



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



St. Angela Merici

Feast Day: 27 January

JANUARY 2022 | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

JANUARY
2022

The Priestly Blessing

²² The Lord said to Moses, ²³ “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

²⁴ “““The Lord bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

²⁷ “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

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Saturday January 1

Solemnity of Mary Mother of God

Numbers
6: 22-27

Psalms
67: 2-8

Gal 4: 4-7
Luke 2: 16-21

A year of Encounters!

As we embark on a new year, we are faced with what the past two years offered us. We had an unprecedented stint of being home bound and stifled. But today, let us hear the call to break the shackles of darkness and reach out to a broken, depressed, hurting world.

As we celebrate the Blessed Mother as Mother of God we see in her a determined spirit, always looking out for the other person. At Cana, her heart went out to the wedding family who were on the brink of being ashamed. When she heard of Elizabeth expecting, she left the safe confines of her home and travelled miles to be with Elizabeth. There she shared her joy, her portion of the Holy Spirit, faith and love.

Every moment of her life impacted others as the word says in Luke 2:19 - As for Mary, she treasured all these words, and pondered them in her heart. As for me, do I follow her example? Do I yearn to make every encounter with another, one where the gifts, fruits and love of Jesus within me are transferred to that person. With all that is going on in the world, let us choose to learn these words from Numbers 6: 23 - "This is how you shall bless the people of Israel and shall say, "May Yahweh bless you and keep you. May Yahweh let His face shine on you and be gracious to you! May Yahweh look kindly on you and give you His peace."

Now let us read this blessing a few times, taking it into our hearts, and then reach out to that person towards whom we have a tinge of jealousy, that person who has been outsmarting us or that person who has let us down. Let us not only pray for those whom we love and respect but also for those who hate and despise us because the word says, Bless your enemies and do good to those who hate you.

Let us introduce Jesus' power and salvation into every exchange we have with a friend, colleague or family member. Within us we must hear the Lord telling us - I am for you and I will never leave you. This will give us the confidence to declare God's blessings over people and into every circumstance. It is no more about us, our achievements or our holiness, it is about our Lord Jesus, what He has accomplished on that cross and His mighty ability to use us as conduits to heal, bless and transform this world. As we embark on journeying through this New Year, let us look forward to miracles, testimonies, signs, wonders and being amazed. We have only tasted a fraction of what God wants to do in the year to come. He is waiting to amaze us as he reminds us that we are His sons and daughters loved by Him, forgiven, washed in his blood and commissioned to set 2022 on fire!

Prayer: Abba Father, I declare in the name of Jesus that this is a year of signs, miracles, wonders and power. Amen

Sunday January 2

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah
60: 1-6

Psalm
72:1-8, 10-13

Ephesians
3: 2-6

Matthew
2:1-12

“Arise, shine, for your light has come...” Isaiah 60:1

The solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord marks the visit of the Magi to the infant Lord Jesus. The readings beautifully align, just like the star did 2000 years ago, to point towards the true light of the world – our Lord Jesus. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the Lord rising upon His people. When the Lord Jesus came to this earth, nobody imagined a helpless babe could behold the glory of God, but indeed He did. He brought down heaven to earth and with it banished darkness and death for all eternity. Though the trials of this world seem unending, the Epiphany reminds us that light always overcomes the darkness. The glory of the Lord still prevails even over the darkest situations of our world.

When the Magi visited the Lord Jesus, their first reaction was to worship. They did not stop to ponder how a child could be the king of the Jews, they did not question why he was in a manger and not in a palace, they did not consider the state of his mother and father, nor any external factor – they simply prostrated themselves before the Lord and did him homage.

Today, when we visit this same Lord in the Eucharist, do we not get distracted by all the externals around us? We question what other people are wearing, why they are talking so loudly, how they are praying, what they are doing, and we fail to recognize the living presence of the Lord right before our eyes. We must allow the light of the Lord to shine into our dark hearts when these thoughts enter and let His truth become our reality. It is then that we can be partakers of the mystery of salvation that is revealed to us in the second reading.

St. Paul points out God’s marvelous plan for the Gentiles as he speaks of the mystery of Christ, and a mystery it truly is, for we cannot understand the salvation that came down to earth that day 2000 years ago. It is through this salvation that both Israelites and Gentiles, both slaves and free are offered the priceless gift of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes I find that I judge who deserves redemption according to my own standards, when the truth is, the Lord brings salvation for all. If you recognize the Lord Jesus as the true king, if you follow His light, He will guide you on the path of righteousness and salvation will be your reward. This light must be taken to every nation on earth until all men bow and confess that the Lord Jesus is the King over this world.

Prayer: Abba Father, let the light of your Son guide our hearts today and always. Amen.

Monday January 3

Holy Name of Jesus

1 John 3: 22-
4: 6

Psalm
2: 7-12

Matthew
4:12-17, 23-25

In the name of Jesus

1 John 3:23 says, "His command is, that we believe in the name of His son Jesus Christ." For so long we have believed in our fears, science, the impossibilities and the odds. Here is a call to simply believe in the Name of Jesus. At the name of Jesus anything and everything bows. We are called to return to what our Lord can do and wants to do. In Matthew 4: 23 the proclamation says, " Jesus went round all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people. Today our Lord goes around not just Galilee or Rome but rather to every corner of the world, neglected by the world and He is ready to work wonders in His name and power. Are we ready to believe and activate that power? It requires less words and more action. It requires us to step out in faith, lay our hands and speak His word. He says I will give you all the nations for an inheritance meaning when we live for Him we will have access to the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, in the name of Jesus I speak freedom, healing and your love into the life of the person reading this book. Amen

Tuesday January 4

Elizabeth Ann Seton

1 John
4: 7-10

Psalm
72: 1-8

Mark
6: 34-44

"Taking the... loaves and... fish, he gave thanks and broke the loaves."

There is a saying, we will receive from God to the extent we believe. I met a man recently, who lost almost everything in his life.. He went through unimaginable trauma but he never stopped believing, his advice to me was, no matter what you are facing, even in the times you think you have lost everything to keep believing and God can do the impossible. In todays reading we see how the Lord Jesus fed 5000 men with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Who in his right mind would think that this can happen? This is exactly what our faith should look like.. We should not limit our thinking to only rational things with God. Our mind and imagination should go beyond whats rational and the what human mind cannot understand. God is love as we read in the first reading and his love is unfathomable and is not limited to our understanding.

Prayer: Abba Father give us the grace to look beyond our imaginations, to gaze on you and trust in you. Amen

Wednesday January 5

John Neumann

1 John
4: 11-18

Psalm
72: 1-2, 10, 12-15

Mark
6: 45-52

Remain in Him

In today's readings we encounter the God of Love. It is Love that unites us with the Father and allows us to remain in Him and He in us. It is Love that eradicates reasons to fear. It is Love that perfects us and makes us confident in our divine identity. Today's Gospel reveals much about God's love. Upon seeing the supernatural event of Jesus walking on water, the disciples respond in shock. The author notes that the disciples "had not understood the incident of the loaves". What could this mean? The miracle of the multiplied loaves revealed God's heart in many ways. Jesus knew the needs of His people and powerfully met them. Secondly, the bread was multiplied in the hands of the disciples; they were part of the miracle. Jesus used His lovers to distribute the food that He made from Love to the people He loved. Considering this, when the disciples were being tossed about by the raging winds, they had every authority and anointing to still the storm.

Prayer: Abba Father, soften and open our hearts today to receive Your perfect love in its power, abundance, and fullness. Amen

Thursday January 6

St. Andre Besette

1 John
4: 19-5:4

Psalm
72: 1-2, 14-17

Luke
4: 14:22

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world" 1 John 5:4

We are children of God, and we need to love our brothers and sisters. If we claim that we love God who is unseen, then we ought to love our brothers or sisters who are seen. Who is my brother or sister? My brother is the one who works with me in the office, my colleagues in school, friends around me, members of the community and most of all my family members. Would I have unconditional Agape love for these people whom God has placed in my life? As the Lord Jesus was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit we too can be Spirit filled. Do not succumb to the temptations of your life and the Holy Spirit will dwell fully in you. Is that easy to follow? It is not, but the word of God is true and will never fail to the one who believes. And as we bring our selves completely to the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to guide and lead us in His ways. We become children of the Father. Living temples of God!

Prayer: Abba Father, let Your Holy Spirit never leave me so that I may always do Your will and be Your witness. Amen

Friday January 7

Raymond of Penafort

1 John
5: 5-13

Psalm
147:12-20

Luke
5: 12-16

“Yes, I will; Be made Clean” Says the Lord.

As it's explained in the Gospel of Luke a man with leprosy desires to get healed. He calls on the Lord and he say, “Lord if you are willing to you can make me clean” Often we believe and know that God can do the impossible in us; or give us peace in our mind during the storm. Yet we often think that we need to qualify for it and that creates doubts in our minds. But Jesus responds to him explains his heart towards us. He responds saying “Yes I will; Be made clean” and in an instant he gets healed. Jesus is reminding us that God is ever willing to heal us and liberate us more than we desire. The delay lies in us, often we gaze on things of this realm than gazing on the things above. We believe in human Testimonies. But he demonstrates that if we believe in the Son of God then we receive God's Testimony which is far superior to our human Testimonies. Human Testimonies will be the little things we do to overcome our problems and sicknesses. But God's Testimonies bring us Greater things such as total freedom.

Prayer: Abba Father, I too want to be made clean by your word and ministering over my life and family. Amen

Saturday January 8

St. Apollinaris

1 John
5: 14-21

Psalm
149: 1-9

John
3: 22-30

A man cannot receive any thing, unless it be given him from heaven.”

The setting for today's Gospel is the region of Judea. Numerous people came up to Jesus asking Him to baptize them. John also was in the area and he was baptizing. John's disciples came to him and told him that Jesus was near and He also was baptizing and masses of people were coming to Jesus for baptism. Were John's disciples a bit jealous and spiteful of Jesus' popularity?

John undoubtedly understands that his mission is to make way for Christ. John clearly is fully satisfied to be the best man, rather than the bridegroom. John understood that Christ will “increase” and his part will “decrease.” In today's world, many individuals seek to be in the limelight or to be significant in some way. John knew his place in the best sense. He understood that he had a important role in the drama that was unfolding. However, John was fully satisfied to play his part and then step into the background. Let us be happy and rejoice that we have a part to play?

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray that you will increase, and we will decrease as we spend time on your word learning more of you. Amen

Sunday January 9

Feast of the Baptism of our Lord

Isaiah
40: 1-5, 9-11

Psalm
104: 1-4, 24-30

Titus
2: 11-14, 3:4-7

Luke
3: 15-16, 21-22

Who is the servant God delights in?

Today we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the day the Lord Jesus heard the voice of His heavenly Father calling Him "My Son". This experience was the fuel that pushed the Lord Jesus throughout the 3 years of His ministry and gave Him the grace to walk to the cross. Each time He had to heal the sick or raise the dead, the Lord Jesus would have thought back to this moment when the Father said, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." The Father in heaven confirmed to the Lord Jesus that He was indeed the Son of God; He was loved by God and God was pleased with Him.

The Lord Jesus drew strength from this experience and was able to do miracles and suffer and die on the cross because He knew He was the Son of God, loved by God and that God was pleased with His life. In the same way, today the Lord is calling us to have this same relationship with the Father and to draw self-worth, value, love, and a sense of belonging from God and not from the world around us. This experience we have in prayer can fuel our lives and give us strength to face whatever life has to offer.

Today's First Readings in Isaiah 42:1 says, "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight." The Lord Jesus was the chosen one and the servant God delighted in. As I was praying about this verse, I realized I too need to learn what these characteristics were, so I too could bring delight to God my Father. Verse 1 says, "I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations."

The Lord Jesus had the Spirit of the Lord upon Him. We too must be baptized by the Holy Spirit. Verse 2 says, "He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets." The Lord only spoke what the Father wanted Him to say. He was quiet when He needed to be and spoke when He heard the Father. He was in-tune with His Father. "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice" (v.3). The Lord Jesus was gentle with people. "He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope" (v.4). He wanted to help poor and disadvantaged people. We too can help others who are suffering in the world. These are some of the ways we can become a servant that God delights in.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for Your grace to become Your child whom You are pleased with and delight in. Show me the way. Amen.

Monday January 10

St. William of Bourges

1 Samuel
1: 1-8

Psalm
116: 12-19

Mark
1: 14-20

“But Wisdom is proved right by her actions,”

Today's first reading focuses on how God HIMSELF teaches us what is best for us. If we meditate on all the laws of the Old Testament we see that they act as a fence to shield us from the effects of sin. To cross that fence would mean to break the very commands that are set in place to protect us. If we follow these commands, our wisdom will be seen through our act of obedience. If we live within the framework that God has provided for us then our peace in every area of our life would be constant and furthermore flow into the lives of others. The Gospel today beckons us into deeper thinking. Jesus is comparing the current generation to one that is not happy in any situation. A critical generation. A discontented generation. A generation failing to notice and appreciate the good in people and in situations. A disconnected generation to God. A generation lacking wisdom. Both the first reading and the gospel are linked in that should we allow ourselves to be lead by the wisdom of the Holy One of Israel.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to take every thought captive and make it obedient unto you so that your holy wisdom may abound in us. Amen

Tuesday January 11

St. Leonie

1 Samuel
1:9-20

1 Samuel
2: 1-8

Mark
1: 21-28

The Authority of God dispels spirits of evil

The world we live in is malevolent. The Word says “ Dark powers govern this world. We are struggling against the spirits and supernatural forces of evil “ (Eph.6/12). As a result we knowingly or unknowingly wish doing evil or harm to others. The first reading speaks of the humiliation endured , and the sorrow and misery that follows through those dark powers that rule our world. One is unable through human effort to rise above or have control over it. Only lifting our thoughts to the Almighty brings changes. Prayer takes us into the presence of God. The supernatural realm opens and our hearts receive transformation. The malevolent heart becomes benevolent. An inclination to do good and become kind to oneself and the other emerges from within. Prayer that rises from the temple of our heart invites the Lord. His teaching, and making alive His Word have power to dispel what is unclean in us. It is said “ He who is born of God, is protected, and the evil one does not touch him”(1Jn. 5/28).

Prayer: Abba Father, may your Holy Spirit warn us to ward of evil inclinations that emerge from within our thoughts. Amen

Wednesday January 12

Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Samuel
3:1-10, 19-20

Psalm
40: 2-10

Mark
1: 29-39

Be silent, and let the Lord redeem you from all your ills

In the gospel proclamation today, we see instances of astonishment and amazement of the people in Capernaum. They are astonished with the teachings of the Lord Jesus which would surely have pierced their hearts to conversion as well as stir out an unclean spirit out of a man in the synagogue. The power of the Word was such that the true identity of the Lord Jesus was revealed in the words of the unclean spirit. They are amazed at the authority in which the Lord Jesus commands. The power and authority of the Lord Jesus comes through His constant connection with the Father in heaven. This reminds me of a teaching by Lalith Thaththa recently, how we can go before the Father boldly and ask for whatever we want and how the Father would send forth His angels to assist. What a privilege, once we ensure our unbroken connection with the Heavenly Father, to know we also can do what the Lord Jesus did in His time on earth and even more.

Prayer: Abba Father, power us from above to carry our mission just as the Lord Jesus did. Amen

Thursday January 13

St. Hilary

1 Samuel
4: 1-11

Psalm
44: 10-25

Mark
1: 40-45

If you wish, you Can make me clean

What does faith look like? In the book of Hebrews, the author writes, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Ch 11:1) In layman terms, faith is in the 'knowing' the absolute 'knowing', that God sees me, He hears me and He will answer my plea. Today's Gospel proclamation explains this well.

The Leper, did not hesitate or imply, "If you can, do something" rather his faith in Jesus Christ, the son of God, was absolute. He had a deep conviction that it was the Lord and Him alone, who could help. He also had a beautiful spirit of surrender, giving the Lord ample freedom to do as He wills, in his situation. Are we waiting on the Lord today, for an answer? Can we say with certainty, 'I know my redeemer lives, He will come to my rescue, He will come to save me.' True faith also has a spiralling effect. The leper didn't stop there, his conviction was deep, he had to proclaim Jesus to all.

Prayer: Abba Father, I confess that You alone are my Healer and Redeemer. Amen

Friday January 14

St. Felix of Nola

1 Samuel
8:4-7, 10-22

Psalm
89: 16-19

Mark
2:1-12

Faith is enough!

Pushing and shoving, struggling to scramble up a roof, rousing speculation, covering the ears to outrageous remarks, an impossible juggling act in the heat of the day...all part of an act of faith we hear in the gospel today. And the result...a remarkable healing. What does faith look like for us today? How does faith manifest in our lives? Can we claim to have faith like the four friends who carried the paralytic, who were not deterred by any obstacle? Do we hesitate at the thought of how the world would react to our ways of exercising faith and confirm to silent submission? No matter how we choose to answer these questions, we are reminded today that if we choose to be content with God as our Master and King and totally depend on Him alone for all our needs- unlike the people of old, who pleaded with Samuel to appoint a king to rule over them for they couldn't comprehend how an unseen God would provide for them-then we too are pleasant in His sight.

Prayer: Abba Father, increase our faith so that we may endure through trials and temptations and keep our gaze on You alone. Amen.

Saturday January 15

St. Paul the Hermit

1 Samuel
9: 1-4, 17-19, 10:1

Psalm
21:2-7

Mark
2: 13-17

Valuing people

In today's gospel proclamation "Follow me" are the words the Lord Jesus uses to call St. Matthew. Until the time the Lord Jesus called him, St. Matthew lived the life of a tax collector, despised by his own people as a traitor who worked for the Roman occupation forces. Yet the Lord Jesus saw him not as he was, but as he could be, and invited him to follow him. The Lord Jesus saw beyond St. Matthew's current occupation and circumstances and saw in him the potential to be the Apostle Matthew who wrote one of the four gospels and who ultimately died a Martyr for the faith; He saw in him the potential to be the person God created him to be. Each person we meet, also holds much greater potential than may be visible on the surface. It is possible that they themselves have not recognized their potential, instead have accepted the labels the world has placed upon them. It is only God's grace that can open our eyes to value each person we meet, seeing them, loving them, and encouraging them, as a Son and a Daughter of the Most High God.

Prayer: Abba Father, open the eyes of my heart so that I may see people the way you see them. And truly value and love them as you do. Amen

Sunday January 16

Feast of St. Joseph Vaz

Isaiah
52: 7-10

Psalm
96:1-10

Acts
20: 17-18, 28-36

Mark
16: 15-20

“St. Joseph Vaz: Pray for us!”

Today is the Solemnity of St. Joseph Vaz, the Saint of Sri Lanka. He was born in 1651 in India. In 1676 he was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of Goa. Soon after his ordination he lived as a poor person going bare-foot and was accepted as a popular preacher and confessor. In 1677 he consecrated himself as a “slave of Mary” and sealed it as the “Deed of Bondage”.

The first proclamation is about God’s messenger; blessed are the feet of the messenger who takes good news to the nations in hopeless situations. St. Joseph Vaz who committed to follow God’s leading came to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) at a time that the church was going through hopelessness.

The Church of Ceylon was going through persecution. The Dutch feared that the Catholics wouldn’t be loyal to them therefore persecuted them. The Catholic priests were banished from the country and the verdict was given regarding a capital punishment if anyone accommodated Catholic priests. Catholic churches and schools were confiscated. Catholics were required to attend services in Dutch kirks and to have their children baptized, their marriages solemnized and their dead buried according to Calvinist rites. This situation prolonged close to three decades. Catholics at the time didn’t have priests to administer Sacraments. But God kept the Catholic faith preserved and sent St. Joseph Vaz to Ceylon during this time.

In the second proclamation St. Paul bid farewell. He warned his brothers before leaving that the good news he preached would be perverted, therefore, to keep watch over themselves and the flock of which the Holy Spirit appointed them overseers. Something to ponder; God acquired “the Church” by His own Blood, henceforth, the sole owner of the “Church” is God. No human person could twist the Gospel nor distort the written ‘Word of God’. The assurance of God is sealed in the Gospel proclamation. The Lord Jesus commissioned His apostles to carry the good news to the ends of the earth and they did. The marvelous works of God follows when the Gospel is preached. We are witnesses of the flourished Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. Let’s face persecution boldly because God reigns and His word is true. The Lord Jesus said, that the netherworld shall not prevail against the church.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for sending St. Joseph Vaz to revive the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. Amen.

Monday January 17

St. Anthony the Great

1 Samuel
15: 16-23

Psalm
50: 8-9, 16-25

Mark
2: 18-22

Obedience over sacrifice.

Each day, every moment in life is different and unique. We hope for the best and presume that we will be able to maintain situations and manage life to the best of our abilities. But sometimes the opposite happens and the least predictable is done by us for good or for bad. Today's readings invite us to maintain a healthy and an obedient relationship with the Lord by submitting to His Word & relying on His leading everyday when we make our choices in life. The question is, are we sensitive to that calling? How do we respond to it? Persistence in prayer, renewing the mind in the Holy Spirit & continuously seeking the will of the Lord will definitely lead us to the answers God has for us. Saul assumed that he was following the instructions of God but in the eyes of God he had failed. We too are reminded to examine our hearts. Where do we stand? Let us open up our hearts cleanse them through repentance & refresh ourselves to accept the will of God in a new way each day.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us wisdom to understand your ways and a heart to be obedient to your calling. Amen!

Tuesday January 18

Sts. Philonelia, Hermione and Zenoida

1 Samuel
16: 1-13

Psalm
89: 20-28

Mark
2: 23-28

Transaction vs. Relationship

'People looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart'. This was the instruction given to Samuel by God. How true this is. Don't judge a book by its cover as said in today's context. We look at the way a person dresses, behaves in public, mannerisms, etiquette, personality; but for our Heavenly Father all of this is immaterial. In the New Testament, the same was said of the disciples. They went against the Jewish tradition and broke the law on the Sabbath. But all of these laws were only to beautify the outward appearance and not to cleanse the heart. It seems that from today's readings, God is wanting to show us that His ways are not our ways. We can be so engrossed in fulfilling our obligations, reading out prayers; but today we are called to go a step further and to examine our hearts. Where do we stand in our relationship with God? Are we trying to earn our identity from God by doing things for Him or do we see ourselves as seated in Heavenly places.

Prayer: Abba Father, I repent for the moments of wanting to perform for You and choose instead to walk in the identity you have given me. Amen

Wednesday January 19

St. Conute IV

1 Samuel
17: 32-37, 40-51

Psalm
144: 1-2, 9-10

Mark
3:1-6

Step out in faith and to be filled with His love

Today's Gospel proclamation shows how Jesus heals the man with the withered on the Sabbath. Though this man had a deformity he had the willingness and the faith to be healed. But many of the Pharisees gathered there were healthy but their hearts were closed and they had no faith. Sometimes even we find ourselves to be just like the Pharisees. We stick to traditions and rituals like clockwork but our hearts are not opened to the our lord Jesus the savior, the healer, the provider. We are so focused on getting through our religious rituals like it is a chore, a duty to be done and over with. Jesus didn't come to this world so we can stick to the tradition and fulfill our duty but he came to live with us, to journey with us, to heal us and to give us new life. A relationship Jesus calls all of us to break the norms of our understanding and to live in faith. The more we step out in faith, the more he fills us with his love and power. Are you ready to step out in faith and to be filled with His love?

Prayer: Abba Father, open the eyes of my heart and help me to step out to you in faith. Amen.

Thursday January 20

St. Sebastian & St. Fabian

1 Samuel
18: 6-9, 19: 1-7

Psalm
56: 2-13

Mark
3: 7-12

Intercession and steadfast divine love

The first reading tells us about Saul's jealousy following public adulation for David's victory over Goliath and Jonathan's intercession to sway Saul from his plan to kill David. The Psalm is a song of praise and faith in God's protection against the harm and tyranny faced by oppressed people. In the Gospel proclamation, we learn about the Ministry of Our Lord Jesus Christ to such a great number of people that He had to go on a boat to avoid being physically swamped by the great throng. They came from distant places and tried to touch him because of their faith in his power to heal them from their sicknesses and for exorcism of evil spirits and He did not disappoint them. The evil spirits openly acknowledged his divinity but Jesus ordered them not to publicise that fact presumably because He did not seek fame. Jonathan's intercession saved David for a while, but the supreme self-sacrifice of Jesus has saved all humanity for all time.

Prayer: Abba, Father, imbue us with faith to trust in your steadfast unconditional love as a beacon in our lives.

Friday January 21

25th Week in Ordinary Time

1 Samuel
24: 3-21

Psalm
57: 2-11

Mark
3: 13-19

The Call to Mission

The Gospel highlights a diverse group of people who were called by God. There were fishermen, a tax collector and even a zealot. No matter what their backgrounds were once, they were called and accepted that call to discipleship. They were gradually transformed to be like their master. We too are a diverse collection of people called to the same mission as disciples of Christ. What is most relevant is what unites us is far greater than what divides us, Christ living in us unifies us and strengthens us. In the first reading we see the extreme weakness man can be subjected to and one who can be truly faithful to the cause and purpose God calls one to be, proving to be an instrument that changed an envious heart to true repentance. Saint Augustine wrote- I sought a way to gain strength to enjoy you. But I did not find it until I embraced the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is above all God blessed forever. He was calling me saying- I am the way the truth and the life.....

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we be true disciples following the footsteps of your son, who is the way the truth and the life. Amen.

Saturday January 22

St. Vincent of Saragossa

2 Samuel
1: 1-4, 11-27

Psalm
80: 2-7

Mark
3: 20-21

They said, 'He is out of his mind.' Mark 3:20-21

When you try to set yourself up for the mission that you are on earth for, you clearly see how the forces are formed against you. Sometimes we are internally challenged which path to choose. At times what brings us under the cloud in moving forward in the ministry entrusted to us is the external pressure that is sure to come. You almost give up when the pressure starts from your own and around you. It explains very well how our Lord Jesus was challenged at the start of His earthly ministry. "He has an unclean spirit; He's doing this by the power of the devil," they were attributing the works of God's Holy Spirit to Satan. He didn't even have time to eat bread, because He was just giving Himself so completely to the needs of the people. He healed many. He preached to many. He transformed many. When they started following Him, the external forces, the forces of this world were becoming stronger. But there is no sign of Jesus getting disturbed because he knew that he was doing the will of the father. His trust was in the Father.

Prayer: Abba Father, please help me to keep connected to You and to focus on purpose entrusted to me. Amen

Sunday January 23

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Nehemiah
8: 2-10

Psalm
19: 8-15

1 Cor
12: 12-30

Luke
1: 1-4, 4: 14-21

God come sin through His word

Today's first reading expresses the enormous enhancement brought on the Israelite men, women and children by Ezra the priest. We find Ezra and Nehemiah together, instructing the law and the method to fulfill it by "rejoicing in the Lord". We see a tremendous shift taking place when people stop weeping and being sad, but instead choose to be joyful in the Lord.

Even in my life, in the midst of turbulence the cause of joy is the Lord. It is a common secret, when things in this life keep changing it is a fact which is stubborn and engraved in my heart that it is only God who can bring ultimate and everlasting joy in my life. Every other joy is momentary and uncertain. Thus, as the Psalmist says, we are called to cherish the law and crave for the word of God that brings life in abundance to our life. Truly, it is the word of God, which is Spirit that induces life in to any situation.

Hence, the spirit filled word that vivifies our soul, mind and body generates rivers of living waters to whom we come across, associate and surround us. The gospel narration relates to the same when the Lord Jesus Christ reads through the scroll in the Synagogue, where the spirit of the Lord had anointed him to bring glad tidings to the poor, to set captives free, bring sight to the blind and let the oppressed go free. This, was the real calling of our Saviour as foretold by the prophet, and thus the very words proclaimed were fulfilled in the hearing, by the crowd.

Therefore, hearing the word of God and proclaiming it in the Holy Spirit brings results today as back in the day for it is the same Holy Spirit at work today .Are we opened and receptive to this life giving word of God ? Does the Law of God have an impact on us?

As believers can we go by feelings or sight? Of course not, we are called to keep declaring the promises of God and His, concerns and plans for our life which are good. Let us, not keep room for insecurities to try to creep in to our lives. When we read the word of God we can revert darts of the enemy, and know his plans will not prevail against us.

Prayer: Abba Father, anoint me today to proclaim your word that sets captives free. Amen.

Monday January 24

St. Francis de Sales

2 Samuel
5: 1-7,10

Psalm
89: 20-26

Mark
3: 22-30

My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him.

In the first reading we are reminded of the greatness that God created David's kingship to be here on earth throughout Jerusalem and around the country. It was God Himself who chose David out of his strong brothers that the prophet thought would fit in as a King in the eyes of this world. But God's plan was completely different. He saw something in David that no one saw, not even his brothers, his father, his society, nor the appointed Prophet at that time saw this capability in him. We are reminded of His kingship and greatness. He who was chosen was just shepherding around in the country area but made to rule a country on its own. The Gospel reminds us of a similar situation, where the Pharisees fail to recognise the Son of God sent by the Father Himself for our salvation. Their eyes are closed as they're fixed on the worldly thinking pattern of seeking worldly power and strength. But God's greatness does not rest on worldly power but He is able to do greater things.

Prayer: Abba Father, we bring ourselves to you with our current thought process and truly believe in Your power and greatness. Amen.

Tuesday January 25

Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle

Acts 22: 3-16
or 9: 1-22

Psalm
117: 1-2

Mark
16: 15-18

Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord Corinthians 1: 31

Paul's testimony of faith opens to the scriptures this morning. Whatever God touches does not remain the same. All of us have experienced his saving hand and powerful encounter. As he invited St Paul, he invited the 11 disciples in Gospel of St Mark, God invites us personally to be a witness of his Gospel, of his presence in our lives. Today, God is preparing us to simply share with our friends, work colleagues, neighbours of what Jesus has done in our lives. We might not often come across receptive ears but we should offer ourselves faithfully and leave the results to God. Our God has risen from the dead and is very much alive! As you grow closer to him in prayer and worship, He is going to give you the strength, determination and opportunities to share his message. Offer yourself to the lord with praise as he prepares you to be his vessel, surrender to his mission as your heart whispers, Here I Am!!

Prayer: Abba Father, let my boast be about your goodness and mercy in my life and about all that you have done. Amen

Wednesday January 26

St. Timothy and Titus

2 Timothy
1:1-8

Psalm
96: 1-10

Luke
10: 1-9

Power, Love and self-control, keys to belonging to the family of God

In the first reading St. Paul writes to Timothy teaching the real power of a Christian life through the unwavering faith that is handed down the generation. If I ask each of you to look back at your Christian journey so far, you may recognize from your formative years, people who have influenced you in the building up your faith running back to your own grandparents. Can this strong faith coming down the generations, help us in the present day? Both the first reading today and the Gospel proclamation give us a clear teaching. St Paul speaks of the Spirit of God which is not timid but of power, love and self-control. The Lord Jesus proclaims today how we become his mother, brother or sister, part of God's own family. "Whoever does the will of God" and how we do is as St. Paul says, through the Spirit of power, love and self-control. In the power of the Name of Jesus, we are called to love our enemy and avoid all occasion of sin through self-control.

Prayer: Abba Father, clothe us with your spirit of power, love and self-control. Amen

Thursday January 27

St. Angela Merici

2 Samuel
7: 18-19, 24-29

Psalm
132: 1-14

Mark
4: 21-25

Let your light shine

When new amazing gemstones were discovered in Sri Lanka , they were shown to the world. Their pictures have been splashed all over the media and interest has poured in from all quarters. So also we have been given the light of the Gospel. Are we keeping it to ourselves or sharing it with the world? King David shared his love for God with us through the Psalms and praise of God. One such person who was touched by the light of God was St. Angela Merici. She lost her parents at the age of 10 and later her sister. These impacted her life but a vision assured her that though her sister did not receive the last rites, she was in heaven. Further visions and direction encouraged her to take up the education of young girls through the Company of St Ursula and today the institutions she founded have spread across the world taking the light of Christ and giving amazing opportunities to young girls through education and vocational courses.

Prayer: Abba Father, you have lit the flame of your light and presence in my life. May it burn bright and impact lives across the world. Amen

Friday January 28

St. Thomas Aquinas

2 Samuel 11: 1-4
5-10, 13-17

Psalm
51: 3-11

Mark
4: 26-34

Listening and responding to God

In today's Gospel reading Jesus' teachers about the growing seeds. Jesus' words may have been directed to the Jews who had no understanding of Jesus and would lose even what they had - their privileged status as God's people. Or Jesus might have meant that when people reject him, their hardness of heart drives away or renders useless even the little understanding they had; thus, any opportunity to share in God's Kingdom will eventually be taken away completely. To understand Jesus' message, people must listen and respond. Those who listen casually, for whatever reason, will miss the point. God promises that his harvest will be magnificent and prolific - the best fruit ever grown. Your witness may be weak, and your efforts may seem to influence so few, but the Word of God is a powerful growth agent. Keep your eyes on the great harvest to come and do not let bad soil or weeds discourage you from faithful service and witness.

Prayer: Abba Father Help me identify the call you have for me and serve in your worldwide ministry. Amen

Saturday January 29

St. Aquilinus

2 Samuel
12: 1-7, 10-17

Psalm
51: 12-17

Mark
4: 35-41

God's spirit is in my heart, He has called me and set me apart

God's word comes to us in many forms. How do I respond to God's word? Do I receive God's word willingly, with faith of fulfillment or do I not recognize God's word. Do I become enraged and flee or destroy His word? Just because I don't recognize or hear God's word it doesn't mean that God is not speaking to me. I just need to tune in. Right now, let us declare the truth over ourselves and our lives – God knew me before I entered my mother's womb. I am set apart and appointed to do the will of my Father here on earth.

God my Loving Father, Jesus my Saviour and Holy Spirit my comforter and counselor is always with me. Jesus is reminding us of our commission and that He has empowered us to carry it out - Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. John 14:12

Prayer: Abba Father, as you send me out to be your witnesses in love throughout the world, I believe that your Spirit will guide me! Amen

Sunday January 30

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah
1: 4-5, 17-19

Psalm
71: 1-5, 17-19

1 Cor 13:4-13
Luke 4: 21-30

You are who God says you are!

Today's liturgy focuses on setting us, God's people in the correct mindset as we journey through life. We know that we are God's children through Baptism. Yet, often we live a powerless joyless life, unworthy of children of God.

The first reading and the Gospel proclamation speak to us, through prophet Jeremiah and our Lord Jesus. God virtually commands us to know and acknowledge our true identity in His eyes. Each of us has been created uniquely, for a specific mission in the Body of Christ. We are reminded of this identity received in our Baptism as priest, prophet and king, anointed by the Heavenly Father.

As priests, we need to bring the divine and human together, living in the deepest intimacy with Christ, bringing the world around us back to Christ, in and through our lives firmly rooted in Him. We do this by keeping Christ at the centre of our life, giving Him the first place in every decision. Then our lives become the right worship, and we can turn our world back to an Eden. As every priest needs to offer a sacrifice, we too need to offer a sacrifice. On a personal level we offer our independence and ego as we choose to submit to God's will in everything. At a family level we sacrifice our desire to primarily make our children shine in the world and focus on making them disciples of Christ.

As prophets, we are to see everyone through the eyes of God. This will change the world around us significantly, as we refuse to judge people but choose to see them as Christ saw the woman caught in adultery.

As kings in the Kingdom of God, we are to use the authority given by our Heavenly Father. We are not to be victimised by enemy's lies and faulty values of this world, but are to fill our minds with the true values of heaven and allow them to flow into our families, workplaces and our neighbourhood. Lord Jesus was forced to accept He was the just a carpenter's son, but He stood firm in the certainty of His identity as God's Son, as revealed to Him in baptism.

The Second Reading clarifies the attitude we are to have as we live and minister as beloved children of God. We are to serve others in love alone. If we have no love, we have nothing.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray that we Christians will be transformed by renewing our minds, to live in our true identity as Your sons and daughters. Amen.

Monday January 31

St. John Bosco

2 Samuel 15: 13-14,
30: 16: 5-13

Psalm
3:2-7

Mark
5: 1-20

From discomfort to deliverance

Often when we are besiged by evil, we learn to accomodate it and live with it. When we taste sin, we get a distaste for God. God does not appear attractive to us and we ask Him, 'Lord what have you got to do with us. We do not need you.' Our Lord Jesus came to set us free and deliver us from darkness as he did to the Gerasenes man who was possessed by demons. Where Don Bosco lived, he witnessed the youth drawn into lustful pursuits and he banded them together, putting them under the care of Mary Help of Christians and offering them a Catholic formation. Thousands were delivered from a wasteful life to learning a new trade and being able to support their families. To the city folk who were more interested in making money and ruining lives, Don Bosco was a living nightmare. But by the grace of God his ministry impacted Italy and the world and today even the writer is a product of Don Bosco's powerful ministry saving youth.

Prayer: Abba Father, we love you, we want you and we need you to pick us out of our darkness and lead us to your light. Amen.

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St. Angela Merici

St. Angela Merici was born on March 21, 1474 in Italy. She was a religious educator and founder of the Ursulines whose deep prayer life and relationship with the Lord bore the fruit of mystical encounters with God.

At just 10-years-old, Angela and her older sister became orphans and went to live with their uncle. There they led a quiet and devout Catholic Christian life. After the untimely death of her sister, Angela was saddened by the fact that she had not had the opportunity to receive her last Sacraments and was concerned for her sister's eternal salvation. Filled with grief, she prayed for God to reveal the condition of her deceased sister's soul. In a vision, she learned her sister was in Heaven with the company of saints.

She became more devout and joined the Third Order of St. Francis where she also pledged to remain a consecrated virgin. When she was 20, her uncle died and she returned to her hometown. There she found that there were many young girls who had no education and no hope. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Angela became convinced there was great need for a better way of teaching these girls. So, she opened her own home to them and began to teach them. She devotedly taught them the Catholic Christian faith. In another vision, the Lord revealed to Angela that she was to found an institution with other consecrated virgins to further devote their lives toward the religious training of young girls. These women had little money and no power, but were bound together by their dedication to education and commitment to Jesus Christ and service to His Church.

In 1524, she travelled to the Holy Land. During the journey, she was suddenly struck with blindness, but this didn't stop her though. She continued the journey. She made the entire pilgrimage and visited the sacred shrines. On the journey back home, her sight was miraculously restored while she was praying before a crucifix in the same place where she had become blind. The Lord showed Angela through this experience that she must never shut her eyes to the needs she saw around her, and to not shut her heart to God's call.

On November 25, 1535, Angela gathered together 12 young virgins and laid down the foundation for the Order of the Ursulines at a small house near the Church of St. Afra in Brescia with Angela's Company of Saint Ursula, under the patronage of St. Ursula.

St. Angela Merici died on January 27, 1540. She is often attributed with a cloak and ladder. She is the patron saint of sickness, disabled and physically challenged people, and those grieving the loss of parents. Her feast day is on January 27.

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.

