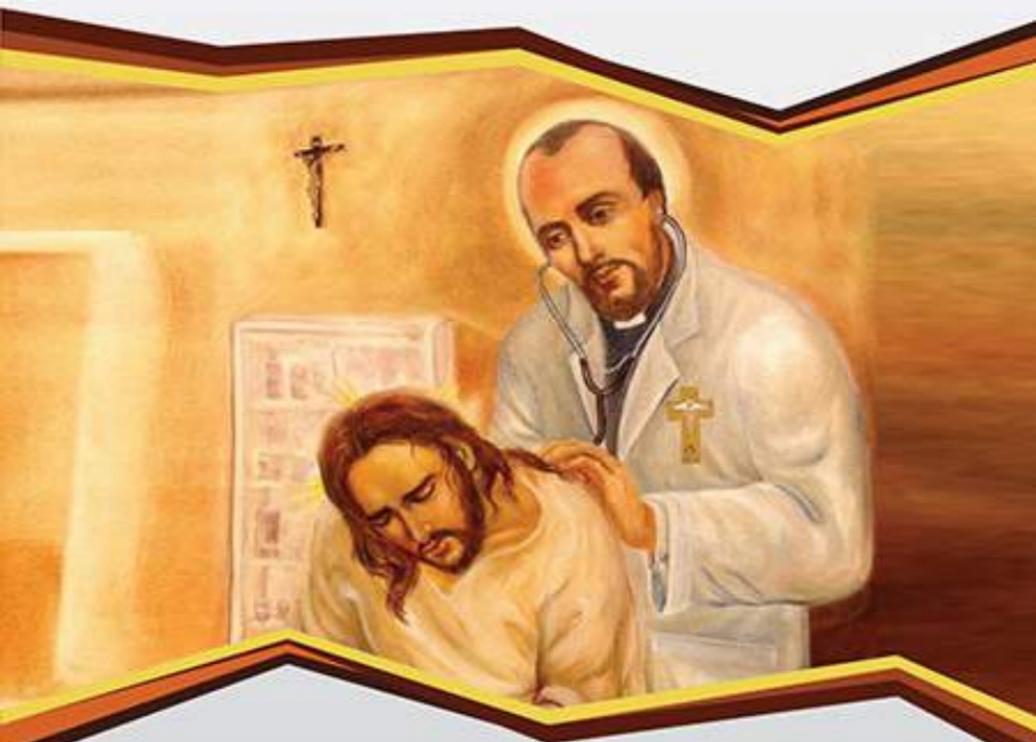


JULY  
2021

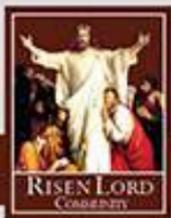


# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



## St. Anthony Zaccaria

*Feast Day: 05 July 2021*



DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

JULY  
2021

Take care of your spiritual life,  
your relationship with God,  
because this is the backbone of  
everything we do and everything  
we are.

Pope Francis

### **Published by:**

*The Life in the Spirit Communities of the Catholic  
Charismatic Renewal, Colombo, Sri Lanka,  
(With Ecclesiastical Approval).*

### **Editors**

Lalith Perera  
Louis Benedict

Read the “Daily Reflections” from anywhere in the world  
by downloading the PDF file from  
[www.risenlordcommunity.org](http://www.risenlordcommunity.org)

## No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit

“When we pray, it is because the Holy Spirit inspires prayer in our heart. When we break the cycle of our self-centredness, and move beyond ourselves and go out to encounter others, to listen to them and help them, it is the Spirit of God who impels us to do so. When we find within a hitherto unknown ability to forgive, to love someone who doesn’t love us in return, it is the Spirit who has taken hold of us. When we move beyond mere self-serving words and turn to our brothers and sisters with that tenderness which warms the heart, we have indeed been touched by the Holy Spirit.”

Pope Francis, Homily, 2014

### Thursday July 01

13th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
22:1-19

Psalms  
115:1-6, 8-9

Matthew  
9:1-8

Let go, and let God.

My Grandfather rose from being a pauper to a man of great wealth and power. Towards the end of his life, he lost most of it. He told me that what he had retained was what the Almighty had bestowed. He advised me to allow God to take it all. If I did so, He would bless me with what power and wealth promises to give but does not. God gives when holding on to nothing. As children of God we share divine power. The criterion however, is to “let go” of what we hold precious. We are invited to go beyond our understanding to enter another realm of reality: the realm of believing the impossible. Nothing is impossible for God, therefore nothing is impossible for one who believes and acts on God’s word. Entering into the realm of losing or having nothing, we receive more than what we can ask for or imagine. In the gospel, God through Jesus, forgives sins: “the Son of Man has authority to forgive.” Something impossible is now made possible.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I empty myself to exalt Christ Jesus. Amen.

## Friday July 02

13th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
23:1-4,19;24:1-8,62-67

Psalm  
106:1-5

Matthew  
9: 9-13

Jesus came for the sinners.

Today's Gospel proclamation focuses on Matthew who was also called Levi. He became one of the apostles, when he was sitting by the customs house in Capernaum and the Lord said "come follow me." Scholars believe Matthew was employed as a tax collector in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. Because Levi's occupation was one that earned distrust and contempt everywhere, the Jewish religious leaders criticised Jesus on seeing him eat with tax collectors and sinners. The Lord said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners". Other than naming St. Matthew in the list of Apostles, the New Testament offers scant and uncertain information about him. St. Matthew's Gospel was written for a Jewish-Christian church in a strongly Jewish environment. Tradition notes his ministry in Judaea, after which he supposedly missioned to the East, suggesting Ethiopia and Persia. It is said that he was martyred for the sake of Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for your divine mercy which liberates us from our sin and selfishness. Amen.

## Saturday July 03

Feast of Saint Thomas, Apostle

Ephesians  
2:19-22

Psalm  
117:1-2

John  
20:24-29

Doubting Thomas proclaimed: My Lord and my God

In the first reading, Saint Paul speaks about an egalitarian perspective on society. Christians are like a building, where Jesus Christ is the centre and the faithful form an integral part. The common fatherhood of God makes us all children, equal in God's eyes. Today's Gospel proclamation relates the episode for which Saint Thomas is most known, 'doubting Thomas'. The other disciples had told him what they had experienced. He too wanted to experience it. Despite his initial disbelief, his subsequent belief led him to Asia, notably the Indian sub-continent where he was martyred. Perhaps the other disciples also would not have believed had they not seen the risen Lord. He blesses us because we too believe without seeing. It is Jesus who called us, since he said that we did not choose Him, but that He chose us. This blessing encourages and fortifies us in our faith when our spirits are drooping in the dark times we experience in our lives, which may, otherwise, cause us to despair. Let us in faith call on our savior, "My Lord and my God."

Prayer: Abba Father, strengthen our faith, based on belief without seeing, for which your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed us. Amen.

## Sunday July 04

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel  
2:2-5

Psalm  
123:1-4

2 Corinthians  
12:7-10

Mark  
6:1-6

When I am weak, then I am strong.

Does God still speak to us? Is the prophetic ministry a thing of the past? Are we left to ourselves? No, in every time and age, God raises prophets, shepherds, saints, priests, mothers and fathers to speak his message. However, it is often uncomfortable to listen to the prophets whom God sends, because often their messages challenge us to heed the harsh realities that we try to run away from.

Pope Francis is a "Climate prophet", he is challenging us to re-think about how we treat the only home that we have - our planet Earth. He has been making numerous pleas to protect water, rainforests and animals. We may think that this is not relevant to us. But it is one of the most important callings that we have received; to care for our common home. We are only stewards of this planet, we share the resources with all forms of life, not just human.

When we are faced with challenging prophetic words, how do we respond? Are we like the people that Ezekiel describes, hard and obstinate of heart and will not want to go through inconvenience to do God's will? Or are we like the people in today's Gospel proclamation, trying to find fault with the prophet? We know who this person is, his/her background, so we will not listen to him/her? Where is our faith? We say with our lips, that we want to obey God, but when the message is too difficult to carry out, we find fault with the preacher.

Caring for the poor, the marginalized, and oppressed are not options, these are our duties. The Lord wants us to take care of our brothers and sisters in whatever the simple ways that we can. Perhaps by sharing a packet of biscuits with a neighbor, making a phone call to an elderly family member who might be living alone.

Many of us have been privileged to receive blessings from God, but let us not become proud. If we do, then God will gently remind us that all glory belongs to him, we are only doing our duty when we help or minister to others. We are not inadequate, the Lord has filled us with the Holy Spirit and empowered us to carry out his mission in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. God's grace is always sufficient for us, he does not push us into despair. If he calls us, he also equips us to do his task. When we feel weak, that is when we can start relying more on God's power. This is why St. Paul gladly said, "When I am weak, then I am strong."

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to take care of your creation, and empower me when I feel weak. Amen.

## Monday July 05

14th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
28:10-22

Psalm  
91:1-4, 14-15

Matthew  
9:18-26

Called to a great adventure.

When the Jews pray, they call upon the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Though Jacob was deceptive, God chose him to establish a people through him. God's nature is different from our traditional views of him. Sin is no barrier for God's unconditional love. The Gospel shows the "otherness" of God. The Synagogue leader and the woman with the issue of blood came to Jesus in their desperation. The motives of both may be questionable. The Synagogue leader may have opposed Jesus and His teachings, but he had nowhere to turn. The woman had tried everything else before coming to Jesus. The Lord came for us, sinners and outcasts, to reveal God's unconditional love, and healing was a part of his ministry. We are called to "come as we are". We have the Holy Spirit as a counselor who will reveal Jesus to us. When we surrender and hold on to his promises, we can have an exciting adventure ahead of us.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for your Spirit, who will increase my faith in You and help me appreciate Your goodness to me. Amen.

## Tuesday July 06

14th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
32:23-33

Psalm  
17:1-3,6-8,15

Matthew  
9:32-38

As gold is refined in Fire, the children of God are perfected in trials.

Jacob in all his might fought with God and others, yet prevailed, owing to the strength he had. Do we have the same strength when we face life's barriers and difficulties? Do we simply give in or give up? Do we throw the towel and walk away? Jacob reminds us how he wrestled until he was blessed. When the going gets tough, and sickness, poverty, death or failure strike us, we are reminded to strive and hold on to God. We need to hear Jesus telling us, "Fear not, I am with you." Our faith through prayer and perseverance can open doors to blessings beyond our imagination or understanding. The Gospel speaks of an episode where Jesus restores the speech impediment of a man possessed by a demon. The Pharisees have negative remarks on the miracle performed. We may come across similar attitudes from the spiritually blind. Yet Jesus' concern was not about who opposed him but about the plentiful harvest that needed labourers to gather it.

Prayer: Abba Father, awaken our spirits and raise labourers for your abundant harvest. Amen.

## Wednesday July 07

14th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
41:55-57, 42:5-7, 17-24

Psalm  
33:2-3,10-11,18-19

Matthew  
10:1-7

Curses turned into Blessings.

In today's readings we see a comparison between the Joseph of the Old Testament and the "New Joseph" in the New Testament - the Lord Jesus. Joseph was unjustly handed over to the Merchants. The same is true in the life of the Lord Jesus. He was unjustly treated and was crucified, but His death brought victory to all. The famine in Egypt brought victory to other nations, because of the way God spoke to him through his dreams. The readings are teaching us of the sacrifice of one man and the impact of it on the world. Maybe we feel rejected, misunderstood, lonely; but if we choose to look at the same situation through the perspective of God the Father, we will begin to receive new strength and be empowered to face the same situation in a new light. This empowerment is the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that is able to turn a curse into a blessing that will transform us and others. Today, we are called to be a blessing.

Prayer: Abba Father, we place before you, our situations. Give us the grace to go beyond and see these same circumstances through your eyes. Amen.

## Thursday July 08

14th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
44:18-21, 23-29; 45:1-5

Psalm  
105:16-21

Matthew  
10:7-15

To dream the impossible dream.

In today's first reading, the dreams of Joseph, - where he dreamt of the sun, moon and eleven stars bow to him - comes true. There are many promises and words given to us by God in tough times and good times. We have often treasured them dearly, trusted and stood by them most of the time. But with time we have forgotten and sometimes gone back to our old ways. This dream was revealed to Joseph when he was young and then he was led into so many troubles and tribulations to the extent that he almost lost his life. But in His heart He trusted God and was obedient to His ways. And we see the words of God fulfilled, where the brothers seek help from Joseph. Joseph did not follow God for the benefits he would receive one day but for the love he had for God. When we serve God with all our heart, we are able to manifest the power of God and bring down heaven to earth - we will be able to heal, help, cleanse and proclaim God's love.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to give as we have received. Let us remember your promises and that your Word will not return to you until it's fulfilled. Amen.

## Friday July 09

14th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
46:1-7,28-30

Psalm  
37:3-4,18-19,27-28,39-40

Matthew  
10:16-23

A glorious ending to a faithful life.

In the first reading we read about God's revelation to Jacob on his journey to Egypt. God tells Jacob 'Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt', because He was going to accompany Jacob. Fear had gripped Jacob as he endured much loss in his life; his father, mother, a wife and Joseph. He had experienced the fear of grave loss and loneliness. The Psalmist says that God will not forsake His faithful ones and He will deliver us from our troubles as we take refuge in Him. God assured Jacob of his faithfulness as Jacob continued to trust God and seek Him. When famine struck, Jacob was led to send his sons to Egypt and this resulted in a greater blessing. Jacob re-united with Joseph and saw the conflict between Joseph and his other sons resolve. Furthermore his entire household received the favour of Pharaoh and was looked after and provided for, in the midst of a great famine. A glorious ending to a faithful life.

Prayer: Abba Father, I trust in You, be my refuge and strength. Amen.

## Saturday July 10

14th Week in Ordinary Time

Genesis  
49:29-32; 50:15-26

Psalm  
105:1-4, 6-7

Matthew  
10:24-33

Seeing with the eyes of faith.

How much do we trust God? If we did, we would not be bitter, and resentful of the things that happen to us. We would have the power to forgive others as God forgives us because deep within us we would have the assurance that our lives when surrendered to God, come under his protection. No matter how dire the situation maybe, He will bring about His beautiful plan even in the most trying circumstances. The Old Testament's Joseph held onto God, trusting and obeying God, even when things continued to go from bad to worse in his life. Ultimately Joseph is blessed beyond measure and through him, many other lives including those of his own family are saved. In today's Gospel proclamation we see the Lord Jesus beautifully portray this truth. Indeed our God sees all, knows all, and is all-powerful, we have no reason to fear, for he is our protection, we have no reason to be bitter because he is our recourse.

Prayer: Abba Father, increase my trust in you so that I will be able to look upon my life's circumstances, with eyes of faith. Amen.

## Sunday July 11

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos  
7:12-15

Psalm  
85: 9-14

Ephesians  
1: 3-14

Mark  
6: 7-13

Let us become mature disciples.

In the first reading, we are told about the Israelites rejecting the prophet Amos. As he humbly explains, it was not his choice to prophesy or not, it was the Lord's calling: "Go, prophesy to my people Israel." What is the relevance of Amos to us? Surely we are not prophets, are we? Many of us have forgotten that Baptism made us priests, prophets and kings. We who are baptized, have this threefold mission. Our prophetic ministry would be quite different from the prophesying in the Old Testament. Not all of are called, to walk into the houses of Parliament. Our prophetic ministry is to become the voice of the voiceless. Often we see people posting on social media, about their support for various movements and political situations across the globe. But in our own backyard, how many problems have we pushed under the carpet? We try to become champions of minorities in the United States while not giving enough attention to the minorities in our own countries.

How can we become effective prophets? We need a foundation of prayer, and seeking God's voice. This is not a one time thing. We are to seek the Lord on a daily basis. If we do not act in accordance with God's will, we might become mere social activists. It is a praiseworthy thing to be active in society, however as Christians, our calling is greater. We are to seek the Lord's mind, as to where he wants us to speak up. At times, being prudent is also a prophetic mission. As we reflect more on our prophetic ministry, it becomes clear that, left to ourselves we will hardly gain much through worldly methods. But if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, he will give us the right words at the right time, he will guide us to be quiet when it is necessary. He will tell us what has to be done in each situation.

As we read in the Gospel, the Lord has already sent us into the world to fulfil his mission of establishing the Kingdom of God. It is a privilege but it comes with its own burdens too. We can no longer keep quiet as injustice and inequality prevails. In prayer and supplication, we are to intercede that God's will would become a reality in our homes, workplaces, and countries. Let us fortify ourselves with prayer, so that we will be fully equipped to accomplish the mission that we have been entrusted with. Nothing is impossible for God, and nothing is impossible for the one who believes. Let us utilize the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our ministries. Let us speak a healing word to someone, let us help people to discern what the Lord is telling them in prayer, above all else let us lead more people to become mature disciples.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for calling me into the prophetic ministry, empower me with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Monday July 12

15th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
1:8-14,22

Psalm  
124:1-8

Matthew  
10:34 - 11:1

God's presence can make us extraordinary.

The first reading tells us how the Israelites became a threat to the Egyptians. Pharaoh finds the Israelites stronger and more numerous than them, and tries to oppress and control them. God's presence can make us extraordinary in the world, but we may have to face jealousy and oppression. It is only God's love that makes us special in the world, although we feel ordinary. "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." (Ex 14:14) God will deal with those who oppose and declare war against believers, for He alone is our protector who comes to our rescue. Our walk is smooth and uninterrupted because of our loving God. The Gospel affirms, that when we love God above everything and everyone, we will have to face bitter strife. Yet, we are called to take up our cross and follow Him. When we do so we are guided to accept and welcome people sent by God into our lives. This will result in receiving great rewards as the Lord Jesus promises.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to love you sincerely by cheerfully carrying my cross daily. Amen.

## Tuesday July 13

15th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
2:1-15

Psalm  
69:3,14,30-31,33-34

Matthew  
11:20-24

We are part of God's special plan.

Today's first reading is about the famous story of Moses. The message that speaks out loud to me, is the amazing reality of our life. Our God always has a plan for us, and He uses other people and events along the way to carry out His plan. Looking at the dire circumstances surrounding the birth of Moses and the events that followed afterwards, we begin to notice that even though the situations were not ideal, Moses' life was spared in surprising ways. This was because God planned to use him for a greater purpose, and this remains true for us too. Looking back at some of the hardest times I have gone through, I know that the unexpected encounter with a friend, the seemingly coincidental happenings that led me to find solutions and the many closed doors, were all part of His great plan. Knowing this enables me to put my trust in God no matter what happens. We are invited to hold on to this faithful God in every situation of life.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we place our trust in You alone, for You have the perfect plan for us. Amen.

## Wednesday July 14

15th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
3:1-6, 9-12

Psalm  
103:1-4, 6-7

Matthew  
11:25-27

Humility and simplicity.

Simplicity and humility are necessary to know God. Perhaps the greatest obstacle is the pride that we often have. In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus rejoices while revealing his identity to the little ones, the humble. The closer we get to Jesus, we start to battle against our pride. Do I see myself as wise and intelligent or as an infant? Pride keeps us from the love and knowledge of God. It closes the mind to God's truth and wisdom. Jesus tells us what he is passionate about; his desire is to reveal the Father's will to everyone, and that we need to have the openness of a little child to it. Child-like simplicity and humility is the soil in which the grace of God can take root. Jesus fulfills the plan of the Father, and he reveals the importance of the Father, drawing us into an internal relationship with him. In giving himself completely to the Father, Jesus wants to show us the Father's love, and that it is through him that we are God's children.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be simple like children. On life's journey bless us and reveal your love as we draw closer to your son. Amen.

## Thursday July 15

Memorial of Saint Bonaventure, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Exodus  
3:13-20

Psalm  
105:1,5, 8-9, 24-27

Matthew  
11:28-30

Resting in God's love.

The Lord loves his people so much that he led them into the Promised Land where they could rest and live in peace away from their enemies. However we know that many battles and wars took place before and after their arrival in Israel. Even in May 2021, we saw how violence again took place in the land that God led his people into. The Gospel points out that the rest that God intends for his people, is not a geographical location, but a rest that can be found by living in Christ. The Lord invites all of us no matter what our situations maybe. He wants us to rest in his love, to be nourished at his feet, and to be strengthened by his grace, so that we can become messengers of his love. As St. Bonaventure said, "The Holy Spirit comes where he is loved, where he is invited and where he is expected." As we spend time in prayer, let us invite the Holy Spirit to make God's love a tangible experience in our lives so that we can rest in the arms of our Father.

Prayer: Abba Father, I want to rest in your embrace and to feel your love overflowing in my life. Amen.

## Friday July 16

15th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
11:10 - 12:14

Psalm  
116:12-13, 15-18

Matthew  
12:1-8

Walking in love.

Today's Gospel proclamation talks about Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath. When we read the first reading and the Gospel they seem contradictory. The first reading shows us how the Israelites were given instructions to follow so they could be saved from slavery. But in the Gospel proclamation we see the apostles breaking the law. We may fulfill rituals and traditions and think that we have done our duty to the Lord. But he reminds us that following him is more than a ritual, a tradition or laws that we uphold. We feel good when we offer sacrifices to the Lord. But do we have mercy in our hearts? "I desire mercy and not sacrifice", the Lord says (Matthew 12:7). What the Lord desires from us is love in our hearts and mercy for our brothers and sisters. Walking on the journey with the Father means to be first filled by his love and mercy. This is the same love and mercy he desires from us. Are we ready to answer this call and walk in love?

Prayer: Abba Father, fill me with your love and mercy so that I can walk in love. Amen.

## Saturday July 17

15th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
12:37-42

Psalm  
136:1,23-24, 10-15

Matthew  
12:14-21

God's love endures forever.

For about 400 years the Jews were slaves in Egypt, the Lord heard their cry for freedom. God's heart melts because of his love, so he calls Moses to lead his people into the Promised Land. Though they were led to a land flowing with milk and honey, they fell again into sin. But God's eternal love continued. As we read in the Gospel, Jesus came to save us from our sin. With his death and resurrection we won eternal life and inherited his kingdom, a land flowing with milk and honey. Do we experience the freedom that Jesus won for us? We are influenced by a virus that has engulfed the whole world. Does that mean that Jesus' victory is lost? No, even in this Pandemic he reigns supreme, because his love endures forever. If we are feeling defeated or overwhelmed, let us return to Jesus with a repentant heart. He is always ready to strengthen us to face life's situations, we need to be humble, contrite, sincere, faithful and receptive.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to return to you with a contrite heart. Amen.

## Sunday July 18

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah  
23:1-6

Psalm  
23:1-6

Ephesians  
2:13-18

Mark  
6:30-34

Power corrupts, prayer sanctifies.

Over the centuries, especially in the past decades, we have seen that when people come to power, they take on their responsibilities with sincerity. But with time, as they taste the potential of power and the abilities it gives them, they give up the idea of relinquishing their hold. They change rules and circumvent the law so they can remain forever - so they think.

However our Lord Jesus, knowing the struggle that would emanate from one placed in such a position, gave us a fine example and humbled himself, never abusing his authority and power to assert his position or save himself from the terrors of the death he faced.

This is His call to all of us who have been given some position of leadership either in the religious circles, in the corporate world or as heads of families. Do we deal with those placed below us with love, concern and humility or do we assert our leadership and position at every twist and turn.

Our Lord Jesus offered us the best model of a leader as is demonstrated by a Shepherd and his sheep. In this relationship of love and protection, the shepherd is ready to give his life for the sheep. This is the extent to which he is willing to go. In today's context we have leaders who eliminate people if they see them as a threat. The people are erased off the surface of the earth. Secondly, the Shepherd has a deep relationship with the sheep... between themselves there is a constant flow of communication by way of warnings, love and encouragement. As leaders, we are not called to be autocratic but involving and open to suggestions. In religious settings well aware of the transient nature of life, we should be aware that we are temporary custodians of the assets that we are vested with.

How can we save ourselves from living in the flesh? It is deliverance by the blood of Jesus. The daily receiving and washing of the blood of Jesus can save us from the clutches of the flesh and deliver us into the presence of the Lord. Hearing the voice of the Shepherd refers to a life of prayer and staying in touch with what the Father wants. When we live apart from the vine, we begin to become self centered and our eyes close to the cries and pleas of those around us. In the Gospel proclamation our Lord invites us to come away with Him to a time of rest and recuperation. Our Lord has pity for the crowds and his heart goes out to their desolation and hunger for Him. As leaders let us rest in the Lord, remain in prayer with him, listen to his voice and know that the Lord's heart is throbbing with love for us.

Prayer: Abba Father, we surrender our motivations and blindness to you and ask for the grace to be loving leaders to those we look over and after. Amen.

## Monday July 19

16th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
14:5-18

Exodus  
15:1-6

Matthew  
12:38-42

God can make us walking miracles.

The Pharisees were asking for another miraculous sign, but they were not sincerely seeking Jesus. He knew they had already seen enough miracles to convince them, if they would just open their hearts. But they had already decided not to believe in him, and more miracles would not change that. In Jonah's parable, we read how he tried to run from his assignment and ended up spending three days in the belly of a fish. When Jonah got out, he grudgingly went to Nineveh, preached God's message, and saw the city repent. By contrast, when Jesus came to his people, they refused to repent. Jesus is saying that his resurrection will prove that he is the Messiah. Many say, "If I could just see a real miracle, then I could believe in God." But Jesus' response to the Pharisees applies to us also. We have seen his work through believers. How do we respond to the miracles we see? Do we still seek for more miracles? Instead, let us allow him to use our lives as miracles to reach others.

Prayer: Abba Father, I surrender to the truth and the great commission you have granted me. Amen.

## Tuesday July 20

16th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
14:21 - 15:1

Exodus  
15:8-10, 12, 17

Matthew  
12:46-50

Doing the will of the Father in Heaven.

God used Moses to rescue the Israelites from Egypt, after Moses started doing the will of God. Before becoming Israel's leader, Moses was a powerful figure in Pharaoh's palace. If he continued in that position, he would have lived a comfortable life and died, but nobody would have remembered him. But because he chose to do the will of God, though he went through difficulties, the Lord was able to do mighty miracles through him and made him a blessing for others. Today's Gospel proclamation teaches us that Jesus showed a new way to live – "not my will but the Father's will." The will of the Father may not always be something grand, impressive, or magnificent. It may be like forgiving a family member who has hurt us or to be fair and righteous to the person who has been unfair and unjust to us. As Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me." (John 4:34) Let us ask the Holy Spirit to empower us to do the Father's will.

Prayer: Abba Father, I want to do Your will in my life. Give me the grace to be lost in You, and not in myself. Amen.

## Wednesday July 21

16th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
16:1-5, 9-15

Psalm  
78:18-19, 23-28

Matthew  
13:1-9

Even in a wilderness, trust in the Lord.

In the first reading, the Israelites have miraculously escaped from cruel taskmasters in Egypt. Instead of celebrating escape from slavery, they only see the wilderness ahead. They start complaining to Moses. They remembered the plentiful bread and meat enjoyed in Egypt. The fear of lack of food gripped them. Fear brought on insecurity. Insecurity led to blame and accusations. They complained to Moses, who sought God's power to deliver them. In my own life, God delivered me from slavery of a worldly life. He brought me into the Promised Land of an experiential journey. Yet, just like the Israelites, I too murmur when I see the enjoyment and lustful worldly life some of my friends enjoy. I feel left out. I start complaining. In God's faithfulness and mercy, he draws me back and assures that I am his precious child. The Lord Jesus feeds us with the Bread of Life, therefore we will be satisfied even when we walk in the wilderness of life.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I bear fruit in the wilderness of this dark world where my family and friends will experience salvation from slavery. Amen.

## Thursday July 22

Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

Song of Songs  
3:1-4

Psalm  
63:2-6, 8-9

John  
20:1-2, 11-18

Mary Magdalene, the Apostle to the Apostles

St. Mary Magdalene is called as the Apostle to the Apostles, since she was chosen to be the first to proclaim the Good News of the Resurrection. Jesus gave this high honor to Mary because of the great love she had for him. People in love, long to meet and spend time with their loved ones. A mother longs to see the child returning from school. A husband eagerly waits to have dinner with his wife. Mary had a similar love for Jesus. She had an intimate relationship with Jesus and even death could not stop her from meeting her beloved. We are also invited to deepen our intimacy, love and commitment to Jesus. Do we long to spend time in prayer and to share the message of his love with those around us? As we seek Jesus from the depths of our hearts, may we also have the courage and faith to say, "I have seen the Lord." May our inner eyes be opened to witness the presence of the Risen Lord in our midst.

Prayer: Abba Father, strengthen me in my journey of faith and love. Make me a better disciple. Amen.

## Friday July 23

16th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
20:1-17

Psalm  
19: 8-11

Matthew  
13:18-23

Lord your word is power, it brings forth fruit.

Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfil it in love. He summarized it into two main commands of love. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. In the Gospel, Jesus explains the Parable of the sower and the different responses that people give in their faith journey. When we first come to faith in Christ we are like 'babies in Christ' as referred to by St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. Over time we achieve maturity. This progression does not happen by self-effort but only through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. We need to co-operate with God believing in his love, and nothing can separate us from him. Despite our shortcomings, when we bring the truth of our hearts, in total surrender to Him, He will give the power of his Holy Spirit that can transform us. "For, God is at work in you, both to will and work for his good pleasure"(Philippians 2:13)

Prayer: Abba Father, let your word take root in our lives by the power of your Holy Spirit and may we bring forth a bountiful harvest. Amen.

## Saturday July 24

16th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
24: 3-8

Psalm  
50:1-2, 5-6, 14-15

Matthew  
13:24-30

Distinguishing the wheat from the weed.

As we journey on earth, at some point, the Lord in his mercy captured our hearts. We were transformed and were invited to follow in his footsteps. He revealed to us who He is. How great is his love and mercy towards us. But by the trend and the pattern of this life we get drawn back to the earthly lifestyle. In our different walks of life we easily get distracted from him and his plan due to many reasons. We may have his word and promises in our minds, we have seen his work in our lives, but often lacking something inside of us. Since we know him we know it is the spirit that is yearning for him. But those who are unaware of his presence experience an emptiness within them. We may fit into either category. We also get bombarded with many worldly things. Whether it be information, knowledge or different experiences. Let us ask the Lord to help us distinguish the wheat from the weed and make our hearts the home for His word and promises.

Prayer: Abba Father, as the rain waters the earth, send your Holy Spirit to water our hearts and spirits, for your word to bear fruit in our lives. Amen.

## Sunday July 25

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kings  
4:42-44

Psalm  
145:10-11, 15-18

Ephesians  
4:1-6

John  
6:1-15

Give us this day our daily bread.

Today's readings could bring us to the realisation that God is our provider and Father. He is able to provide for us no matter what the circumstances. How do we respond in such situations?

In the story from the Second Book of Kings, the man who brought the twenty loaves of barley and wheat was wondering how it could be multiplied to feed a hundred hungry men. With the ongoing lockdown, mothers with children and relatives to look after are faced with the same dilemma. Do they have enough to last through this lockdown? The young children, as sweet as they may be, are like hungry lions raiding the refrigerators, eager to put something into their mouth. Often the children have no thought of tomorrow. But the home maker is wondering how he or she will come up with something for the day and the next day.

When questioned by the man who provided the loaves, it is said that Prophet Elisha insisted that he begin distributing the loaves among the men. When the man consented, the miracle unfolded. The same series of events unfolded when our Lord Jesus was faced with the challenge to feed 5000 people. It was not just a question of feeding them but the Lord would have also had to provide them with water. It is not mentioned but it goes without saying. Here again both Philip and Andrew gazing at what was in hand and the surging crowds, were rock solid sure that they would not be able to provide to such a big crowd.

Our Lord's instructions were simple, 'Make the people sit down,' one cannot ask people to sit down without having a workable solution to meet their needs. Our Lord looked up to Heaven and thanked the Father for His provision and the miracle worked. Do we thank the Father for every meal provided or have we taken our meals for granted? In the Old Testament, one of the names attributed to God is Adonai Jireh, which means God my provider. Often, we assume that our efforts and strides have taken us to where we are. It reveals how blinded we are and limited to the earthly realm. Unknown and unseen to us, even the prayers of strangers may be the wind that is beneath our wings carrying us to destinations we would not have reached. The best response we can give the Father is a thankful heart. During these days, I also faced a bleak situation. I am not an excellent cook and I cannot create tasty food each day. But not only did friends provide me with food to stock in my refrigerator, also my neighbour has been serving me home cooked meals. God is able to provide. Let us thank Him.

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for the grace to thank you for your ability to provide for us in all circumstances. Amen.

## Monday July 26

Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Exodus  
32: 15-24, 30-34

Psalm  
106: 19-23

Matthew  
13: 31-35

Establishing God's Kingdom.

The Israelites sinned against God and forgot the miracles that were performed in Egypt. They worshipped idols, and rebelled against God. In the first reading we see Moses coming down the mountain with the tablets of stone in his hands, only to witness the sin of idol worship. His anger knew no bounds as he smashed the two tablets and burned the golden calf. Yet, the next day, Moses stood in the gap for the Israelites as he went to God in atonement for their sins. Today's readings are a reminder for us of our task from God, to bless His chosen people and intercede for the peace of God's people. Today's gospel proclamation speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven. I believe that the Lord is asking us to do the little things, like stand in the gap for those who still do not know the Lord. That might be a mustard seed ask, but when we obey, and our hearts are turned to God, many will turn to the true Kingdom of God!

Prayer: Abba Father, turn the hard hearts of our brothers and sisters, to know Jesus as the true Messiah and to follow him. Amen.

## Tuesday July 27

17th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
33:7-11, 34:5-9,28

Psalm  
103: 6-13

Matthew  
13: 36-43

Bearing the fruits of God's Kingdom

How blessed we are! We no longer have to stay away from the Tent of Meeting. Thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit, the divine presence is within us. God is not outside, in one building, he lives in our hearts. So his law is also written in our hearts as the prophets said. In the Gospel, Jesus explains a beautiful parable. God has sown his seed in our hearts at Baptism. But as the Word grows within us, the enemy does not stand by. He sows seeds of doubt, anger, jealousy and other vices. So which seed will grow well? We are constantly reminded to sit at the feet of Jesus, so that he can minister to us. As we repent, the Lord will uproot those weeds. And there will be more room in our hearts for God's word to flourish. Our actions will be the sign of which seed is bearing fruit. Regardless of our current fruits, God's mercies are new every morning. So let us renew our hearts, uproot a few weeds, and nourish and nurture the Word of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, may your Word grow in me, and may its fruits nourish those around me. Amen.

## Wednesday July 28

17th Week in Ordinary Time

Exodus  
34: 29-35

Psalm  
99: 5-7, 9

Matthew  
13: 44-46

What is this pearl of great price?

When Moses encountered God, his face became radiant. This is true for us too, we may not have a physical radiance, but when we live in the Spirit, those around us will notice something different, because the fruits of the Holy Spirit will be evident in our actions, we will be peaceful, joyful and patient. Our actions and witness to Jesus, will have an influence on the lives of our friends and family members. What is the treasure buried in the field? What is the fine pearl? Isn't it the gift of the Holy Spirit? In our spiritual lives, when we have a fresh anointing and receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we receive this great treasure, a pearl of great price. How do we live after that? Do we let go of other things and hold onto the treasure of the Holy Spirit? Do we give him the first place in our lives? Or do we fall back to our former ways of living, and pray to the Spirit only when we need something? Let us reconsider our priorities, let God be the centre.

Prayer: Abba Father, as I place you at the centre of my life, may I become a radiant witness of your love. Amen.

## Thursday July 29

Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus

Exodus  
40:16-21, 34-38

Psalm  
84: 3-6, 8, 11

Luke  
10:38-42

Hosting the presence of God.

"In the house at Bethany the Lord Jesus experienced the family spirit and friendship of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Martha generously offered him hospitality, Mary listened attentively to his words and Lazarus promptly emerged from the tomb at the command of his voice." Their ministry was one of hospitality. Often we tend to look at preaching and singing as the main forms of ministry. However being the person who serves lunch to those attending a retreat, is also an important ministry. More than the words that are preached, our actions speak louder. The way we live and act in the world will either inspire more people to seek Jesus or to go the worldly way. As Christians we are called to host the presence of God in our lives, to bear witness to the Gospel through our actions. As Martha, let us serve the people that we meet, as Mary, let us listen to God's voice and as Lazarus, let us be ready to walk out of the tombs of weakness.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I serve others, listen to your words and rise into a new life in Christ. Amen.

## Friday July 30

17th Week in Ordinary Time

Leviticus  
23:1,4-11,15-16,27,34-37

Psalm  
81: 3-6, 10-11

Matthew  
13:54-58

Worship, faith and miracles.

The first reading records the detailed instructions that God gave to Moses regarding diet, rest and offerings. But those rituals and laws lost their meaning overtime. Jesus emphasized meaningful actions over rituals. Today's Gospel proclamation is a story of rejection of a "local". Jesus' neighbours and those who knew his family, did not listen to Him. The rich resented the threat to the existing power structures, which benefited them. It demonstrates the power of faith and, conversely, that its absence deprives us of its miraculous results. Jesus then left His home country to journey to other parts, where His background was unknown and His teaching and preaching were widely accepted. He instructs the disciples, whom he commissioned to preach elsewhere, to shake off the dust from their sandals when leaving the towns where they were not accepted, presumably to prepare them for the disappointment which He had experienced.

Prayer: Abba Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts to make us receptive to your message, by whomsoever it is sent. Amen.

## Saturday July 31

Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Priest

Leviticus  
25: 1, 8-17

Psalm  
67: 2-3, 5, 7-8

Matthew  
14:1-12

Standing for the truth.

Today's Gospel reminds us that we are to speak up when we see others doing wrong. It would have been convenient for John the Baptist to justify not taking a stand against the rulers of the day, and to continue with his ministry of preaching repentance and baptizing people...after all it is for God that he would remain alive. John was focused on his mission but he put honouring God with his life first before his mission. John had "The fear of God" ever present through his actions. Today's first reading ends with the same instruction, "Fear the Lord". How often do we justify our actions based on the same premise? Do our lives portray this exacting statement of fearing God. A fear that stems from hurting our Father who gave his only Son for us, that we can be reconciled to Him. John the Baptist did not see how Jesus was crucified for our salvation. We have experienced the effects of salvation. Will we take a stand for what is right at any cost?

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to stand up for your word, forsaking the cost to ourselves. Amen.

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**  
**“ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS”**  
**(To be filled in block capital letters)**

Name: .....

Address: .....

City: .....

Postal Code/ZIP Code: .....

Country: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

Annual Subscription(12 ISSUES): Sri Lanka – Rs.600/- Overseas – USD 20.

Payment by: Direct Deposit to Bank  Cheque (within Sri Lanka only)

**Method of Payment:**

1. For Subscribers from Sri Lanka and overseas - Directly deposit the subscription fees being a full one year's subscription (12 issues) to the account below:

**Account Details:**

Account Name: The Community of The Risen Lord

Bank: Commercial Bank

Branch: Wellawatte

Account No: 1100087435

Swift Code: CCEYLKX

**NB:** Please ensure you post us your Bank Deposit Slip as proof of payment together with the above **subscription form duly (mandatory) filled** to the address below. **or**

2. Draw a cheque in favour of “The Community of The Risen Lord” for the subscription fee of Rs.600/- and post the cheque along with the **duly filled above subscription form (mandatory)** to the address given below (within Sri Lanka only):

**The Community of The Risen Lord,**  
**20, 17th Lane, Colpetty, Colombo 03 (Sri Lanka). Telephone:0112366264**

# ST. ANTHONY ZACCARIA

Anthony Zaccaria was born in the city of Rome Italy, in 1502. He was an early leader of the Counter Reformation, the founder of religious orders Barnabites, and a promoter of the devotion to the Passion of Christ, the Eucharist and the renewal of the religious life among the lay people.

When he was two years old, his father died. His family was of the nobility, and in order to teach him compassion for the poor, his mother made him her almoner. After attending the Episcopal School annexed to the Cathedral, he studied philosophy, and later studied medicine at the University of Padua. After completing studies in 1524, he practised as a physician in Cremona for three years.

In 1527, he started studying for the priesthood, and was ordained in February 1529. Having explored his calling for two years, mainly working in hospitals and institutions for the poor, he became the spiritual advisor to Ludovica Torelli, a religious woman who supported the order of the Barnabites. He followed her to Milan.

Later in Vincenza, he popularized for the laity the "Forty-Hour" devotion, solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the adoration of the faithful, accompanied by preaching. He also revived the custom of ringing church bells at 3 p.m. on Fridays, in remembrance of the Crucifixion.

While on a mission to Guastalla in 1539, he caught a fever. Combined with the strict penances he performed, his health waned and he died on 5 July 1539, at the age of 36. Bishop Luca di Seriate, who ordained him a priest, presided over the funeral. After his death, a number of cures were attributed to the intercession of Anthony Zaccaria. 27 years after his death, his body was found to be incorrupt. His mortal remains are now enshrined at the Church of St. Barnabas in Milan, Italy. He was canonized by Pope Leo XIII on 27 May 1897. His feast day is celebrated on 5 July. He is a patron saint of physicians.

On Our Knees In His Hands is a book of reflections and aid to prayer based on the daily readings of the 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 themselves are lay people living at the heart of busy day to day life.

