



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



Pentecost

Feast: 05 June

JUNE 2022 | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

JUNE
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“The Heart of Jesus is the ultimate symbol of God’s mercy; but it is not an imaginary symbol, it is a real symbol, which represents the center, the source from which salvation for all humanity gushed forth.”

Pope Francis

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Wednesday June 1

Memorial of Saint Justin, Martyr

Acts
20:28-38

Psalm
68:29-30,33-36

John
17:11-19

God may change His workers, but the work goes on.

In today's Gospel proclamation, God reminds us on how we must stay true to our words and deeds. Sticking to what is true drives away the pessimisms and more so, it also reflects the significance of being blessed with a God who knows the truth. In addition, our God is a God of promises, He never leaves a person hanging but rather, He holds on and helps us to reach eternal life. He gives innumerable graces to those who are true in following and loving Him. Jesus is no longer in the world physically but we are in the world. Jesus' purpose is to bring glory to the Father and to bring us to the Father. He is our High Priest. Jesus is offering us to the Father, He lifts us to the Father cleansed in the Lord's blood. In the first reading St Paul addresses the leadership of the church of Ephesus, knowing this was likely to be the last time they would see him. He gives them his blessing: Paul wanted to reassure these leaders to continue serving faithfully after he is gone. God may change His workers, but the work goes on.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be on our spiritual guard, not only for our own well-being but also for those that you have seen fit to place in our lives. Amen.

Thursday June 2

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts
22:30; 23:6-11

Psalm
16:1-2,5,7-11

John
17:20-26

Unity among Christians.

The Church is one because its founder is one. Jesus compels a choice because he speaks and acts in the very person of God. Jesus is not one teacher among many. And therefore those who walk in his way must be exclusively with him. When we accept God and Jesus Christ, we reject any political party, or any set of ideas that claim to be the ultimate truth. Bishop Barron said that a Christian is someone who, at the fundamental level of his or her being, is centred on the one God of Jesus Christ. This explains why, on the last night of his life on earth, while sitting at supper with his disciples, the core of the church, Jesus prayed "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one." It is safe to assume, that one reason our church is so divided, is that many of us, do not have Christ as the centre of our lives. We follow many other things while also claiming to follow Christ. No wonder there are so many fractions and divisions in the church. Let us pray for unity.

Prayer: Abba Father, make us all one again, let every Christian's life be rooted only in you, the one true God. Amen.

Friday June 3

Memorial of Saints Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

Acts
25:13-21

Psalm 103:
1-2,11-12, 19-20

John
21:15-19

Feed God's people.

In today's Gospel proclamation Jesus asks Peter: "Do you Love me?" He is asking the same question from us also. What is our answer going to be? Do we really love him? Do we really feed his children? We say that we love Jesus but it is often limited to words. He also asks us to feed His children, and that is our responsibility as believers. How are we to love him? How are we to feed his children? We need to realize that Jesus loves us always, we need to believe it and sit at His feet every day to be nourished by His love. God is love, without his love we cannot feed his children, and feeding is not only about earthly food but also spiritual food like love, mercy, compassion and peace. Therefore, when we start to spend time with him and knowing that we are loved by God, then we could feed his children without any barriers and we can share his fraternal love with the whole world. Let us love our neighbours, start with one person at a time, it is not the quantity but the quality of our love and service, that matters more.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to feed your children, give us the courage to reach out to the needy and to build your kingdom on earth. Amen.

Saturday June 4

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts
28:16-20,30-31

Psalm
11:4-5,7

John
21:20-25

The unseen hand of the steersman: God.

In the Gospel proclamation we see Peter being inquisitive of John's fate and the Lord's swift reply was: "it is no concern of yours". There is a testimony in the lives of every person, as it is confirmed in a disclaimer by John that there are many things that Jesus did which are unwritten. There are biographies of great saints like Francis of Assisi, Therese of Lisieux, Ignatius of Loyola, but there are many saints whose stories we do not know, whose testimonies to the unending love and grace of God have transformed many lives. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see Paul who originally persecuted Christians, committed to spread the Good News fearlessly, risking his life for the same cause he fought against. He started preaching to the Jews first and on being rejected he turned to the gentiles and that was the very purpose God had planned for him. In faith, through Baptism into his death and Resurrection, we can be another book, another testimony to the love and power of God and be used powerfully for His glory.

Prayer: Abba Father, through the power of the Resurrection, let me be yet another testimony for your greater glory. Amen.

Sunday June 5

Solemnity of Pentecost

Acts
2:1-11

Psalm 104:
1,24,29-31, 34

Romans
8:8-17

John
14:15-16,23-26

Will you say yes to an invitation from God?

The First Reading tells us the story of what happened during that first Pentecost, in the upper room and on the streets of Jerusalem. While the Spirit of God descended on the disciples and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues; the people on the streets were amazed they could hear their own languages being spoken by the disciples. Acts 2:5-6 says, "Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language." This event of Pentecost is not something that happened spontaneously, it was the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

In Jerusalem there were people from different lands who spoke different languages. God gave the gifts of different tongues to each of the disciples and gave them the words to praise God in different languages. There were two reactions to hearing the disciples speak in different tongues. When some heard God being praised in their own language, they were amazed, and some asked what this meant and maybe some of them followed the disciples and became followers of Christ. While others wrote the incident off, attributing the actions of the disciples as being drunk on wine. These people missed the invitation the Lord was giving them. Today, the Lord is asking us which crowd we will belong to this Pentecost? Will we be amazed and drawn to God through His gifts of the Spirit and say yes to His invitation to follow Him or will we reject the invitation and walk on?

In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus gives us a promise. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you" (John 14:15-17). When we say yes to the invitation of the Lord, He promises to give us another Advocate - the Holy Spirit. We are not on this journey alone. We journey with God the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Today, the Holy Spirit wants to give us a fresh anointing. No matter who we are, the Lord is calling us to follow Him and to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:11, "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines." The Holy Spirit is waiting to give us His gifts. He is waiting to empower us to proclaim His word, to do miracles and to heal people. All we have to do is accept His invitation. Let us give God our "yes" and be baptized anew in the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Abba Father, today I give you my yes and ask you to baptize me afresh in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Monday June 6

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Genesis
3:9-15,20

Psalm
87:1-3, 5-7

John
19:25-34

Mary - the mother of us all.

A mom sends her little child to bed for the night. The child asks that the door be kept open, as the child is scared of the dark. From the bed the child cries out "Mom can you bring me a glass of water". "No, it is time to sleep", says mom. Again, the child asks for water. Little agitated after repeated requests, mom says "one more complain, I am going to close the door". Then the child says, "Mom before you close the door, can you bring me a glass of water?" Today we celebrate the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Church. She is the mother of us all. How blessed are we to have her as our mother, given to us his disciples by the Lord right before his death on the cross. Like our earthly mother, Mary is truly our advocate in times of our needs and our guide when we are confused with life's direction. Take time today to recall with heartfelt devotion the blessings received through her intercession and think of ways to follow her example in looking at all that each one goes through in the light of God's greater plan.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me grow in my trust in your care no matter how and what may come to me in life's journey. Amen.

Tuesday June 7

Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Kings
17:7-16

Psalm
4:2-5,7-8

Matthew
5:13-16

The result of obedience is abundance.

The promise of God in the first reading applies to our lives in the present era. The promise is: that we shall never be in want. Our life's foundation should be the Word of God. When we reflect on the event of Elijah and the widow there is something common in them, what is it? Obedience. Elijah acted according to God's instructions. The widow did as the prophet told her. Both survived the drought. We need to know that God's answers makes us victorious. God's solutions are always a win-win situation. In God's answers no one would be excluded but everyone is included and the result is a win-win situation. This happens under one fundamental truth; that is Obedience. The result of obedience is abundance. There are no conditions for God's love. There is only freedom in God. The most important commandment is to love. We are called to love. Like salt we can influence the society and the world without being seen through God's unconditional love. As light we should be bold and be seen when necessary with love.

Prayer: Abba Father, grant your grace that I may be obedient in living joyously within your unceasing abundance. Amen.

Wednesday June 8

Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Kings
18:20-39

Psalm
16:1-2,4-5,8,11

Matthew
5:17-19

Choose the Lord.

In today's First Reading we read about the contest on Mount Carmel. Evil kings hated God's prophets because they spoke against sin and idolatry and undermined their control over the people. With the wicked kings' backing, many pagan prophets sprang up to counter the words of God's prophets. But Elijah showed the people that speaking a prophecy was not enough. One needed the power of the living God to fulfill it. So, Elijah challenged the people to take a stand, to follow whoever was the true God. Why did so many people waver between the two choices? Perhaps some were not sure. Many, however, knew that the Lord was God, but they enjoyed the sinful pleasures and other benefits that came with following Ahab in his idolatrous worship. It is important to take a stand for the Lord. If we just drift along with whatever is pleasant and easy, we will someday discover that we have been worshiping a false god ourselves. When we push the Lord out of our lives and choose sinful pleasures, we could lose sight of God's love.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to identify my hidden sins and the power to overcome them. Amen.

Thursday June 9

Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Kings
18:41-46

Psalm
65:10-13

Matthew
5:20-26

Forgiveness flows from the Cross of Jesus.

Our human relationships depend on how we handle our feelings and emotions. Justice, peace and joy are qualities of the kingdom of God. Jesus is insisting to have these qualities in our daily life. Forgiveness is an important aspect of God's presence in one's life. If we are able to forgive our brother or sister we are displaying a heavenly quality. Jesus not only preached forgiveness but also repeatedly showed how to forgive, during his suffering and death. "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing". Forgiving another person is not about any pride, it is not to accuse the other person. We forgive because Jesus has forgiven us. Am I practicing true discipleship? Am I a member of a Christian community only by name? Forgiveness not only impacts others, it also frees me from bitterness and hurt. Am I also ready to forgive myself for my mistakes and failures? Am I able to accept the forgiveness; which was offered from the cross? If I believe and accept that forgiveness, it will become easier to forgive others.

Prayer: Abba Father, be with me and empower me to imitate your Son Jesus. Amen.

Friday June 10

Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

1 Kings
19:9,11-16

Psalm
27:7-9,13-14

Matthew
5:27-32

Let us keep our eyes fixed on God.

Today's Gospel proclamation talks about the sin of adultery. Here the Lord says that anyone who looks at a woman with lust is guilty of committing adultery. What is meant by this is that we need to be aware of what we allow ourselves to see with our eyes. There are many things that distract us from God, are our eyes fixed on God or are we distracted by worldly pleasures? What actions do we allow ourselves to do? Are our actions glorifying God or ourselves? Whatever it is that caused us to turn away from the Lord, whatever that takes us far away from the will of the Father is considered a sin. It is better to cut off the things that cause us to walk away from His Love. We are called to enjoy the love of God in our lives and to then share it with others. Today let us look into our lives and see what causes us to walk away from the will of the Father. Whatever it may be let us bring it to the Lord and He will give us the grace to get over it. Let us trust in the Lord and He will fill our lives with His love and mercy.

Prayer: Abba Father, here I am Lord, take away from me anything that is not right in your sight and fill me with your love. Amen.

Saturday June 11

Memorial of Saint Barnabas, Apostle

Acts
11:21-26;13:1-3

Psalm
98:1-6

Matthew
10:7-13

Bearing witness to Christ.

In today's first reading we see the missionary efforts of Barnabas, whose Memorial we celebrate today. Many came to know the Lord as a result of Barnabas' preaching. Today's Gospel proclamation gives instructions to all missionaries. "Freely have you received, freely give." As Christians we are all called to share what God has done in our lives. As we embark on mission, do we trust in God completely? Or do we seek luxuries and comforts? The Lord has entrusted his mission to us at our Baptism. It does not matter what our current situations are, in our little ways, let us try to bear witness to God's love in our lives. Missionary work is not only about preaching and teaching, it also includes witnessing, interceding, serving and ministering to people. Even our acts of charity are a part of our mission. When we give a glass of water or some food to someone, let us do it with love. Let us pray for the zeal that St Barnabas had, so that our lives may bear witness to Christ, may others see our lives and give glory to our heavenly Father.

Prayer: Abba Father, may my life be a witness to the great transformation that you have done in my life. Amen.

Sunday June 12

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Proverbs
8:22-31

Psalm
8:4-9

Romans
5:1-5

John
16:12-15

God's infinite love for us.

On this Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, I remember the famous story that is told of St. Augustine, who took a walk on the beach one day after many futile attempts of trying to understand the mystery of the Trinity. It is told that St. Augustine saw a little child trying to fill in a small hole dug in the sand with a handful of sea water over and again. Upon inquiring what he was up to St. Augustine found out that he was trying to fit in the ocean in the little hole. The great saint was quick to point out how pointless it is and was given a reply that showed how equally pointless it is to try to fit in the mystery of the Trinity into one's mind. Similarly, it is not for us to fit this great mystery of the Triune God into our limited understanding, but instead try to fit ourselves in relation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Each time we mark ourselves with the sign of the Cross and proclaim, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit", we profess our faith in this great mystery. However, for many of us this has become more of a habit than a proclamation of faith. We sign ourselves with the Cross at many different times of the day without paying much thought. What seems like a spontaneous act from our part is in fact a prayer in remembrance of the Holy Trinity and so great is the mystery that the act itself sanctifies us and unites us with the Holy Trinity.

If we look closely at the union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, it reveals an intimate relationship that is shared between them and as children of God we are partakers of this unity.

The Lord Jesus, during His life on earth painted a beautiful picture of God the Father and the Holy Spirit, the advocate. It has left us with the affirmation of the love and mercy of God and the mighty works of the Holy Spirit. How do we reciprocate this love for us in our day-to-day lives?

As I see it, we can begin to do this by living in unity with our own brothers and sisters and reflecting God's love through our dealings with them. Let us in a special way take that first step in forgiving the person who may have hurt us so badly, go that extra mile for a difficult colleague in the workplace, have a willing heart to extend our hand to a person in need and in doing so imitate the divine love that is shared between the Holy Trinity.

As little as our actions may seem, the difference that it would bring to another person's life will be truly transformative and this in turn draws us closer to the Holy Trinity. Let us praise and worship the Holy Trinity saying:

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen"

Prayer: Abba Father, through little acts of love, may we grow in communion with You each day. Amen.

Monday June 13

Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua, Priest and Doctor of the Church

1 Kings
21:1-16

Psalm
5:2-7

Matthew
5:38-42

Do not oppose evil with evil.

The Gospel proclamation today presents us with a difficult challenge: to respond with love when we are hurt and taken advantage of. In these times, we are often encouraged to assert our rights and seek justice. However, Jesus is not only demanding a positive, loving and visible response from us but a response that is welling from deep within us. We will not be able to respond in the way our Lord responded to his cruel executioners if we lack the wisdom, guidance and grace of the Spirit. Our responses will be worldly and the mental struggle of responding with love will take a toll on us. St. Anthony of Padua himself had to face years of silence and a small role in his community till the moment when he was forced to preach due to the absence of a speaker. The Lord made a way for him to embark on a life of preaching but not without preparing him in solitude and with prayer. Opposing evil with love is the way of life God is calling us to, because it transforms the person giving it and the receiver who is impacted by that love.

Prayer: Abba Father, you are our refuge and strength in moments when we have to give love in the face of hatred. Amen.

Tuesday June 14

Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

1 Kings
21:17-29

Psalm
51:3-6,11,16

Matthew
5:43-48

Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Most people struggle day in and day out to be perfect in what they do. Research shows that the psychology of perfectionism is complex. If we are perfect, we are more likely to be motivated and striving for flawless results of what we do and become. On the flip side the result most often is ending up in burnout, stress, anxiety, and depression. Today in the Gospel proclamation, we are invited to be perfect. But it is not the same interpretation of perfectionism that the world offers. It is a different kind. This perfectionism means imitating Jesus, to model ourselves according to God's will. It is something that will end up with a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the plans I have for you, the plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope." Striving to be perfect while believing in the plans of the Father, secures eternity for us. The formula is to love those who persecute us, hate us and reject us. Because that is who the Father is. As sons and daughters, can we be the same?

Prayer: Abba Father, make me perfect in loving those who are around me. Not depending on how they treat me but unconditionally like You do. Amen.

Wednesday June 15

Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

2 Kings
2:1,6-14

Psalm
31:20-21,24

Matthew
6:1-6,16-18

A double portion of the Spirit.

We desire a life in abundance. Most often that life in abundance is about “Things and Things” - worldly things which are limited to what we can see, feel and sense. In other words these are things that can be achieved, bought or brought about. On the other hand, what can we give out, give to others – a brother, a sister in need or lacking something. Most often we give what is in excess from what we hold, so we do not feel a pinch. May be our giving is focussed on showing off, to receive vain glory, for self-admiration. But we are called to look after the needy without any reservation, without any limitations and to give out of what we ourselves need so we can take part in that pinch. We must be unselfish in sharing the pain of the poor. Also when we ask of the glorious Father, let us ask in thanksgiving to build up in the Spirit, to build up treasure in heavenly places and not on earth. The Father who hears us, also sees our innermost being and provides us with wisdom in the inmost parts.

Prayer: Abba Father, pour out your Spirit in double portions to us, so we may be one in you in the Spirit. Amen.

Thursday June 16

Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

Sirach
48:1-14

Psalm
97:1-7

Matthew
6:7-15

Praying meaningfully.

We know many prayers. We pray many prayer formulas mostly pleading for some need. Today let us focus on the prayer that Jesus himself taught the disciples: “the Lord’s prayer”. In this prayer Jesus teaches us how to address our Heavenly Father. God is not only my Father, but he is the Father of all, hence we pray ‘Our Father in heaven.’ Jesus is also teaching us how we can draw the power of heaven to earth through prayer. “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven”. When we pray let us not babble but focus our attention on each word. We need to draw the heavenly power down to where we live. In our struggles we need to surrender to the will of the Father, as Jesus always did the will of the Father even unto death. The first reading shows the power of God acting on this earth through one man: Elijah. Are we caught up in what is happening around us, are we struggling with no answers and feel powerless and worried? Let us pray and draw blessings from heaven, upon our nation and the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, increase our faith to experience the power of prayer more and more in our lives. Amen.

Friday June 17

Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

2 Kings
11:1-4,9-18,20

Psalm
132:11-14,17-18

Matthew
6:19-23

Trust in the unchanging Word of God.

We live in tumultuous times, everywhere we turn seems to be full of confusion and chaos. This may be a good time to reflect on where our treasure lies? Do we trust in people? In ourselves? Or is our trust in the unchanging Word of God? We see the promise given to King David in today's Responsorial psalm, "that through his line the Messiah would be born". In the first reading we see how close this promise came to be extinguished when Athaliah upon the death of her son Ahaziah is so consumed by grief and ambition kills her own son's children to secure her reign in Judah. And for a while, the whole nation of Judah thought that all the heirs of David were killed. But unknown to many, one son had survived, and at the appointed time was crowned King of Judah. When things seem to go wrong we do not need to despair, rather that is the time we need to turn in unwavering faith to our God. Recalling all he has done in the past and look towards the future with hope. Our God has never failed us before and he will not fail us now.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill me with the light of your faith, that I may always put my trust in you. Amen.

Saturday June 18

Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

2 Chronicles
24:17-25

Psalm
89:4-5,29-34

Matthew
6:24-34

Choose God over everything else.

In today's first reading we see that God was not angry at what the people did, but at their 'guilt'. The awareness of going against God's commands and proceeding regardless. How often do we find ourselves in this situation? How many decisions do we make in a day? Do they stem from a heart that is committed to doing what the Lord wants of us? Or do those choices stem from a heart that is so embedded in the world that the right choice often seems a little blurry? "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else shall be added unto you." How do we get there? How do we seek him and his kingdom? It starts with a decision; a desire to know what he wants from us, behavior, conduct, attitude, outlook, heart condition and everything else that goes with it. Both feet completely in. The answers are all in his Word that is alive and active. It may appear daunting at first, but when we start reading his Word attentively, every page we turn will give us a thirst for more.

Prayer: Abba Father, as we make the decision to seek you first, help us to find your heart for us in a real and personal way. Amen.

Sunday June 19

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Genesis
14:18-20

Psalm
110:1-4

1 Corinthians
11:23-26

Luke
9:11-17

The most precious gift Jesus left for us: His own self.

The Lord Jesus brought a whole different meaning to atonement for sin. He revealed the Father's heart in a way we could easily relate to. In Him, we see the father who leaves no stone unturned to save His children. A remote place with no food was no hindrance for the Lord Jesus to feed His followers, as He was connected to the Father, receiving His instructions. He drew the creative power from the Father, to meet their physical need. He knew it was useless to preach to hungry people! The availability was enough to meet the need, and much more! In His presence people were fed, healed, freed and delivered.

When it was time for the Lord to leave, He wanted His disciples to continue enjoying the prosperity and abundance of grace He brought to the world. He was not happy to leave us a philosophy to follow. Instead, He desired us to have Him, the source of joy and abundance. So He became our food and drink, to satiate our inner hunger and thirst. Rather than leaving us with a spiritual theory, our Lord desired for simple bread and wine to become His flesh and blood at the proclamation of His words, through the power of the Holy Spirit. 'Transubstantiation' means the conversion of the substance of the Eucharistic elements into the Body and Blood of Christ at consecration, only the appearances of bread and wine remain.

As we receive the living Christ at the Eucharist, we receive the same grace as those He ministered to in Galilee. Are we sick? He is the Healer. Are we bound and oppressed? He is the deliverer. Are we blind, deaf, mute or paralysed? He is able to give us sight, hearing, speech and strength to move. Are we sunk deep in depression and confusion? He can bring brightness and clarity to our minds. Are we living in sin? The Light of the world is in us and the rivers of living water awaits to cleanse us and put on the robe, the ring and the sandals, presenting us to the Father as His beloved son or daughter. If it has not happened yet, it is because the door handle is only on our side, not on the Lord's.

St Paul says, "whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Cor 11:26) His death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice for all the sins of the world. The veil that separated the supernatural from natural, was torn from top to bottom, connecting heaven and earth, when the Lord Jesus declared from the cross, "It is finished." (John 19:30). He reconciled us to the Father with the same relationship they enjoy. Let us believe and proclaim this truth each time we partake of His Body and Blood. Let us not waste the most precious gift He left for us: His own self.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for the most precious gift You gave us. We pray that You change us to the nature of the One who is living inside of us. Amen.

Monday June 20

Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

2 Kings
17:5-8,13-15,18

Psalm
60:3-5,12-13

Matthew
7:1-5

Recognize the call of God.

How often do we recognize the call of God in our lives? When we commit a sin we drift away from God or we avoid coming back to God because of the guilt we carry. But that is when we should pray harder and seek God even more. St. Pio once said, "The sinner who is sorry for his sins, is closer to God than the just person who boasts of their good works." When we drift away from God, He may send messengers inviting us to come back. Like the people of the first reading today, do we also forget to stop and ponder on these messages sent by God? God is closest to us in our weaknesses, he is just one step away, we need to walk towards Him and He is always reaching His arms out similar to the parable of the prodigal son. Let us remind ourselves to be humble and meek as our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us keep in mind His actions to the people who betrayed Him. By this we will not judge the people around us, instead find love in our hearts to embrace them as they are, just as Christ did.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank You for helping me, loving me, and showing me the way. Thank you for forgiving me. Amen.

Tuesday June 21

Memorial of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious

2 Kings 19:
9-11,14-21,31-36

Psalm
48:2-4,10-11

Matthew
7:6,12-14

Choosing the narrow path.

Today's readings pave a path for us to walk on. In the Gospel Proclamation, we hear about the narrow gate; the gate that brings life and is found only by a few. We see in the First Reading, the prayer of King Hezekiah, the King of Judah. He took his problem before God, but first He remembered who God is. This reminder is not for God, as He knows very well who He is. Rather it is a proclamation; a declaration spoken with confidence about the power and ability of God, instead of getting lost in the problem. He then presented His problem before God, in complete trust, that He will be answered. This is the narrow gate He chose to walk through. The King could have responded to this situation in so many different ways, but chose to fall at the feet of God instead. It was a path that was laughed at, but Hezekiah continued to believe and hold on in faith. Let us think of the situations we are placed in today and choose the narrow path as we remember who God is and lay our problems at His feet.

Prayer: Abba Father, I desire you to lead me on the narrow path in every situation I am placed in. Amen.

Wednesday June 22

Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

2 Kings
22:8-13; 23:1-3

Psalm
119:33-37,40

Matthew
7:15-20

Every sound tree bears good fruit.

The will of God for us is always for our good. This is the reason why God invites us to obey His teaching and walk in His light. If we have been ignorant of the Word of God and His commandments the first reading today invites us to turn away from our own ways and seek the heart of God through His Word. At the same time through the Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus reminds us that we should be careful of false teachings that eliminate the reality of what it is to be a Christian by embracing Christ together with the cross, teachings that treat the commandments of God very lightly to justify the evil in the world. We are often tempted to give our own interpretation to the word of God and His teachings for our own conveniences. But as the Lord Jesus says, it is only the sound tree that bears good fruit. If we choose to be true to ourselves, true to God and true to His word, the Spirit of God will dwell within us. Let us pray with deep faith and hope so that we may bear the fruits of righteousness.

Prayer: Abba Father, lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in them. Amen.

Thursday June 23

Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Isaiah
49:1-6

Psalm
139:1-3, 13-15

Acts
13:22-26

Luke
1:57-66,80

Do we know our purpose and calling?

The Gospel proclamation speaks of the birth of John the Baptist. It made Elizabeth and Zechariah's lives blessed as the Lord had been wonderfully good to them to bless the couple with a child in their old age. It was a cause of great rejoicing to the neighbours and relatives, and the speech impediment that was removed from Zechariah immediately after professing the name of the baby would have been astonishingly marvelous. As St. John the Baptist grew up he fed upon locusts and wild honey and preached a Baptism of repentance. He never drank wine or strong drink. His attire had distinctive characters, unusually made of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. He was chosen by God to be the forerunner and to baptise Jesus in the river Jordan to fulfil all righteousness. He preached a baptism of repentance and he knew that he was set apart by God for a purpose. He knew he had to prepare people for the coming of Christ. Do we know our purpose and calling as we look forward for the second coming of our Lord?

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray that our spiritual eyes will be opened to grasp the gravity of our calling. Amen.

Friday June 24

Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Ezekiel
34:11-16

Psalm
23:1-6

Romans
5:5-11

Luke
15:3-7

God has poured out His love into our hearts.

Today's readings speak of the love of God as a shepherd's love; a love that is personal, that seeks out the lost, heals the abandoned, strengthens the weak and upholds the humble. While we were still sinners He died for our sins and gave us the potential to be changed into his likeness. As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we see here that the image of the Sacred Heart is intimately linked with the image of the Good Shepherd. In the first reading, God speaks to Ezekiel of how He Himself will tend the sheep of His flock: how He will 'gather them from foreign lands' and "lead them out from among the peoples". The Gospel proclamation extends this theme. It is the story of the lost sheep: but above all, it is the story of the Shepherd, who leaves the ninety-nine in search of the one. We are lost sheep: as individuals, as communities and as families. God seeks to reconcile us to Himself and loves us so much that He sends Jesus, the Good Shepherd, in search of us and brings us back to eternal pastures.

Prayer: Abba Father, we know and believe that there is no pit so deep that your love can't reach us still. We cling in prayer to your faithfulness. Amen.

Saturday June 25

Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lamentations
2:2,10-14,18-19

Psalm
74:1-7, 20-21

Luke
2:41-51

Let us trace our steps back to God.

When we deviate from our plans, we frantically wonder where God is through all of this. Amid confusion and disorientation, we seek God, frustrated that He is not where He should be. We read that Mary and Joseph worriedly searched for Jesus. We often do the same, as if it is God who is lost, and not us. When Jesus' parents finally found him at the temple, Jesus asks, "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?". The Gospel says that Mary pondered these words in her heart; so, must we today. Jesus is always exactly where He needs to be, fulfilling His Divine Will and eternal promises. It is we who get caught up and tend to lose sight of the perfect ways of the Father. Mary found the peace to endure His suffering, faith to await His resurrection, and hope that even in death, He is God. So, in confusion and anxiety, no longer should we believe that God has abandoned us or disappeared out of reach, but let us learn like Mary, to trace our steps back to Him, His heart and will, and join Him in the Father's House.

Prayer: Abba Father, create in us a heart like Mary's, to never forget that You are our perfect God in all circumstances. Amen.

Sunday June 26

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings
19:16,19-21

Psalm
16:1-2,5,7-11

Galatians
5:1,13-18

Luke
9:51-62

Being led by the Spirit.

In today's first reading Elijah throws his cloak over Elisha as a sign of Elisha's call. Elisha responds by destroying his plow, yolk and oxen thus severing his connection with his old life and dedicating himself entirely to the service of God. He had made up his mind resolutely and went ahead with that decision.

The Gospel proclamation also tells us that our Lord Jesus made up his mind to go to Jerusalem. Along the way to Jerusalem, our Lord had a few discouraging experiences of people not willing to go by His plan or accept His invitation but our Lord Jesus continued his journey to be tried, crucified and killed.

We may be called to dedicating our life to the Lord in various degrees of calling. Some of us are called to sever ties completely with the world and move forward and others to a lesser degree. When we are insecure about God's ability to provide for us, the true extent of severing of ties may not take place. As Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem he faced the prospect of death and rejection. There was even no place for him to lay his head. Just because he chose to sacrifice His life, it did not mean that people around had to respond positively to His decision. Often we assume that the world has to bow to us when we become preachers, religious or ministry stars. We expect people to respect us, give us a discount or preference or repay us for our service. But we should not expect such responses. When we are unrecognised or sidelined it dampens our ego to such an extent that we become bitter and revengeful.

That is where Galatians chide us to walk according to the Spirit and not give in to the desires of the flesh. Even after choosing our Lord as our King and Saviour there may be occasions where we have not severed ties from our past and we may be responding in the ways of the world. Only a quiet time with the Lord will reveal to us our weaknesses and failures. Often we struggle with links to relationships that may be good but not up building. Or when the rough tide of life has settled and life becomes a little easy we begin to let down our guard and try to snatch back our version of freedom, from God. That freedom is 'giving free rein' to the desires of the flesh. Let us be reminded of what the letter to the Galatians tells us. It says that the desires of the flesh WAR against the desires of the spirit. Though the attractions may come in beautiful shades they may hide sinister repercussions that can lead us to a war in the spiritual realms and a conflict. Let our Saviour counsel us, give us rest and lead us in our journey.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for the grace to make a full commitment of my life to our Lord Jesus and not make partial promises. Amen.

Monday June 27

Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Amos
2:6-10,13-16

Psalm
50:16-23

Matthew
8:18-22

Seek first the Kingdom of God.

Prophet Amos uses harsh words to admonish the Israelites. As we look around us, it looks like nothing much has changed. The poor are still victims of human trafficking and slavery. What is our role in the world? Are we quiet in the face of such evil? Or do we take the necessary steps to ensure justice for the migrant about to be deported? The child who might be imprisoned for stealing food? The Lord always cared for the victims of oppression, let us also imitate his love for the less fortunate and marginalized people in our society. In today's Gospel proclamation the Lord is reminding us that we need to follow him without any excuses. We may have 101 reasons and excuses, but our priority should be the Kingdom of God. When we make choices in our day to day lives, do we seek to glorify God or to satisfy our pleasures only? Let us shift our focus back to the Lord Jesus who died for our sake, so that we may inherit the Kingdom of God. Let us in humility share his love with others.

Prayer: Abba Father, I desire to seek your Kingdom above all else.
Amen.

Tuesday June 28

Memorial of Saint Irenaeus, Bishop, Martyr and Doctor of the Church

Amos
3:1-8; 4:11-12

Psalm
5:4-8

Matthew
8:23-27

Faith and trust.

Saint Irenaeus became Bishop of Lyon upon the martyrdom of the previous Bishop and fought against heresies and schisms. He strongly supported the authority of the Church and the Pope as the unbroken line of authority. Pope Francis named him as the Doctor of Unity, since he worked for the unity of the Church. Today's first reading tells us that sin leads to punishment but that God reveals his plans to his prophets in advance and gives the examples of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Israelites, who were protected, did not return to Him. We are exhorted to prepare to meet our God. The psalm tells us that God hates evildoers but will extend mercy to those who worship Him. The Gospel proclamation recounts the disciples' panic and terror during the storm which threatened to swamp the boat while Jesus was asleep. He chastises them for their lack of faith and stills the wind and sea, astonishing the disciples. We too need faith that with Jesus in our lives, we will be protected from being swamped by life's storms and tempests.

Prayer: Abba Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts to fortify our faith to withstand the trials and tribulations of life. Amen.

Wednesday June 29

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

Acts
12:1-11

Psalm
34:2-9

2 Timothy
4:6-8,17-18

Matthew
16:13-19

Who is Jesus Christ to me?

Today's readings prompt us to re-think, who Christ really is to us. He is Lord and Saviour. As I ponder more...He is the way, the truth and the life. In the depths of my valley, there is no other way I would rather take for all other 'ways' lead to destruction. I see the mountain before me and ask 'where does my help come from?'. My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121). He is the only 'way' that leads me to victory, I will wait on Him. When the world fills me with lies, God's word remains true, the rock that breaks the deception in my heart. Christ is the unchanging 'truth'. When sorrow fills my heart and I want to break down into despair and self-pity, I will remember; He is 'Life' in all its fullness. As I partake of Him in the Eucharist, His life becomes mine. I am set free from bondage. Who is Jesus to me? He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, there is no other. As we celebrate the feast of the two greatest apostles, let us ask for God's grace to be witnesses to Jesus, who is the only Way to the Father.

Prayer: Abba Father, I need the Lord Jesus more than ever, may he come into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Thursday June 30

Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Amos
7:10-17

Psalm
19:8-11

Matthew
9:1-8

Overriding circumstances through God's Word.

Paralysis has gripped our fallen world. Wars, chaos, shortages, starvation, economic woes, all a result of the ravages of sin, inherent in us. We contribute to its cause. God in His great compassion, mercy and love, sent His Son into this paralyzed world to proclaim His words of comfort and security. His commands echo continuously through time and space. The Lord Jesus spoke and continuously speaks through the scriptures and the authority of the church. There are also many other things the Lord did and said and is continuously doing and saying. As St John said, 'If they were to be recorded, the world itself would not be able to contain the books that would be written.' The Words of Life are written that we may have healing of our paralysis. When my parents spoke and asked things from me, I responded and felt good about it. They loved me despite my naughtiness. Their words of assurance gave inner peace. Life was pleasant as a result. How much more if God's word is listened to and taken note of.

Prayer: Abba Father, your child is wanting to listen to you even though the noise of the world deafens unto paralysis. Amen.

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Pentecost

Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Church. Pentecost is a Greek word, and it means "50th day". Fifty days after Easter Sunday, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, and the beginning of their Earthly ministry to make disciples of all nations.

At Pentecost, the disciples were gathered in a room. Jews from all over the world were gathered with Peter, the leader of the Apostles. At this time, a great wind blew and a flame appeared as a tongue of fire, which split itself into many individual flames above the heads of all those present. The Holy Spirit came upon these people and each began to speak in tongues. Despite the fact many had no common language, they were perfectly able to understand one another. Peter then called all those present to be baptized and about three thousand people were baptized that day.

The symbols of Pentecost are the flame, wind, and the dove, which represents the Holy Spirit. The color of Pentecost is red and the priest wears red vestments on this day.

On the day of Pentecost when the seven weeks of Easter had come to an end, Christ's Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and communicated as a divine person: of his fullness, Christ, the Lord, pours out the Spirit in abundance. The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out on his members, builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church. She is the sacrament of the Holy Trinity's communion with people.

Come Holy Spirit Prayer:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

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.

