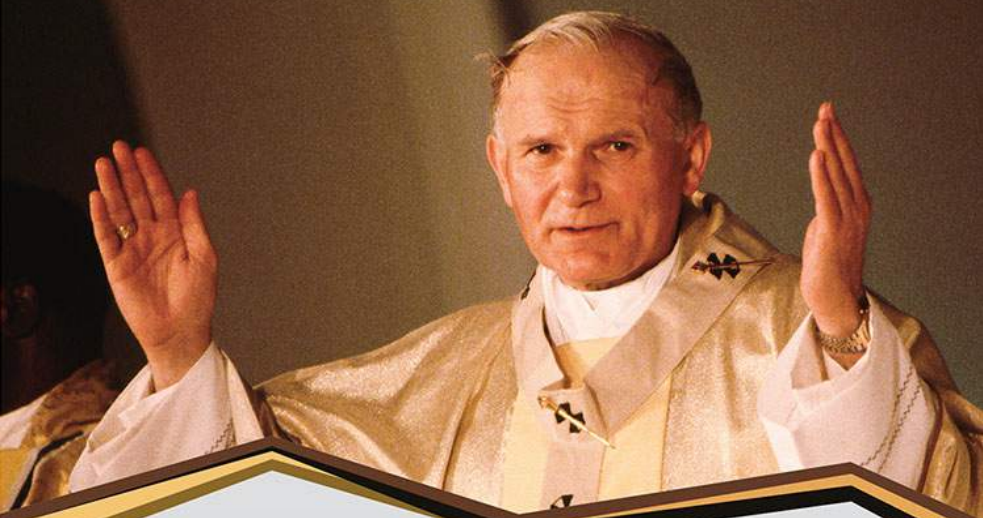


OCTOBER
2021



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



St. John Paul II

Feast Day: 22 October



RISEN LORD
COMMUNITY

DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

OCTOBER
2021

Father, when evil darkens our world, give us light. When despair numbs our souls, give us hope. When nothing seems sure, give us trust. When we lose our way, be our guide! That we may find serenity in Your presence.

(Prayer by John D. Rayner)

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Friday October 01

Solemnity of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Virgin, Doctor of the Church

Baruch
1:15-22

Psalm
79:1-5, 8-9

Luke
10:13-16

Repentance a U-turn back to God.

As sinners we ask the Lord for the grace to be humbled before God who embraces us with all of His mercy. Baruch shows the right way to ask for forgiveness. The people were sorry before the Lord and pleaded for their sins to be forgiven. Such an act of remorse reveals more than a simple case of confessing "we have done this or that", but rather of confessing them "in relationship with the Lord", because it is through such a connection that one "reveals repentance". We are indignant people! Laws are put in place to keep order in our countries, and yet we find ways to turn them to our advantage. As we live we will continue to sin for we are mere humans with weaknesses. We sin through our thoughts, words and actions. However, as we keep on sinning, God calls us to repentance. In Confession we become mindful of God's goodness and mercy. There are people who will not leave their sinful lives; no matter how we try to support. Let us pray for such people today.

Prayer: Abba Father, we repent while we still have time and humbly ask you to forgive us of all our sins. Amen.

Saturday October 02

Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

Baruch
4:5-12,27-29

Psalm
69:33-37

Matthew
18:1-5,10

Humility: vital for our journey with the Lord.

Scriptures tell us, it is humanity's pride that led to its fall. Satan as the Scriptures tell us is a fallen angel who decided to disobey God. Jesus came to this earth to redeem us from this pride. Being the son of God, he humbled himself to the point of becoming one of us then, was obedient to God to the point of death and God exalted him to the highest point. In today's reading Jesus, makes this strong comment: unless you become like a child, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. If it is pride that led to the fall of humanity then, it is only through practicing the opposite of pride - humility - that we can enter the kingdom of heaven. Humility is a basic and essential virtue, yet how rarely do we see this. We have our own opinions about most things, and not often we think we are right. There are tens of thousands of Christian denominations because we cannot have a dialogue and come to a consensus. If we humble ourselves, leaving our opinions behind, and become obedient to God's word, he will forgive us.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be humble like children. Amen.

Sunday October 03

Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Genesis
2:18-24

Psalm
128:1-6

Hebrews
2:9-11

Mark
10:2-16

God's creative ways are better than our best plans.

At first glance, today's readings are about marriage, but as we listen with our spirit's ears, it becomes a deeper message relevant to our whole life.

The First Reading reveals that marriage was God's idea and not something figured out by humans for their own pleasure. We were not meant to live lonely lives. The Triune God is the epitome of companionship and oneness, while being Three Persons. Man had no part to play in designing what the woman should be. Yet when he accepts his wife and vice versa, from the hands of God, and become one in spirit, mind, and body, they allow a new creation to emerge in their family. For this to happen, man/woman leaves what is familiar and comfortable, namely their own parents and family, and unite with their spouse, thus becoming a new creation. Our family life is not supposed to be a carbon copy of that of our parents. The Creator God never runs out of creativity, and this trust and knowledge should empower us to be open to the new thing God is doing in our marriage despite our individual differences. I remember the wise words of Brother Lalith Perera, when we were praying for our children's marriages. He said, "Don't think that they should find "matching" partners, rather the one that God has in mind for them, because with God 1+1 is not 2, but any number that God wants it to be!" And God is faithful.

The Gospel proclamation, through the words of the Lord Jesus, reveals how God sees marriage. There is a way God sees every aspect of our life, not just marriage. We need to be open for the Spirit to reveal his mind to us, so that gradually we too will be able to see situations in our life through His eyes. It is easy to be judgmental towards those who have failed in marriage, and to feel self-righteous. Yet, as we read between the lines, and particularly in the encounter that Jesus had with the woman caught in adultery, (John 8:3-11), we realise that our Heavenly Father sees deep into people's hearts and not legalistically.

After Jesus speaks on marriage, the Gospel mentions children. While the disciples felt that children should not "disturb" the Master, Jesus not only welcomed children, but also made it a teaching moment about discipleship. As a child trusts the parents, we too are invited to leave our agendas and submit to the will of God. The good news is that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. He has enabled us also to be made perfect through what we suffer, to do God's will. The Psalmist beautifully outlines the rewards for those who obey God.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the heart of a child, to look to You in everything, and see, hear, speak and love as You do. Amen.

Monday October 04

Memorial of St Francis of Assisi

Jonah
1:1--2:1-2,11

Jonah
2:3-5,8

Luke
10:25-37

Caring for our common home.

Children would admire natural beauty, they are fascinated by small insects, birds and pools of water after a rain. Why do we lose this innocent appreciation of the beauty around us? As we celebrate the feast of St Francis of Assisi, let us strive to become more aware and grateful for the wonderful creation that sustains us. The world is facing an ecological crisis today. As we read the Parable of the Good Samaritan, perhaps the Lord wants us to become the Good Samaritan to our environment. Do I waste God-given resources? Do I stock up food and water, not caring about the needs of my neighbours? The need of the hour is that we all get together and become true Christians in all aspects of our lives. It is not simply external rituals, but internalizing Jesus' message which calls us to conversion and love. We are all called to this vocation to love everyone and everything around us. We may fail, but let us keep trying. God's grace will always be there for us.

Prayer: Abba Father, I thank you for the beauty of creation, help me to be a good steward of creation. Amen.

Tuesday October 05

St Faustina Kowalska, Virgin

Jonah
3:1-10

Psalm
130:1-4,7-8

Luke
10:38-42

Only one thing is needed.

God had to speak to Jonah twice. How many times should he speak to us to hear him? Jonah tried to run away from God when he heard God for the first time. How many times have we ignored, run away from his calling? The psalmist tells us to repent and cry out to the Lord, it gives us the assurance that our God hears our cry of repentance and will come to our rescue. Today's Gospel draws our attention to Mary and Martha. We have heard in many sermons how Martha complained about Mary. A certain preacher said some years ago: "Martha was going about making sandwiches that Jesus never wanted." Often we occupy ourselves with so many other things and pretend that Jesus would be pleased the way we do them, but what would Jesus say? My daughter/son, I want to spend time with you and that is why I came to you today. Can we hear Him say that or are we still running away from Him like Jonah?

Prayer: Abba Father, give us that grace to hear you and the Holy Spirit to recognize your voice. May we return to you everyday to be with you. Amen.

Wednesday October 06

27th Week in Ordinary Time

Jonah
4:1-11

Psalm
86:3-6,9-10

Luke
11:1-4

Seeing through God's eyes.

Today's readings explain the difference between the human heart and the heart of God. Be holy or ordinary, a human heart responds to life's events based on experience and understanding, but God sees beyond human boundaries. What we do not understand is described as mysterious and confusing. But when God looks at the same event with His light and life giving Spirit, He sees perfect order and peace. We worry about the life we do not have control over and the question asked today is: why are we so angry about things and people we do not have control over? Like Jonah we too have a preconceived idea or thought about situations and people and believe that is how God should respond to them. When the opposite happens we become indignant. Let us ask the Lord to teach us His ways that we may walk in His truth. The Lord has taught us how to pray and call upon our Father. May his word be life giving and shed light to our problems.

Prayer: Abba Father, let me see through Your eyes, to understand that your hand is upon me. I know You are at work for my good. Amen.

Thursday October 07

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Acts
1:12-14

Luke
1:46-55

Luke
1:26-38

Allowing the Holy Spirit to transform.

The prophet Malachi explains that if we search for what is good and pleasing to the Lord, we will receive the fulness of God's blessings. We will see the Sun of justice. It is certainly food for thought as to why Jesus ended his sermon with reference to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals the glory, the majesty, and the love of the Savior. There is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. He gives us knowledge, gives us insight into the deeper things of God. We are not capable of being godly or living a spiritual life apart from the Holy Spirit. It is the love that flows between the Father and the Son. We have become a part of this. The Spirit works in the realm of our unshakeable faith based on the trust in the promises of God. Often, we find ourselves carrying the heavy burden of life especially in a world that is suffering from its own mistakes. But the one who walks in the Spirit, can transform the world we live in!

Prayer: Abba Father, may the power of the resurrection take root in our lives, empowering us to do your holy will. Amen.

Friday October 08

27th Week in Ordinary Time

Joel
1:13-15; 2:1-2

Psalm
9:2-3,6,16,8-9

Luke
11:15-26

The more we overcome evil, the harder the evil one comes at us.

We all struggle with our sins especially the sins committed repeatedly. We reach the sacrament of reconciliation seeking forgiveness while focusing on overcoming the temptations of the evil one. As we know well, we end up often frustrated and dejected as we fall again and again. We wonder why we fall victim to habitual sins. Our Lord addresses that question in the Gospel today. When the demon is gone, our sins are forgiven and we are made clean, there is the tendency of its return with many other demons more numerous and vicious than the earlier one. Evil returns with greater force because it wants to attack a soul that is clean and orderly. So, the situation becomes more pathetic. With our repeated sins, we are to guard ourselves continuously, to fill the inner self with the Holy Spirit, with holiness and love. God helps us to do it because He has not created us to fail. How deeply are we resolved to overcome evil?

Prayer: Abba Father, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Saturday October 09

27th Week in Ordinary Time

Joel
4:12-21

Psalm
97:1-2,5-6,11-12

Luke
11:27-28

The power of the Word.

In the first reading we see many promises of God. We are reminded of the goodness of God. "When God is for us, who can go against us" (Rom 8:31). Isn't this the meaning of the words today? God is gathering His people to the judgment valley to favour them. God will deliver His people while the wickedness of the surrounding nations will be crushed. God is good; therefore when God brings justice the wickedness of people will be destroyed and the people will be freed. The 'Word of God' is true and active. Nature would be against those who stand against God or His people. Likewise everything in the world will be a channel of support to those who stand firm in the 'Word of God'. The Gospel reading proved the power of the 'Word of God'. The Blessed Mother accepted the 'Word' even though she could not understand. Her "Yes" could have caused her doom. Yet she believed and experienced the power of God's 'Word'.

Prayer: Abba Father, let my home be in your Word. Amen.

Sunday October 10

Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom
7:7-11

Psalm
90:12-17

Hebrews
4:12-13

Mark
10: 17-30

The wisdom of God.

Today the whole world is fighting a battle against the Covid pandemic. We may be fearful for ourselves or praying healing for another. How can we become warriors in Christ during this time?

The first step we can take is to realize that God is there for us. In the first reading King Solomon writes about his love for wisdom. He receives the gift of wisdom from God to become one of the great kings of Israel. He realizes that the wisdom from God is greater than any wealth or possession on earth and with wisdom everything else will fall into place. How can we receive this wisdom from God? It is through prayer. When we sit at the feet of the Lord daily, He will begin speaking to us through His word.

In the Second Reading the author tells us about the strength of the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." The word of God is not just words written in a book. It is not just stories of past people. But it is life, and it can give life.

As we sit in prayer every day, God will slowly reveal Himself to us. During these times of the pandemic we can ask the Lord to give us a word, for us to hold onto and to draw strength from. Next, we can nurture this word inside us. How can a plain word that is in the scriptures be nurtured inside us to become real and alive? In the spirit when we worship it will become alive. As we worship with the word that God gives us in prayer, it will go deep within us. In Theology the word "rhema" means the power of God's word. "Logos" means the word of God. "Logos" can become "rhema" in times of prayer and worship. We can quietly take the word of God in our prayer time and allow it to move in our lives. Then at a certain time, the Word of God will jump off the page and into our hearts and it will become alive inside us. This is how we can mature and grow in the journey with God.

Today as we pray earnestly for those affected by the pandemic, the Lord is giving us a word to hold on to from today's Gospel reading. Mark 10:27 says, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God." When the Lord Jesus walked the earth, many people were healed. We must remember He has the power and the potential to do the same for us today. Let us make this the foundation to build our faith on, during these tough times. Let us pull down the power of God through prayer and worship.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for the grace to sit in prayer and hear Your voice over events that are happening around me. Amen.

Monday October 11

St. John XXIII, Pope

Romans
1:1-7

Psalm
98:1-4

Luke
11:29-32

We are the sign the world awaits.

Seekers of Truth and people of other faiths and denominations it is said, would rise up on the day of judgement and condemn us for not having recognized the treasure that has been given to us Christians. Our lukewarm attitude to God's Presence is pathetic to say the least. He and I are one. And yet we are blind to that reality. As the saying goes "He came unto His own and His own received Him not; but to those who did, He gave the power to become children of God." An evil generation asks for a sign to believe in the Lord. The Lord is being incarnated in us when receiving the Holy Eucharist each day. We do not need signs to know the Lord. That sign is manifested in us. He is able to make us alive in Him. We are therefore invited to be set apart from the sinful life patterns we are accustomed to. The world would be able to then recognize Him in us. The sinful world groans waiting for the sign of God's children in their midst.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I awaken to my presence in your Son, and He in me, so that the world would know you sent me. Amen.

Tuesday October 12

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
1:16-25

Psalm
19:2-5

Luke
11:37-41

The Good news is God's saving power.

We need God's saving power because when we do not give Him glory and honour we lose ourselves in our own reasoning and darkness fills our minds. We live in a world which is depraved and has given into sinful indulgences and have let evil take control. We reach such state of blindness when we suppress the truth by our wickedness and live life the way we think we should and not allowing God to take control. Where do we stand in our relationship with God? Are we still pretending to do the will of God by merely concentrating on the externals as the Pharisees did? Or have we touched the depths of God by accepting our sinfulness and giving Him the truth of our hearts? Let us repent and allow Him to wash us with His precious blood and water that pours out from His side cleansing and healing us with His forgiveness. Then we can say "I am a new creation, the old has gone, the new is here" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Prayer: Abba Father, we open our hearts in repentance to receive your love, forgiveness and healing. Amen.

Wednesday October 13

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
2:1-11

Psalm
62:2-3,6-7,9

Luke
11:42-46

God is love, anyone living in love, lives in God.

In today's Gospel proclamation we read about the Lord Jesus blasting the Pharisees after he was criticized for not observing "the prescribed washing before the meal." Jesus described them as unmarked graves. Over the centuries before Christ and specially after the era of Moses, the Religious leaders had drawn up more than 700 laws, rules and regulations which they expected the people to observe but as Jesus said, most of them were hypocrites and did not do what they told the ordinary people to do. Instead, as Jesus said they loved "the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces." While reflecting on the Lord's condemnation of the Pharisees and their hypocrisy we also need to search our conscience and see when we have acted like hypocrites. When we read the Word of God in its proper context and do not observe it we are guilty of the sin of self-deception. We need to remember that the words in the Bible are powerful when we put into practice. As we live in love, God will reveal his love to everyone around us.

Prayer: Abba Father, freely as we receive your ending love and mercy, may we freely give it to others. Amen.

Thursday October 14

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
3:21-30

Psalm
130:1-6

Luke
11:47-54

Are we truly Christian?

Today's Gospel proclamation shows us how Jesus showed his anger and disapproval. Here he calls out the Chosen people of God as hypocrites. Hypocrisy is an evil that enters our hearts. We cease to be genuine and harbor deceit within our hearts. This is something that is condemned by the Lord. Many of us call ourselves Christians but are there fruits in us to prove it? "You will know them by their fruits" (Luke 7:16) We follow the rituals and traditions, sometimes we go with the flow because we were born into Christian families and have the Christian upbringing on the surface. But there is no love, peace or joy in our hearts. We seem to be miserable Christians with burdens on our shoulders, anger and resentment. Being a follower of Christ means to have a relationship with God. Do we read and meditate on His word? Are we surrendered to His will? Do we love without prejudice? Do we have a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior?

Prayer: Abba Father, open the eyes of my heart to see you and to walk with you. Amen.

Friday October 15

Memorial of St Teresa of Jesus, Virgin, Doctor of the Church

Romans
4:1-8

Psalm
32:1-2,5,11

Luke
12:1-7

Purify my heart.

The Lord reminds us of our external and internal union with God, just like Saint Teresa of Avila, who had a mystical union with God. Am I right with God? As we look into ourselves, let us become aware of the sins hidden deep within ourselves, those we do not want to think of, sins we commit in the silence of our hearts, the evil and selfish thoughts, the lustful and egoistic habits/deeds, our past, our nature that we keep hidden behind closed doors. Let us pray to him: Lord, I acknowledge and confess my sin and my guilt, you gave your life for me. Lord, forgive me and fill me with your salvation. Our God is all knowing. He is our loving Father. We are precious to Him. "You are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life". (Isaiah 43:4) Let us allow the fire of the Holy Spirit to purify us and make us whole, so that we can accomplish the mission entrusted to us.

Prayer: Abba Father, my heart's one desire, is to be holy, set apart for you, my master, ready to do Your will. Amen.

Saturday October 16

28th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
4:13,16-18

Psalm
105:6-9,42-43

Luke
12:8-12

Do I practice what I preach?

In the Gospel reading, Jesus tells that everyone who acknowledges him before others will be acknowledged by him before the angels of God. He then states that anyone who denies him before others will be denied before the angels of God. These are strong words! I doubt that most of us deny Jesus by our words. However, we more likely deny Jesus by our actions and our inactions. Jesus not only desires that we practice what we preach, He hopes that we truly practice what we profess to believe. Let us take few minutes and ask ourselves: Do I practice what I preach? Do I live the values I profess? Where are my weak spots? In what areas of my life do I want to strengthen my authenticity? Take a small step each day to become more authentic and strive to practice what we preach. Be the person you desire to become. Let us turn to Jesus and he will help us to become what we desire. But, patience and commitment are required.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me eyes that see, ears that hear, and a heart that understands. Amen.

Sunday October 17

Twenty Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah
53:10-11

Psalm
33:4-5,18-20,22

Hebrews
4:14-16

Mark
10:35-45

Boldly approaching the throne of grace.

In the Gospel of St Mark, we find James and John coming before Jesus with a request. They are confident and comfortable in approaching Him. "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you". This kind of request you can only make if you feel extremely safe in the presence of the one from whom you are making such a request. Even though they approached Jesus with arrogance and a misplaced sense of entitlement, this was the kind of relationship Jesus built with His friends. Jesus was such a safe place for them that they felt that they could say anything to Him, ask anything of Him. This is the kind of relationship He offers us.

We are instructed to approach the throne of grace not because of our good works or holiness. But because of what Jesus achieved on our behalf. And as I approach God I remember that it is not a place of condemnation, but of grace. Grace is the power that enables me to do what I cannot do by myself. And He tells me to come confidently, boldly before Him, fully assured that I can receive mercy and find help in my time of need. Oh how it must grieve Him when we still persist in coming before Him fearfully, begging, pleading and doubting when Jesus did everything that was needed for us to come before God with full confidence.

The sons of Zebedee come to Jesus asking Him to give them places of prominence and significance. They wanted to be remembered as being important. They had no clue what they were actually asking for. I can just imagine Jesus having a little laugh to Himself before He corrects them. They may have left His presence at that moment feeling disappointed because He didn't give them what they wanted. But Jesus probably knew, that these men who were so impetuous and impulsive would one day be celebrated all over the world. St James the first apostle to be martyred and St John renowned as the apostle of love. This same John who came to Jesus and requested that Jesus give him a place beside His throne was the same John who later was exiled to the island of Patmos. Despite not getting his request met that one time, John never changed his confident relationship with Jesus. It's that same confidence that God wants us to approach Him with. Maybe yesterday we didn't get what we wanted from God. And that's okay because He sees the future – we don't. He knows the blessing that is coming our way and He won't let us settle for less. But He invites us to approach Him with confidence, with boldness and with complete trust.

Prayer: Abba Father, I come before Your throne today confident that I am loved and that I am heard. Help me to walk in faith. Amen.

Monday October 18

Feast of St Luke, Evangelist

2 Timothy
4:10-17

Psalm
145:10-13, 17-18

Luke
10:1-9

The Lord stands by us and gives us strength.

Hearing the disciples being sent on mission today, I imagine myself as part of the seventy-two going out into the world, carrying the good news. Then I am reminded that we who follow the Lord are also given this same mission, despite the difference in time. But at one point or another, we may have taken a detour to fulfill our own agendas and gathered a lot of heavy baggage along the way even though the Lord was clear when he said 'carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals', because these things can hinder us from experiencing His providence, deprive us of peace and make us lose focus. Our Lord wants us to know that He is enough for us. We see this reality at work in the life of St. Luke, who chose to leave his career in medicine simply to be a companion to Saint Paul, facing trials alongside him. Let us be grateful witnesses to the Lord through our lives and may our legacies glorify the Lord who has worked wonders in our lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to rely on You and be Your witnesses wherever we are. Amen.

Tuesday October 19

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
5:12,15,17-21

Psalm
40:7-10,17

Luke
12:35-38

Are we ready?

Today in the Scriptures we are reminded again of the abundance of God's mercy and grace for His children. The only intention that God has for us is eternal salvation. What can prevent us from receiving it? Through the first reading, Saint Paul reminds us how the abundance of God's mercy outperforms the effects of evil and how the unending fountain of Mercy is made available to us through His only Son, our Lord Jesus. How is our attitude towards the love of the Father? How many of us are preparing ourselves for the second coming of the Lord Jesus? Our attitude towards the Lord's second coming depends on how we have responded to His first coming. If we have eagerly accepted the Lord's first coming, we should be eagerly waiting for his return too. Let us examine our hearts to understand the areas that we need to fix within ourselves, so we stay prepared, dressed and with lamps lit waiting for the Master.

Prayer: Abba Father, through your love and mercy, let us be heirs of your kingdom as we prepare ourselves for the second coming of Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday October 20

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
6:12-18

Psalm
124:1-8

Luke
12:39-48

Be on guard, keep awake.

Today's first reading exhorts us to avoid evil inclinations and passions. We are motivated to live a life of holiness, keeping our bodies as instruments for the service of God. Let us remember that we live under the grace of God, and not under the Law, yet we are also urged to use this freedom worthily, without misusing it. The Gospel narration speaks of a parable relating to our preparedness for the coming of the Lord. Just like the Master who goes away entrusting the steward a duty-bound task to fulfill. We are to portray the Character of this steward who has to be sober, hardworking and sensible. Our Master's return could be at any hour of the day hence we are reminded to await it with utmost preparation. Let us not be fainthearted with all that is taking place around us. We cannot be deceived or discouraged either, but stay awake with all diligence and attentiveness. So let us stay vigilant, and let us not trade the desire for the Lord Jesus Christ for any other thing or anyone.

Prayer: Abba Father, make me mindful of your calling and help me to be focused on the mission entrusted to me. Amen.

Thursday October 21

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
6:19-23

Psalm
1:1-4,6

Luke
12:49-53

You were not made to fit in; you were born to stand out.

As Christians, we are called not to conform with the world but to stand out. There is nothing more counter-cultural than a true follower of Christ. We were once slaves to sin. We have all done things we are ashamed of, things that brought pain and misery to ourselves and those around us. Scripture succinctly says "the wages of sin is death" and we were living in a culture of death before Christ in his love and mercy paid the price and redeemed us. However, living as a Christ-follower is not easy. We are in constant battle with our own flesh with its incessant desires; with the world and its clashing and clamoring demands; and with the powers of darkness, that wait crouching ready to pounce at the slightest opportunity we may provide. Yet we are called to stand firm in Christ and to be the salt and light of the world. We can only do this through the strength we find in Christ by daily encountering him in the Word, and building an intimate relationship with Abba Father in prayer.

Prayer: Abba Father, we come into your presence to be strengthened by you so that we may be a light in this dark and hurting world. Amen.

Friday October 22

St John Paul II, Pope

Romans
7:18-25

Psalm
119:66,68,76,77,93,94

Luke
12:54-59

Call to repentance.

None of us likes to deliberately sin or live-in sin. Yet we fall into sin daily and struggle with it. Anger, hatred, lust, lies, deception, jealousy and the list goes on. St. Paul tells us why we are so attracted to sin and get stuck in it. He too struggled with his flesh and sin as he pens it down and also illuminates our way to Jesus for the solution and for freedom. In the Gospel today we find Jesus asking the crowds if they cannot read the signs of the time. That question is valid even today. Natural disasters around the world, wars and riots that kill and destroy humanity, and the Covid pandemic. These are true signs that call us to repentance, but we cannot make the whole human population repent for their sins, so we as followers of Jesus must repent for our sins and the sins carried out against the entire creation of God. Let us not ignore these signs, instead let us turn to our Lord Jesus in true repentance.

Prayer: Abba Father, I repent for my sins towards others and towards your creation. Fill me with your Holy Spirit to live this day pleasing to you. Amen.

Saturday October 23

29th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
8:1-11

Psalm
24:1-6

Luke
13:1-9

Freedom from guilt.

For years I battled with guilt and condemnation. I encountered God 17 years ago, yet often I fell into despair when my mind would drift into my past. The guilt complex at times ran into things I'd do for God. I'd find something that wasn't quite right and condemn myself into despair and lose joy and peace even in serving God. I was desperate to find freedom in this place. Scripture tells us that the Messiah who was to come would bear much fruit, because the 'Spirit of the Lord' would rest on him (Isaiah 11:1). It was this Spirit that would empower Jesus to live a victorious life, one void of despair, condemnation or guilt. That same Spirit lives in us and as we believe and declare this we find freedom. Saint Paul says that through baptism we became partakers of that same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. There is no Condemnation for those of us in Christ. What was impossible once becomes possible under His grace and might.

Prayer: Abba Father, free me from condemnation and guilt and fill me with Your Spirit. Amen.

Sunday October 24

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah
31:7-9

Psalm
126:1-6

Hebrews
5:1-6

Mark
10:46-52

The Lord restores.

Today's readings speak of restoration and promises. The psalmist proclaims that the Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy. What better way to celebrate this Sunday, a day of God's goodness, mercy and rest. In these past months, the onslaught of depressing news, the numerous deaths, the effects of the Covid pandemic and the economic collapse have been our constant conversation themes. But this Sunday let us rejoice in the Goodness of God.

In the first reading, Jeremiah declares a promise; that the Lord has saved His people and He will bring them back. Those who went away weeping will return with joy.

Our Lord himself after he had completed his earthly ministry, suffered and died. He was restored to his place of dignity as High Priest. This was given to him by the Father. He was the priest and he was the sacrifice offered for our sinfulness.

This same restoration is reflected in the Gospel proclamation from Mark. Our Lord Jesus heals the blind beggar Bartimaeus. It is no coincidence that this miracle took place in the city of Jericho where we are told that loud shouts of praise brought down God's help for the Israelites.

Once again loud shouts pleading for mercy did not go unnoticed and our Lord responded to the pleas of blind Bartimaeus. The cries of Bartimaeus broke through the barricades of people who were mocking the beggar. As he shouted all the more louder our Lord responded. When we are desperate enough for an answer our prayer becomes louder, more vocal and specific. It causes the Lord to respond.

Our Lord asks Bartimaeus a sort of funny question, regarding the reason for his shouting out. Bartimaeus had no urge to question the Lord or get into any argument. He wanted to see. And the Lord rewarded his faith and cry with the gift of sight.

Today, let us be vocal in our praise and prayer. Major obstacles will be removed. Our Lord will respond. He may even ask us, 'What is it that you want me to do for you.' Do you have one pressing need or request? Keep it ready on the tip of your tongue. This could be our day of joy and restoration. Hear the echo of our Lord's words to Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" Are we ready with our answers and for our restoration. The Lord not only wants to heal and restore us, He says, "You are my son/daughter, I have begotten you. I have not forgotten you!"

Prayer: Abba Father, I look forward to new sight and a renewed faith. Amen.

Monday October 25

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
8:12-17

Psalm
68:2,4,6-7,20-21

Luke
13:10-17

Walking in authority.

In today's First Reading St. Paul describes two ways in which we can live; to live according to the sinful nature or to live in authority as sons and daughters of God. St. Paul further describes that we are also heirs with God and co-heirs with Christ. In other words, he is teaching us about our identity through which comes authority to walk on this earth. In the Gospel Proclamation, we see Jesus walking with that authority. He knew who He was, where He came from and where He was going and did not need any other conviction. With this conviction He was able to perform miracles and healings, and did not get disturbed by any other voice or carried away by what others thought about Him. Today's readings are calling us to walk on the path of Sonship, a life of walking in authority and belief in who we are and what power and resources have been given to us. This path brings life and fulfillment of God's plan in our lives. If we walk in our own sinful ways it will bring misery and death.

Prayer: Abba Father, convert our minds, to walk in the identity that you give us as Your Children. Amen.

Tuesday October 26

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
8:18-25

Psalm
126:1-6

Luke
13:18-21

Seeking eternal realities.

There is no better time that can prompt us to open ourselves to accept the reality of life. Everything we have been holding on to have fallen away and the things we value have only let us down. It's all perishable. Many have gone through the grief of losing a loved one. It causes so much pain and leaves a void that cannot be filled. But God is reminding us that these present sufferings are nothing compared to the glory that's awaiting us in the arms of our Creator. What will not change is the love He has for us. We are indeed longing to be reconciled to our Maker. It is in His presence that we can fully rest. St. Augustine once said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until it rests in you." Let us reflect on what really matters: the Kingdom of God. Let God transform us into places where our families and friends can come for rest. We need to be that person where they meet God or remind them of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, as we face these difficult times help us to focus on your eternal light. Amen.

Wednesday October 27

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
8:26-30

Psalm
13:4-6

Luke
13:22-30

Praying in the right way.

The Psalmist cries out, 'Lord our hope is in your mercy.' Truly our hope is only the mercy of God because our Lord himself declared that the way to heaven is a narrow or difficult road. The first will be last and the last will be first. In a way, we may assume we are clean and good to make it to heaven, but we may be so wrong. How do we get to know our real state? It is only the Holy Spirit who reveals to us where we stand and our real status in the eyes of heaven. In the reading from Rom 8: 28 onwards the word says that the Spirit comes to our aid in our weakness for we do not know how to pray as we ought. This can be so true because often we assume that we know where we stand. We become blind to our sin and never know what to really pray for. Praying in tongues or in the Spirit brings out the right prayer that God wishes to hear. When we pray in tongues we bring the perfect need that God wishes us to be interceding for and the mercy of God saves and redeems us.

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for the gift of tongues that it will no longer remain a mystery to us but become a prayerful way to heaven. Amen.

Thursday October 28

Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Ephesians
2:19-22

Psalm
19:2-5

Luke
6:12-16

Living the Word.

As we celebrate the feast of Saints Simon and Jude, let us reflect on our faith and the Christian community. As we read in the first reading, Jesus is the chief stone of this building. How about our lives? Is Jesus the chief stone? Or do we replace him with worldly things? At some point we had a divine encounter which led us into a life in the Holy Spirit, how is that fire now? Is it still a small spark? Or have we allowed the fire to envelop us completely so that we are not only filled with the Spirit, but also become channels of the power of God to those we meet. Let us reflect on various aspects of our life, the Lord's invitation is that we become witnesses to His love. In a certain sense, preaching the Word is easy, living the Word is difficult. Let us be courageous disciples of Christ as we share God's Word through our words and actions. Our lives would then give glory to God. Let us not lose sight of the Holy Spirit who makes all these things possible.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I bear witness to you through the way I live. Amen.

Friday October 29

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
9:1-5

Psalm
147:12-15,19-20

Luke
14:1-6

Sheep of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus says that his sheep are those who follow him. As we read in the letter to the Romans the Jews were chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them, made covenants, and gave his law. He gave them the privilege of receiving his promises. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite. Nevertheless, we can see that they weren't believers of the Lord. The Jews were eagerly waiting for the Messiah but could not identify him when he was with them, but rather judged him and his act of healing. Yet the poor person, because of his sickness was able to see the Lord, and receive healing. Jesus is reminding us that, it is not qualifications, titles, ancestral value or what this world can offer that makes us worthy to receive the Lord. It is our ability to identify his voice in our inability, the ability to hear his voice in the midst of our brokenness that makes us his sheep. This is the qualification that makes us sheep of the Good Shepherd enabling us to follow him all the days of our lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be able to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd. Amen.

Saturday October 30

30th Week in Ordinary Time

Romans
11:1-2,11-12,25-29

Psalm
94:12-15,17-18

Luke
14:1,7-11

Faith and humility.

In the first reading St. Paul addresses the Christians of Jewish ethnic origin, allaying their concerns about the preaching of the Gospel message to the gentiles. He makes it clear that the Gentiles are also part of God's plan for salvation, but that does not exclude Jewish Christians. He does not mince his words in pointing to the failures of the Jews and suggests that the conversion of the Gentiles should encourage Jews to follow Christ. The psalm promises us that God will not abandon us but that we should live holy lives. In the Gospel Proclamation, Our Lord Jesus Christ recommends humility with a pointed message, this time not in parable, but clearly aimed at his audience, themselves seated at a Pharisee's table. We too can get caught up in the temptation to seek social recognition through high office and impressing others with material trappings of wealth and, in doing so, lose sight of the reason for our existence – to know, love and serve God.

Prayer: Abba Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts to remind us of your purpose for our lives. Amen.

Sunday October 31

Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy
6:2-6

Psalm
18:2-4,47,51

Hebrews
7:23-28

Mark
12:28-34

The law of love.

Love or law? This is the question that is being posed to me as I ponder on today's readings. In the first reading, we are shown the law of Moses: "The Lord our God is one God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength."

The Gospel proclamation elaborates this same law: Love your neighbour as yourself.

Can love and law really coexist? The law makes up rules, mandates, orders whereas love goes beyond boundaries, beyond reasons, beyond sense. In today's Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus says that the two greatest commandments on earth revolve around love. It almost seems impossible to think that we are commanded, or ordered, to love. Yet, that is what being a Christian is about. It is about loving our brothers and sisters in their darkest moments, it is about reaching out to a broken world who can only see their own sin, it is about taking the unconditional love of God our Father into every nook and cranny that it can seep into.

The commandments in question work in unison. If we love the Lord with the entirety of our being, we must love our neighbour in that same regard. One cannot love God yet hate their brother or sister, nor can one love their brother or sister and hate God. Like the scales of justice, the two commandments beautifully balance out a Christian's perspective of life.

As I read the Responsorial Psalm, I am reminded that King David is an example of how when one does not balance love of God and neighbour, the results can be catastrophic, and the repercussions could last generations. His zeal for the Lord was boundless, yet he harboured sin in his own heart, causing him to ultimately kill those who stood in the way of his plans.

We may not do this through murder, but sometimes our words and actions destroy the people around us, when we are focussed solely on reaching our selfish goals. Perhaps at office we speak ill of our colleagues, to snatch a promotion, or we gossip with our neighbours to show that we are perfect. We may even compare our prayer lives or acts of charity to say that we are more prayerful or charitable than others.

It is our Christian duty to actively choose love over hate, over pride, over self in every situation. It does not mean becoming a doormat but letting our Lord Jesus take control and bring His love into the situations of our day. By making this conscious choice daily, we are allowing more of the love of the Lord to spread to our dark world -- and what joy to have been a little light that sparked a flame!

Prayer: Abba Father, let my love for you pour out into those around me that you may be glorified. Amen.

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St. John Paul II

St. John Paul II was born on May 18, 1920 as Karol J. Wojtyła, in Wadowice, Poland. He took his First Holy Communion at age 9 and was confirmed at age 18. He enrolled in Cracow's Jagiellonian University in 1938 and in a school for drama. When the Nazi forces occupied the place in 1939, they closed the university, and Karol had to work in a quarry, and then in a chemical factory to earn his living and to avoid being deported to Germany.

In 1942, aware of his call to the priesthood, he began courses in the clandestine seminary of Cracow. After the Second World War, he continued his studies until his priestly ordination on November 1, 1946.

On July 4, 1958, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Cracow by Pope Pius XII. In January 13, 1964, he was nominated Archbishop of Cracow by Pope Paul VI, who made him a cardinal on June 26, 1967. He was elected Pope on October 16, 1978, the first Non-Italian Pope in 455 years since Pope Adrian VI in 1523. To date, more than 16,700,000 pilgrims have participated in the General Audiences held on Wednesdays by Pope John Paul II.

Like a lion in Peter's chair, he consistently and tirelessly lived what he boldly proclaimed with great courage. Unafraid, he traversed the globe, proclaiming freedom to the captives and truth to the victims of false ideologies that had ravaged the people of the twentieth century. He has not stopped passionately re-presenting the classical, unchanging, Christian message with a prophetic urgency, profound clarity and contemporary relevance. On 13 May 1981, Pope John Paul II was shot in the abdomen and hand at St. Peter's Square, and was seriously wounded. He recovered after spending 22 days in a hospital, and later forgave the assassin.

Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005, on the Octave of Easter and the Vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday. He was canonized on April 27, 2014, on Divine Mercy Sunday, at St. Peter's Square. The Canonization Mass was celebrated by Pope Francis.

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.

