**



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

SEPTEMBER  
2024

“If you love, you will be hurt, perhaps killed.  
But, if you do not love, you are dead already.”

*-Herbert McCabe OP*

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**Deuteronomy**  
4:1-2, 6-8

**Psalms**  
15:2-5

**James**  
1:17-18, 21-22, 27

**Mark**  
7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

# Sunday

01<sup>st</sup> September 2024

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

## A call to be agents of change

Why should Christians who have been set free be obedient to religious laws? It is a question that the Pharisees asked the Lord. The world around us can set this question before us. This is caused by the free will which was given to us as a fruit of God's love. He wants the best for us. He will not stand by and observe while we destroy ourselves.

Today, the Lord is offering us the full possession of the kingdom, that we may live in his presence, enter into a relationship with him and take possession of all that he has promised us. Many of us are content living on the border of this promised experience.

Sin, attractions of this world, promises of worldly possessions and relationships keep us rooted to the border and we do not enter and obtain what the Lord has in store for us. We do not enjoy the fullness of life with the Lord even while here on earth.

We are called to put into action what the Lord speaks to us. It is not enough to be listeners who do nothing. As the Lord reveals his heart to us, we are invited to put it into action.

The laws that have been prescribed are there for a purpose. It is essential that we understand or try to understand the meaning behind them. We often do the external things according to the laws but are resentful and angry in our hearts.

We take the closeness of the Lord for granted. Many people live with no one or no power to turn to, not even having hope. We assume and live like them because often God does not answer us in the way we assumed he would. Therefore, we choose to live as orphans.

In today's Psalm the Lord reminds us of his presence and love. That is to be living up to what we have learnt and choosing to trust in the Lord through thick and thin.

The Pharisees and scribes were concerned about the external things whereas the Lord was concerned about the internal experience. Jesus' answer was "You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition" (Mk 7: 8).

Many people take part in devotions and rituals, without examining their hearts or seeking a relationship with Jesus. Let us surrender ourselves and ask him to purify our intentions so that in all we do his glory will shine.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may the spoken words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart, find favor in your sight. Amen

1 Corinthians  
2:1-5

Psalm  
119:97-102

Luke  
4:16-30



# Monday

02<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

## Total freedom through Jesus

The Gospel of Luke focuses on the compassionate, loving and tender nature of Jesus and emphasises that Jesus came to this world for all people. Jesus returned to his hometown filled with the Holy Spirit and entered the synagogue for the Sabbath service. He was welcomed, appreciated and respected as a teacher and people listened to him attentively. The scroll that was chosen was his mission statement specifying the purpose of his coming to the world. His heart was burdened when seeing the blindness and brokenness which made their lives miserable. The Psalmist speaks of the joy of living in obedience to God. This becomes the key to freedom and joy. The good news Jesus spoke was not taken lovingly. Anyone can come to Jesus and a good example is the criminal who hung on a cross next to Jesus. The moment we accept Jesus as the Saviour, a shift takes place leading to a life transforming experience. This will be a tower of strength as we face the challenges of life.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, help us to focus our eyes only on you and keep us away from evil. Amen.



1 Corinthians  
2:10-16

Psalm  
145:8-14

Luke  
4:31-37



# Tuesday

03<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

Memorial of St Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church

## Jesus is always with us

When Jesus taught the people, they were astounded at his teaching because he was different from other teachers, as he spoke with authority, authenticity and humility. When the man in the synagogue who was possessed by an unclean spirit heard the people talk about Jesus and the deeds he had done, the man cried out to him. Jesus rebuked the demon. At that moment, the demon threw the man to the floor and came out of the man's body. The people who witnessed this healing were amazed and asked: "How does he have the power to exorcise unclean spirits?" The news of Jesus and his power and abilities spread throughout the region quickly. Let us come to Jesus and beg him to rid us of any unclean spirit that is destroying our lives. It could be unhealthy habits, addictions or sinful actions. We may not receive an immediate miracle; however, we would begin to notice a difference in our lives, in our emotions and in the way we trust in Jesus who is always with us.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, open my heart to trust you in every step of my life.  
I know you will not fail me. Amen.

**1 Corinthians**  
**3:1-9**

**Psalm**  
**33:12-15,20-21**

**Luke**  
**4:38-44**



# Wednesday

04<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

## The harvest is rich

Today's readings paint a tapestry of how God interacts with us. He weaves people into our lives and they teach us about God. He appoints people to bring us to God as Paul explains in the First reading. Paul and Apollos were sent by God to the people of Corinth. Paul says that he sowed the seed and Apollos watered it, but it was God himself who made things grow. He is the only one who can make our faith grow from infant Christians to mature Christians who live by the Spirit. God looks over us from heaven and considers everything we do. He delights when we are growing into a fruitful harvest by living in the Spirit but he grieves when we wither and die in our worldly ways. In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus says that he was sent to proclaim the good news. The Gospel writer describes many healings Jesus did in one day alone. Jesus came to save the Father's crop and heal us of our infirmities so that we can be the fruitful harvest that delights God.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may I bear the fruits of your Kingdom. Amen.

**1 Corinthians**  
**3:18-23**

**Psalm**  
**24:1-6**

**Luke**  
**5:1-11**



# Thursday

05<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

## **Are we ready to be transformed?**

Today's Gospel reading illustrates Jesus' authority over nature, his power to transform lives, and the call to discipleship, inviting us to follow him and become fishers of men. It emphasizes discipleship qualities such as faith, obedience and self denial to leave everything and follow Jesus. Christian discipleship could be demanding. Peter although he was an experienced fisherman, threw the net in obedience to Jesus. Often we find it difficult to have faith, obedience and self denial to overcome our ego. These are the challenging elements of our discipleship. When Peter took the initiative to obey Jesus, he realized his unworthiness to stand before him. After the encounter with Jesus his values changed. Encountering Jesus always brings life transformation. If life is not transformed we won't be able to have meaningful discipleship. Peter's encounter with Jesus teaches us that transformation can take place in our lives at any given time.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, transform our lives. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
4:1-5

Psalm  
37:3-6,27-28,39-40

Luke  
5:33-39



# Friday

06<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

## A new wine skin

Have you ever had a remarkable revelation in prayer or in a sermon? One that makes you think wow? I have had many over the years but when I think back only a few have transformed me. They are the ones that I took into prayer and asked God's grace to apply in my life. Jesus said that new wine must be poured into new wine skins, it cannot be poured into old skins. While it was directed at pharisees who were not willing to be renewed it is deeply true to us today. When we receive a revelation or a word of knowledge that moves us deeply, we need to break out of our old ways of thinking, habits and understanding and be renewed by the Spirit: "we must be born again" (Jn 3:7). We need a spiritual rebirth to be transformed. When we do not do this the revelation becomes a nice idea or we might say it is for others or at times disregard it. God's word is alive, true and active. Do we think "I know this scripture by heart" and dismiss his leadings? Can we listen in humility and expectation?

PRAYER: Abba Father, I want to be your vessel that is broken and remoulded. Give me the grace to be patient, humble and courageous. Amen



1 Corinthians  
4:6-15

Psalm  
145:17-21

Luke  
6:1-5



# Saturday

07<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

**Let us be filled with humility and gratitude**

Before I surrendered my life to Jesus, I thought I was in control of my life and did not seek his will. I did not recognise God's hand in my life but sought recognition and praise for myself. This is the behaviour that Paul is describing regarding the church in Corinth. Despite his discipling and sharing of the Gospel, the Corinthians were proud, boastful and judgemental. To the Corinthians the Christian life meant flaunting their privileges and boasting about their achievements; to Paul it meant humble service and a readiness to die for Christ. This is not a situation that happened only in Corinth. It is happening even today. There is no place for pride when we follow Jesus. God looked upon us with grace and mercy and he chose to intervene in our hopeless situations by sending us his only Son. When we recognise what God has done, we will be filled with gratitude and humility. Everything we have is a gift from God, received by his grace. This should be a daily reminder to ourselves.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, I come before you with humility and gratitude for every gift you have given me. Amen.



Isaiah  
35:4-7

Psalms  
146:6-10

James  
2:1-5

Mark  
7:31-37

# Sunday

08<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

## We are a chosen and healed generation

In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah speaks of the goodness of God. We have a compassionate Father. No one in this world could ever give promises and fulfil them like God does. Jesus assured us that he will never abandon us. He vindicates us, our sins are washed away and we are made clean.

We may have been ignorant of the presence of God in our lives but God was ever aware of us from the beginning of time. When we were far away from him, engaged in our plans and sinful desires, God was running after us to embrace us with arms open wide.

The Responsorial Psalm continues to describe and praise the nature of God. God's heart moves towards the fallen, the oppressed and the weak. Many people face discomfort as they lack material things. However some of us who have material goods may lack virtues such as compassion and we may be slack in loving people. But God's heart is clearly revealed in the Psalm. God brings justice to every person and looks after those who have become helpless. Our arrogance and pride are shattered when we are challenged by the pure love of God.

The second reading further portrays God's heart. We cannot be partial in the vineyard of God. The worldly measures are appearances, money, family background and education. There could be people who sincerely love God and are excited to serve the Lord with a burning zeal deep within them but in our circles they may not be recognized due to lack of such worldly measures. To show partiality in God's flock is an abomination in God's Kingdom. In God's Kingdom there cannot be "money talks" principle though this is common in Christian circles. This "money talks" syndrome among us should be stopped. We should love people equally.

In the Gospel proclamation we find the Lord Jesus healing a man with a speech impediment. It is amazing to observe how the Lord Jesus healed this man. The man was taken away from the rest of the crowd. Why? Is it that the Lord Jesus wanted to give him his true identity? The people who accompanied him surely loved him because the scripture says that they begged the Lord Jesus to heal him, but with the impediment his identity was also tarnished. God's compassion restores us completely. We are a chosen and healed generation.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may I serve you and others with a burning zeal. Amen

1 Corinthians  
5:1-8

Psalm  
5:5-7,12

Luke  
6:6-11



# Monday

09<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Memorial of Saint Peter Claver, Priest

### Let us not limit God

Today's Gospel proclamation speaks of Jesus' mission. It is the same mission that he gave his disciples before his ascension into heaven. He said, "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and drive out demons". When God heals it is complete. It is body, mind and soul. Death came as a consequence of sin. There is no one who can claim that they are without any illness or sin. Any infirmity of body, mind and soul is connected to some form of disobedience (sin) of not taking care of our whole being. In the book of Exodus, the writer says "I am the God who heals". We believe that nothing is impossible for our God and he can heal even the worst of sicknesses and forgive any sin attached to it. Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to stretch it out: to do the impossible. We need to act in faith and we will be healed fully. We also need to act in faith to carry out his mission to heal others. Let us become instruments of God's healing.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, let me exercise my faith to receive healing and bring healing to others. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
6:1-11

Psalm  
149:1-6,9

Luke  
6:12-19



# Tuesday

10<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

## **Making decisions guided by the Holy Spirit**

St. Ignatius of Loyola is renowned for his spiritual writings, particularly on discernment: the process of making decisions guided by the Holy Spirit. He shows us the significance of seeking God's will in all aspects of life, specially when facing major decisions. Reflecting on our spiritual journey, how often do we turn to God in prayer for guidance before making decisions? Today's Gospel proclamation serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of seeking God's guidance before making significant decisions. Jesus retreated to pray before choosing his twelve apostles. The same apostles Jesus chose, laid the foundational groundwork for the Church through their faith, dedication and commitment to spreading the Gospel. Jesus' choice of his apostles highlights God's plan and purpose for each individual. Let us seek clarity and direction through prayer when confronted with different choices and discern our purpose and live it with intentionality.

PRAYER: Abba Father, walk before me, make my way smooth, steer my course, and instil courage in me. Amen.

**1 Corinthians**  
7:25-31

**Psalm**  
45:11-12,14-17

**Luke**  
6:20-26



# Wednesday

11<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

## **Purify my heart**

Today's readings underscore the importance of focusing on an inward transformation of our hearts. Our brokenness, sorrow and strife in this transient world are opportunities for spiritual growth. The Beatitudes highlight the disposition of the heart within the kingdom of God. A heart is deemed "blessed" when it exhibits a state of humility and contrition, acknowledging its poverty before God. This meek heart, teachable and under control, allows for the sovereignty of Jesus as its Lord and Savior. It recognizes its own sinfulness in the presence of God, repenting sincerely, seeking comfort in God's forgiveness and striving to do better. This is why we are encouraged to "come as we are" and "present the truth of our hearts" in the 4 Steps prayer. Do I hunger and thirst for the Lord? Do I allow his Spirit to guide me? Let us rely on his grace, mercy and forgiveness. We are a new creation in Christ and all things are possible when we believe.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, purify our thoughts, desires, and motives, so that we may one day see you face to face. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
8:1-7,11-13

Psalm  
139:1-3,13-14,23-24

Luke  
6:27-38



# Thursday

12<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

## **No turning back**

Jesus' ways are radical; it does not belong to this world. Often we do not understand his Word. Even when we do, we maybe reluctant to practice it. Are we listening and understanding the morals of Jesus, to respect, show dignity, be non-judgemental, uplift our enemies and love them, and give without intent to receive? It is difficult, but with him in us, this is what we are called for in our Christian life to take up the challenges and practise those ways of Jesus. The Responsorial Psalm leads us in prayer: "Lead me, O Lord, in the path of life eternal". Let us seek God's presence in the challenges we face daily. Each day, we need to ask for his grace to increase our willpower for wisdom, knowledge and understanding with his power to establish Jesus' way of love and mercy. Let us pray using the words of this song: "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back. The cross before me, the world behind me, no turning back. Though none go with me, still I will follow, no turning back."

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may I seek your presence. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
9:16-19,22-27

Psalm  
84:3-6,12

Luke 6:39-42



# Friday

13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Memorial of St John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

## The Lord is our provider

Jesus is our caretaker, our steward walking and guiding us in our daily tasks. Jesus became poor and weak for us so that we will have strength to follow him. Why do we keep struggling with our own efforts and brokenness? In the Responsorial Psalm, we are invited to dwell in the house of the Lord. How can we say we lack something when God provides for our need even before we ask for it. Maybe we have a blindness we cannot see and therefore find it difficult to rely on him. The word of God is a double edged sword that convicts us from within. We are so wounded with the brokenness within us, that most of the time, we do not recognise our blindness and sinfulness. We are quick to fight back and defend our name, position or status without even looking within to see the issues that lie within us. We are quick to justify the bad behaviour or ignorance in ourselves and we push the blame to someone else to feel better about ourselves. Let us resolve to change our ways.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, give us your grace to see the world through your eyes. Make us better versions of ourselves as we journey with you. Amen.



**Numbers**

21:4-9

**Psalm**

78:1-2,34-38

**John**

3:13-17



# Saturday

14<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

## I will cling to the old rugged cross

In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus tells Nicodemus that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted and whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. The serpent was lifted up on a standard and Jesus was lifted up on a cross. The cross - a sign of human cruelty at its worst was the instrument of love through which God saved us. The cross therefore became a sign of salvation and eternal life for whoever would believe. As disciples of Christ, we often make the sign of the cross over ourselves. We make it as we start our prayers as a way of focussing our hearts and minds on Jesus. We also make it after prayer in the hope that we would stay close to God. In times of suffering and pain, we are to look to the cross as a sign of strength and protection. Today, let us resort to look at the cross more often. When making the sign of the cross, let us realize that we are bringing our whole being to God - hearts, minds and souls.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may I have the courage to embrace my crosses, uniting them with the cross of Jesus Amen.







Isaiah  
50:5-9

Psalms  
116:1-6,8-9

James  
2:14-18

Mark  
8:27-35

# Sunday

15<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Faith and works

I am reminded of a boat with its oars on either side and each playing a pivotal role to steer the boat forward in the desired direction. It is not easy or futile to row a boat with just one oar and so it is with our lives. It is not possible to walk with the Lord only with faith or only with works. We need both faith and works to steer our life in this journey. It is faith and not our works that saved us.

When we were baptised we were grafted into his divine family and he called us his own, not because we deserved it but because of his merciful grace. As we have received Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and desire moving towards the upward call to heaven fulfilling God's purpose in our lives, we need to demonstrate our faith with good works.

In today's second reading St. James reminds us that, "Faith of itself, if it does not have works is dead". In his letter to the Galatians (1:8-9; 2:16), St. Paul explains that none of us can gain or buy out our salvation by our works or accomplishments, we cannot manipulate God.

It is good to know that the word 'works' referred to by St. James talks about our "Good works" that we ought to carry out in response to God's love for us. It is not dead works. It is works we do when we are compelled by his love, inspired and prompted to carry out his will in response to that great love, because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

How do we walk by 'faith' and do these 'good works'? In the first reading prophet Isaiah gives an indication; the Lord God opened his ear that he may hear; because he had not rebelled.

Isaiah speaks of the suffering servant of the Lord who did not shield himself from his oppressors. Instead he surrendered himself to the hands of the Lord, knowing that God alone was his helper. And so we learn, that we are strengthened and empowered when we hear from God and abide by his word, meditating on his promises.

"Faith comes by hearing the Word of God" (Rom 10:17). And so unbelief and rebellion enter our lives when we do not listen to God, lose desire for the Word, or open our ears too much to the world outside.

Let us ask for more of God's grace that we may spend each day reading and reflecting on the word of God so that our ears are opened wide to hear God speak. Let us allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may I walk by faith and not by sight.  
Strengthen me to carry out good works. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
11:17-26,33

Psalm  
40:7-10,17

Luke  
7:1-10



# Monday

16<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Memorial of Saints Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs

## Amazing Faith

In today's Gospel proclamation we learn that Jesus himself is amazed at the faith of the centurion. The centurion at that time would have been an enemy, a Gentile. He recognized in Jesus the authority that he held. He understood that if Jesus said the word, his servant would be healed even from a distance, he need not touch the slave. We could ask ourselves, are we willing to approach Jesus, for ourselves, for our friends and for our enemies. Do we have that kind of faith which amazed Jesus? A faith that believes Jesus only has to speak and that word is carried out with power and authority. Let us ask the Lord to captivate our hearts with his merciful love and truth and set us free to love and serve him always with joy and trust in the power of his saving word. May his love grow in us that we may always seek to love and serve others generously. Let us follow the example of Jesus who loves us and laid down his life for our sake. May we have the strength to love others.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, increase my faith. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
12:12-14,27-31

Psalm  
100:1-5

Luke  
7:11-17



# Tuesday

17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

## Unity in the body of Christ

St Paul draws a beautiful picture of the unity of the body of Christ. We are part of the body of Christ. In the body there is no question of relative importance, we must respect each other, sympathize with each other, and love each other. Have we really internalized this beautiful truth? Love supersedes all. St Ignatius of Antioch speaks of renewing ourselves in the faith in the body of Christ and in the love that is his blood. It is this love and compassion for the widow of Nain that pushes Jesus to raise the dead body of her son to life. Can we really feel the pain and suffering of others to the extent we are moved to do something about it? The cross of Christ's passion is his invitation to you and me who are members of the body. The head cannot come to life without the members, since God the very source of unity, has foretold such a union. We are privileged to be part of this body. Love is the only thing which can bind us into perfect unity.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, give us the grace to love as you love. Amen.

1 Corinthians  
12:31--13:13

Psalm  
33:2-5,12,22

Luke  
7:31-35



# Wednesday

18<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

## See through the Eyes of Love

The religious leaders despised both John the Baptist and Jesus but were not consistent in their fault-finding. They criticized John because he fasted and drank no wine; they criticized Jesus because he ate heartily and drank wine with tax collectors and sinners. Of course, their real objection to both men had nothing to do with dietary habits. What the religious leaders could not tolerate was their hypocrisy being exposed. The Pharisees were not troubled by their inconsistency toward John the Baptist and Jesus. They were good at justifying their "wisdom." Most of us can find compelling reasons to do or believe whatever suits our purposes. If we do not examine ourselves in the light of God's truth, we may be just as self-serving as the Pharisees. Sometimes we look down on others or twist the situation to our benefit. But let us look at their real value in Christ. Let us remind ourselves that we are accountable for all that is done, and see people through the eyes of God's love.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, let there be more of you  
and less of ourselves in our lives. Amen.

**1 Corinthians**  
15:1-11

**Psalm**  
118:1-2,16-17,28

**Luke**  
7:36-50



# Thursday

19<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

**Your faith has saved you! Go in peace!**

Today's Gospel reading speaks of two characters: Simon the Pharisee who did not feel the need to receive forgiveness and mercy from the Lord and the woman who was considered to be a prostitute who accepted the mercy of God and received forgiveness for her sins. The more we get caught up with the world, we tend to seek the acceptance of human beings rather than seeking God's favor. When we focus on building our own prestige and prominence in the eyes of the world we forget that our lifespan is short. Believing that Jesus is our Saviour brings us eternal life and happiness. The Lord therefore invites us to reflect and repent for the times we have rejected him, ignored him and been unfaithful to him. By his death and resurrection, Jesus has already gained forgiveness for our sins. All we need to do is open ourselves and accept it with faith. Like the woman in today's Gospel reading, we will then be able to worship the Lord with a heart of sincerity, freedom, love and gratitude.

**PRAYER: Abba Father, open my eyes to see you.  
May my heart be led to repentance. Amen.**



**1 Corinthians**  
15:12-20

**Psalm**  
17:1,6-8,15

**Luke**  
8:1-3



# Friday

20<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Memorial of Saints Andrew Kim Tae-gon and Companions, Martyrs

## Raise Hope

In today's first reading, St. Paul speaks to the people of Corinth. In this wealthy young city, excess seemed to be the norm and most of them reflected loose morals and had a materialistic outlook. The Corinthian church that St Paul established, influenced by philosophers, did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Their philosophy was, "Let us eat and drink and tomorrow we will die." It was hopeless, empty and materialistic. St. Paul says that if we do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, then empty is our preaching, faith, church and our testimony. We are called to "Raise Hope" in the "Corinth" that we live in. Today's Gospel proclamation says that Jesus was accompanied by three women who provided for Jesus and his disciples, from their personal resources. We are invited to examine the extent to which we have committed our lives to following him. Have we consecrated every part of our life to the Lord and his mission? Do we look for ways to "Raise Hope" in others?

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, thank you for calling me to be transformed by your Word. Enter every part of my life and use me for your glory Amen.

**Ephesians**  
4:1-7,11-13

**Psalm**  
19:2-5

**Matthew**  
9:9-13



# Saturday


21<sup>st</sup> September 2024

Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and evangelist

## **Be compassionate and merciful**

Today's Gospel proclamation talks about Jesus' mission. He came for our salvation. Jesus said "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." The Lord came for all who did not know the way and for all who lived in blindness. Jesus came that sinners may repent and have a new life. He came so that we may repent and change our ways. Like the Pharisees, sometimes we are caught up in religious rituals and sacrifices but our hearts are still hardened. During Lent we fast but our thoughts and actions towards others may not change. That is why the Lord says that he prefers mercy and not sacrifice. Mercy is when we have compassion on others and share God's love. I have heard the elders in my family judging people as soon as they came home from church. All these remarks were judgements passed on others. It took me a long while to realize that Christ came for all and he welcomes everyone with his open arms. Are we ready to love others with the love of Christ?

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, help me to have compassion and mercy on my neighbor like you have for me. Amen.



Wisdom  
2:12,17-20

Psalms  
54:3-6,8

James  
3:16--4:3

Mark  
9:30-37

# Sunday

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## We never walk alone. Jesus walks with us

Today's readings show the problems of our fallen human nature. Some of the problems of a fallen nature are jealousy and selfish ambitions leading to disorder, the passions that are at war within us, the desire to possess and its consequences and to be great in the eyes of the world. Jesus took upon himself our broken human nature, he suffered, died and rose from the dead and is victorious over our broken nature, sin and death. When we by the grace of God believe of his victory over sin and death, our natures will begin to change.

In this world we will always have trouble. Today is a unique day in our life. This day will not come back again. Let us give ourselves fully to the adventure of today. Let us walk boldly along the path of life, relying on our ever-present companion, the Holy Spirit who is with us, to guide us through.

As we go through trials and temptations we will realize how our nature is being changed. The ungodly may find it inconvenient when our natures are being changed. Because the person who used to lie to defend the boss will not want to lie anymore. A person who used to collaborate in cheating will not want to do so. Another will not want to give a bribe to get the work done. One may not want to use words or jokes not pleasing to the Lord. Jesus wants us to trust him to face any challenges and temptations. Facing challenges will reveal to us whether we are able to be gentle, impartial and sincere, how forbearing we are and the faith we have in God's mercy and protection.

"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you: Do not fear, I will help you" (Is 41:13). When we fall we need to seek the face of God.

The Psalmist shows how we can face trials. He implores God to hear his cry, to defend and save him from the enemy. The enemy is our sinful nature that makes us fall to our broken nature. The psalmist believes that the Lord will help him and he praises God in anticipation. We too can pray the same prayer when we face trials and tribulations.

The logic of the Gospel defies human understanding. Jesus says in his kingdom the last shall be first and the greatest will be the servant of all. It describes Jesus' life on earth. Does this not happen also to us? As we face today to reach this goal, let us remember that nothing is impossible for our God. We never walk alone. Jesus walks with us.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, give us the grace to always believe in your Word, as we face whatever life throws at us. Amen.



Proverbs  
3:27-34

Psalm  
15:2-5

Luke  
8:16-18



# Monday

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

Memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest

**Our lives might be the only Bible that some people read**

Today's readings speak to us about living a life of righteousness and holiness. The first reading relates to living a blameless life and the Gospel proclamation speaks about allowing the light to shine in our hearts. It is a reminder to walk in this way not only in the eyes of others, but also when we are by ourselves. Our thoughts should be as pure as white and our actions straight forward. All the time, keeping in mind, "What will the Lord Jesus do or say in each and every moment we face". Today's readings invite us to be "the light that shines before others". It is not a light of self-righteousness nor of good deeds, but a light where our lives become a living testament of the Word of God. Always keeping in mind, that our lives might be the only Holy Bible that some people read. A choice is set before us, and we need the grace of God to choose his ways and the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to say "Yes" to the Father, no matter what the circumstance.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, I desire to walk in your ways and take your light to the world. Amen.



**Proverbs**  
21:1-6,10-13

**Psalm**  
119:1,27,30,34,35,44

**Luke**  
8:19-21



# Tuesday

24<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

## God's Word is living and active

In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus says my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it. In other words, Jesus considers those who spend time listening to the word, reading the word, and acting upon the word as his own in whom he takes delight. Our relationship with God grows by listening to his word, praying with his word, and translating his word into actions. Hebrews 4:12 says that the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword. I experienced the importance of reading the word of God when I lost my job and did not know what to do. It was the daily reading of the word of God that gave me hope and the assurance of God's faithfulness. It is amazing to know that no matter the circumstance we face, there is always a promise that we can hold onto. How often do I read and meditate on the Word? Am I drawn to reading the Word when faced with a difficult situation or when I need to make a tough decision?

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, I pray for the grace to listen to your word and obey. Amen.

Proverbs  
30:5-9

Psalm  
119:29,72,89,101,104,163

Luke  
9:1-6



# Wednesday

25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

## Jesus Christ is the embodiment of truth

What is truth? This poignant question asked by Pontius Pilate is so relevant in our postmodern culture that denies that truth can even be known. In a world where people have their own subjective reality today's first reading and responsorial psalm show us the error of this belief. Truth does not mean only facts, it refers to the deep resonance we feel in our hearts when we encounter something pure, beautiful and authentic. The word of God brings us into the presence of this truth; it points us to Jesus: the embodiment of truth. In today's Gospel proclamation we see Jesus send out the apostles to heal the sick and proclaim the good news that the kingdom of God is at hand. They are required to proclaim this truth with their words and through their actions. We too have been given the same power and authority through our baptism, and we too are being sent to our spheres of influence: to boldly proclaim the truth that his kingdom is at hand.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, in a world desperate for truth, help me to be a bearer of truth through my words and actions. Amen.

**Ecclesiastes**

**1:2-11**

**Psalm**

**90:3-6,12-14,17**

**Luke**

**9:7-9**



# Thursday

26<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

## **A meaningful life with a purpose**

For many, life is short and useless. It is meaningless when we face unexpected problems, sicknesses, calamities, disasters and various other challenges without God. But if we are in the Lord and see through his eyes we see how beautiful life is and we will see its purpose. The creator of the universe is our Father, and I am his child. I belong to God's family and will live forever. Herod wanted to see Jesus not because he believed but because Jesus was a challenge to him and his way of life. We too seek Jesus for various reasons. When that particular need is met we draw away from him. Today he is inviting us to come to him and be connected, like the branches of the vine. Let us believe in his promise in John 15:5-6 that if we remain in him, he remains in us and we will bear fruit. Then we will remain in his word and be strengthened to face life's struggles and come out victorious because of him. Then we will understand the deep meaning of it all. May our lives bring glory to God our Father.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, let me daily seek your face and be connected to you. Amen.

**Ecclesiastes**  
3:1-11

**Psalm**  
144:1-4

**Luke**  
9:18-22



# Friday

27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest

## Seeing and Knowing

There are two ways of “seeing” and “knowing” Jesus. One is that of the crowd and the other is of the disciples. The crowds saw him as a teacher, a miracle worker and a prophet. They wanted instant answers for their day to day lives, to live a trouble free, comfortable earthly life and for that they went after Jesus. Surely Jesus wants to heal our sicknesses, provide our daily bread and bless us. But there is something more. Jesus came into this world with a specific plan and purpose. In submitting to God’s will, he had to go through rejection, humiliation, suffering, pain and death. But at the end it brought deliverance and defeated sin. God has a plan and a purpose for our lives too. To fulfil that plan, we need the Messiah. He alone can give us inner peace in this life and lead us to eternal life. Do we know him as the disciples – the Messiah of our lives or are we still seeing him as the crowds, from the outside as the One who satisfies our day to day needs? Today let us make Peter’s answer our own.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, blessed are you, our rock, our mercy, our fortress, our stronghold, our deliverer and our shield. In you we trust. Amen.



**Ecclesiastes**  
11:9--12:8

**Psalm**  
90:3-6,12-14,17

**Luke**  
9:43-45



# Saturday

28<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

## God is always there with us

The first reading speaks about the human ageing process, something that is familiar to us. Children are usually full of the joy of life, appreciating with wonder so much of the world around them. With maturity come opportunities and choices that may lead us to yearn for the past when life seemed more carefree. It is good to remember that at every age, God has been there with us, even “when to go uphill was an ordeal and a walk was something to dread”. Such memories help us face the future more joyfully. Living fully in the present moment, doing what we can and enjoying the time we have become viable options. Let us seize the day and make every moment count. The Lord tells the disciples the Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands. Perhaps that reality is true for us today too. Are we ready to experience suffering when it comes our way? Everything requires preparation, are we prepared to drink the cup of suffering when it comes our way?

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, we pray for divine wisdom as we walk this journey through struggles and battles. Amen.

Numbers  
11:25-29

Psalms  
19:8,10,12-14

James  
5:1-6

Mark  
9:38-43,45,47-48

# Sunday

29<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## The adverse consequences of poor choices

What harsh warnings today's readings draw our attention to. More than ever before, the line that separates what is accepted and not accepted has become invisible. Our world has become so much of the 'Do what makes you happy' culture that little or no emphasis is made on the adverse consequences of poor choices. Or it may even be that with the chase for instant gratification, no thought even goes toward the repercussions.

The Scriptures talk of a reward for anyone who gives a mere glass of water to someone in the name of Jesus. God is revealing his heart in this statement. His heart is moved when our hearts display his tenderness; when we are mindful of him, that we do meager tasks in his name. Matthew 6:33 "Seek him first and his kingdom". This is just one way we can show him, how we continually seek him.

It is beautiful how all parts of scripture link every book to draw our awareness to him; draw us to a life of living for him, draw us to a life of living IN him - In him we live and move and have our being -, draw us to a life that anything that is impure, anything that concerns darkness should be cut out, as we cannot have it both ways. A life with Christ involves living in the world but not being of the world: to detach ourselves from worries and attach ourselves to Christ - because he is our comforter and he will never leave or let us down.

Today's readings are themed around a life of choices. Every decision we make impacts our spirituality or shows the lack of one. We make numerous decisions in a day. Do we pause to wonder if these center on ourselves or the welfare of others? Do they embody the heart of Jesus? Are we fearful of being thrown into hell when our earthly journey is over? Or are we looking forward to eternal life with Christ while making the choices in this world that help us get there?

Let us thank God for sending into our lives people who have ministered to us and brought us the good news of Jesus our Savior. Let us thank him for the seeds he has sowed and watered through the ones he sent. It is God alone who strengthens and increases our faith so that we may live by his Spirit. Let us implore his help to bear fruit. May he send us to others who may need the seed and watering, so he may do in them, what he has done in us. Let us be grateful to the Lord who is watching over us and protecting us. May he help us to return when we stray from his ways.

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, may you guide every decision we make. Amen.



**Job**  
1:6-22

**Psalm**  
17:1-3,6-7

**Luke**  
9:46-50



# Monday

30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church

## The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away

Today's readings invite us to embrace humility. Humility is "seeing ourselves as God sees us: acknowledging that every good we possess is a pure gift from him" (St. Thomas Aquinas). Job lost everything in the blink of an eye. Despite this, he chose to praise the Lord: "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back again. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". In the Gospel reading, Jesus emphasizes the importance of being childlike: to fully trust in the Lord. Children leap into the arms of those who care for them in unwavering trust. Similarly, we are called to trust our Father. However, as worldly concerns weigh on us, we may find it challenging to trust people and God. Trusting in the Lord is the key to everything. Jesus emphasizes in the Gospel that, "the one who is least... is the one who is the greatest." Therefore, let us strive for humility, relying on the Lord, and praying for the grace to be childlike, trusting in him completely

**PRAYER:** Abba Father, guide my mind, open my heart, strengthen my will and soothe my emotions. May humility become a guiding light in my journey Amen.





## Truth

### **The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away**

Our world has fallen out of love with the Truth: Fake news, wild assertions on the internet, mad conspiracy theories. Yet buried in humanity is an ineradicable instinct for the truth.

How can we draw people to the One who is the Truth if we are not truthful about ourselves? First of all, in speaking truthfully of the joys and sufferings of the world. For truth, we need disciplined scholarship which re- sists our temptation to use the Word of God and the teachings of the Church for our own purposes. 'God must be right because he agrees with me!! God's Word belongs to God. Listen to him. We do not own the truth. The truth owns us.

All power comes from our Triune God, the one in whom all is shared. The Father shares his power. With everyone. And he configures all power as shared. Each one has to be recognized as having the power that the Father has willed to entrust to him or her.

If the Church becomes truly a community of mutual empowerment, we shall speak with the authority of the Lord.

(Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP - Synod Retreat, 02nd October 2023)

# Exaltation of the Cross

Early in the fourth century, Saint Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the second-century Temple of Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Savior's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher on that spot. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch healed a dying woman. The cross immediately became an object of veneration.

At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered placed above Jesus' head: Then "all the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on."

To this day, the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the basilica's dedication. The feast entered the Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered the cross from the Persians, who had carried it off in 614. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he took off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

On Our Knees - In His Hands is a book of reflections and an aid to prayer, based on the daily readings of the Holy Mass. Its purpose is to help Catholics and other Christians engaged in the normal hustle and bustle of life to discover God's presence and direction in the practical situations they are placed in. This is made possible by a group of writers who are lay people living at the heart of busy day-to-day life.