



RISEN LORD
COMMUNITY



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



St. Rosalia

Memorial: September 04



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

SEPTEMBER
2022

“Don’t spend your energies
on things that generate worry,
anxiety and anguish.
Only one thing is necessary:
Lift up your spirit and love God”

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

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From the homily of Pope Francis for Pentecost - 5 June 2022

The Spirit makes us see everything in a new way, with the eyes of Jesus. In the great journey of life, the Spirit teaches us where to begin, what paths to take, and how to walk.

The Spirit points out to us the starting point of the spiritual life. What is it? Jesus speaks of it in the first verse of the Gospel, when he says: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (v. 15). If you love me, you will keep.... This is the "logic" of the Spirit. We tend to think the exact opposite: if we keep the commandments, we will love Jesus. We tend to think that love comes from our keeping, our fidelity and our devotion. Yet the Spirit reminds us that without love as our basis, all the rest is in vain. And that love comes not so much from our abilities, but as his gift. He teaches us to love and we have to ask for this gift. The Spirit of love pours love into our hearts, he makes us feel loved and he teaches us how to love. He is the "motor" of our spiritual lives. He set it in motion within us. But if we do not begin from the Spirit, or with the Spirit or through the Spirit, we will get nowhere.

Brothers and sisters, let us sit at the school of the Holy Spirit, so that he can teach us all things. Let us invoke him each day, so that he can remind us to make God's gaze upon us our starting point, to make decisions by listening to his voice, and to journey together as Church, docile to him and open to the world. Amen.

Thursday September 1

22nd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
3:18-23

Psalm
24:1-6

Luke
5:1-11

Worldly wisdom and the call of God.

In today's first reading, St. Paul tells us that worldly wisdom is useless to God who knows what our thoughts are; and that worldly things are our "servants" in our spiritual journey of belonging to Christ and, through him, to God. We must be "fools" by worldly standards to become "wise" by spiritual standards. Implicit in this instruction is the requirement of faith in God; and total reliance on divine inspiration for our decisions. Today's Gospel proclamation exemplifies the difference between worldly wisdom and spiritual wisdom. Fishing expertise dictated the futility of putting out the nets after fruitless toil all night. Yet, following the instruction of Jesus, Simon and his fishing companions did put out into the deep and were rewarded with such an abundance of catch that their nets began to tear and their boats were in danger of sinking. The shock led Simon to acknowledge his sinfulness but his fear was dispelled by Jesus and at His request to "follow" Him, he and his companions left all their worldly possessions and followed Him.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to be foolish to become wise.
Amen.

Friday September 2

22nd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
4:1-5

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

Luke
5:33-39

Let us examine our conscience.

How blessed are we if we can say the words of St. Paul from today's first reading: "My conscience does not accuse me of anything". Is our conscience clear before God? Do we still have hidden areas of sin and shame which weigh us down? It is said that sin thrives in secret. The more we hide our true self, the more lies we would have to say to maintain the false image. In Christ, we can be who we are, we do not have to be ashamed. As we give the truth of our hearts let us give everything over to the Lord in perfect surrender. Then the Lord will empower us in his Holy Spirit, so that we can become authentic witnesses of the Gospel. As we wait for the return of Jesus, the bridegroom, let us be ready, for we do not know when he will come. If we are honest, sincere, genuine, true and authentic, we have nothing to fear. The Lord who sees even the secret intentions of our hearts will reward us accordingly. Let us continue to hold on to Jesus, trusting in his mercy, love and grace.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to sincerely follow your commandments.
Amen.

Saturday September 3

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

1 Corinthians
4:6-15

Psalm
145:17-21

Luke
6:1-5

Everything we have is a gift from God.

It is tempting to apply the words of the first reading to politicians and leaders, but it applies to all of us. In one way or another we often compare ourselves and boast of our accomplishments, even in ministry. There is a spark of pride and joy when someone appreciates our preaching, our music or other forms of serving in the community. As St. Paul says, everything we have, we have received as gifts from God alone. So how can we boast? Instead we are to give all glory to God, because it is he who has empowered us, transformed us and moulded us into who we are today. It is also possible that we sometimes are like the pharisees seeking to follow the letter of the law, instead of the spirit of the law. We have been given true freedom in Christ, so let us not burden ourselves and others into following obsolete laws. Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, he is the Master of our lives, let us seek only to please him by loving God and loving our neighbours as we love ourselves.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for transforming me.
Amen.

Sunday September 4

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom
9:13-18

Psalm
90:3-6.12-17

Philemon
9-10,12-17

Luke
14:25-33

True happiness in Christ.

These days we are facing so many pressures from every side. We find it hard to answer unbelievers as well as the questions of our hearts. Today's first reading from the book of Wisdom reiterates this fact, of how our soul is weighed down by the issues of this world, those that affect us in the physical realm. If we cannot and do not have the insight to grasp this world how much more our ignorance on things of the spiritual, of things unseen? If we pray for wisdom, God's Word assures us that he will bless us richly with wisdom. I feel that the more we invest our time to study God's Word, the more we will understand, the more will things seem clearer.

The Word of God which we have easy access to, is also Spirit as said in John 6:63. Today's first reading says how God first sent wisdom and then the Holy Spirit and this directed humans on the right path. So do we have the tools it takes to maneuver this life? Do we have wisdom? Are we guided by the Holy Spirit to make Godly choices?

The Psalmist says that knowing the shortness of life is to have wisdom of heart. How does that work? The more we come to realize how temporary this life is, the more every situation in life takes on a different perspective. Anger, bitterness, revenge, selfishness and the mere decision to "hold on" to such seems futile. In the end this route only leads to sickness and disease and an overall sense of sadness. Jesus himself says if we hold on to life we lose it. We should let go of wanting to hold on to the issues that we think will give us happiness, or else we will lose happiness altogether.

Today's Gospel proclamation focuses on the commitment it takes to be a disciple. The Oxford dictionary defines a disciple as "a person who believes and follows the teaching of a religious or political leader." That makes all of us disciples doesn't it? Not just the twelve apostles of Jesus. What is Jesus speaking to us in today's Gospel proclamation? He says in no uncertain terms that we have to be prepared to leave all our loved ones and our comforts to follow him. This means we have to live uncompromised lives. There should be no second thought to do the right thing, which is what the Word says about any situation we are facing. The Word has to be the ultimate authority in our lives – the Word is Jesus.

All the examples given – of the follow through in building a house or a King going into war all display the resolve we should have to stay and keep our focus on Jesus. He says clearly that we cannot be half hearted in our journey with him – it will only lead to our own downfall. We have to be committed completely.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with your goodness, that we may rejoice in you.
Amen.

Monday September 5

23rd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
5:1-8

Psalm
5:5-7,12

Luke
6:6-11

Let us desire to have the mind of Christ.

We know that human behaviour is influenced by multiple factors. We tend to react to the same trigger differently in different circumstances. Jesus was being watched by the religious elite, waiting to pick that one slip of tongue or one action contrary to the law of Moses. Didn't the Lord know their motives? Of course He did. Yet He always looked to the Father to receive guidance for His words and actions. He saw the compassion in the Father's heart towards the man with a shrivelled right hand. With that disability, he had come to the synagogue to worship God. Overflowing with gut wrenching compassion, that went beyond mere sympathy, Jesus fulfilled the Father's desire. What a powerful union, that exceeded all desire of self preservation! How about us? Are we more mindful about our self image and status, when it comes to doing the will of the Father? Are we insensitive when lives and families around us are being destroyed? The Lord is inviting us to be focused, aligning our hearts and minds with His.

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for boldness and freedom that comes from the sure knowledge of who we are in Christ. Amen.

Tuesday September 6

23rd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
6:1-11

Psalm
149:1-6, 9

Luke
6:12-19

We are called to serve others.

Today's Gospel proclamation gives us a summary of the powerful ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He proclaims the good news, heals the sick and exorcises people possessed by demons, demonstrating supernatural power flowing from him. Jesus selected the twelve apostles to continue this divine mission. But, the secret to it all, is revealed in the first few verses of today's Gospel proclamation. We find the Lord Jesus spending the night in prayer, in communion with His father. In the same way, as Christians, we have been selected and called by name, to carry out the mission of Jesus to the ends of the earth. But, our efforts would be in vain if our deeds are not anointed by divine power. Therefore, the Lord Jesus invites us today to spend time in His presence so that He may shower upon us His mercy and love. Let us wait upon him to empower us with His Holy Spirit who will direct and guide us to be instruments in service to the Lord. Our service towards our brothers and sisters would then be pleasing in God's sight.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may do your will and serve you. Amen.

Wednesday September 7

23rd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
7:25-31

Psalm
45:11-12,14-17

Luke
6:20-26

Focusing on what is eternal.

In today's Gospel proclamation we see Jesus calling the poor, the hungry and those who are weeping as blessed. Isn't this the opposite of what the world tells us? From our school days we have learnt the importance of pursuing wealth and fame. There is nothing wrong in earning a fair wage and having a good standard of living. But we should not become obsessed with it. Because in our pursuit for money, often we lose sight of the eternal Kingdom of God. Our titles, possessions and fame will leave us the moment we take our last breath. What remains is the currency of the Kingdom. How have we treated the poor people in our neighbourhood? Do we feed the hungry? Do we give drink to the thirsty? Are we sensitive to those who are weeping? There are many victims of injustice, hatred and corruption, can we reflect God's presence into their lives by journeying with them? Or do we take the easy option of ignoring them, thinking that someone else will help them? Let us become true disciples and care for the people around us.

Prayer: Abba Father, I seek your Kingdom alone.
Amen.

Thursday September 8

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Micah
5:1-4

Psalm
13:6ab, 6c

Matthew
1:1-16, 18-23

The joy of Mary's birth.

Today we celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nine months after the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is also considered as one of the most ancient Marian feasts. Hence, it is a great occasion to ponder on the importance of Mother Mary's life to all of humanity. The way she lived her life with unwavering faith through most difficult times is the greatest virtue we can learn from her life. Pope Francis, recognizes Mary as an icon of wisdom, strength, courage, and joyful hope. Through Mary's unconditional "yes" to God, he encourages us to say "yes" to God's calling today. Mother Mary was unique in human history. She was blessed among women. Saint Augustine in his writings, connects Mother Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work, it is an occasion to be rejoiced, "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." If Jesus has brought the fullness of salvation, Mary is its dawning.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to adhere to your plan and give us the strength to obey your calling. Amen.

Friday September 9

23rd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
9:16-19,22-27

Psalm
84:3-6,12

Luke
6:39-42

What's the log in my eye?

It is a common weakness to judge others while not recognising our own faults and the need for God's mercy. As a spouse I am often quick to play the blame game and criticize my spouse when I could be guilty of similar actions. As a parent I am eager to advice my children but slow to live out that advice. As a friend and neighbour, I show piety and generosity to those around me yet in my own home and work place I act grudgingly and selfishly. The Lord was direct when he used the word, 'hypocrite'. Hypocrisy means 'gross insincerity'. It is like having a log in my eye but making a huge declaration about the speck in my neighbor's eye. In today's Gospel proclamation we read a parable which explains how often we are on a quest to remove the speck from others, while failing to see the log in ours. Sincerity is not a thought, but a response to prayer, where the Holy Spirit can give us grace to see our own heart condition and eyes that see Christ in every person, even the most difficult ones.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me new vision that I may see you in every person and new ears that I may listen and not judge. Amen.

Saturday September 10

23rd Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
10:14-22

Psalm
116:12-13, 17-18

Luke
6:43-49

I am coming back to the heart of worship.

We were created to worship God. Worship is to bring our entire life, our thoughts, our emotions, our being, in complete submission to God. Every moment of our lives we are called to live in this posture of worship. But weak as we are, many times we fail and fall, instead of worshipping the creator, we worship his creation. And anytime we place anything no matter how good, above our relationship with God, we are worshipping an idol in our hearts. The fruit our lives produce will show us the position of our hearts. When we are in the place of right worship and our lives are centred on Christ; We are in him, and his Word dwells within us; He is in us; we are able to produce fruit that gives life; the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We come to this place of constant worship by building the foundation of dwelling on the word of God, by abiding in prayer, and by being strengthened by the Sacraments. When we face tragedy and turmoil in our lives, our foundations will be tested. May we be found to be true worshippers of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us hearts that seek you, help us to abide in you, may we pour out our lives as an offering at your feet. Amen.

Sunday September 11

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus
32:7-11,13-14

Psalms 51:
3-4,12-13,17,19

1 Timothy
1:12-17

Luke
15:1-32

Return to God in repentance.

The Gospel proclamation talks about the well known parable of the prodigal son. One could say that it is the greatest short story ever written. Because it teaches many lessons to us.

The youngest son went away from his father, he squandered his wealth in loose living, he faced a famine and then had to work in a pigs farm, the most unthinkable job for a Jew. He ended up with nothing to eat. Isn't this what we go through when we drift away from God?

St. Teresa of Avila describes in her book 'The Interior Castle', the state of the soul of a person who is in mortal sin as, "no night can be so dark, no gloom nor blackness can compare to its obscurity." The state of our inner being can sometimes be reflected externally as physical sickness and also as emotional problems. Yet the love of the Lord allows a sinner to turn back, like the son who finally came to his senses and decided to go back to his father.

The younger son in this story had deeply insulted and hurt the father by asking the inheritance while the father was still alive. The father in the parable reveals to us the heart of God, who is waiting for the lost son or daughter to come back and be restored. How many times have we given up on Christ and gone against him for petty things in life? But God loves us and is waiting for us to turn from our sinful ways. Today we receive a new opportunity to answer the call of our Heavenly Father.

Many of us have followed the 4 steps retreat and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We have seen how God restored us, but have we now become like the elder son, unable to understand or even bitter when we see a sinner being restored. Unable to accept the holiness of the other, whom we may have known in the past.

In the first reading we see how the people whom God saved from slavery, when they lost their connection with God, quickly bowed down to other gods.

Today we need to be aware of this danger, though we were once anointed by the Holy Spirit, we can easily lose sight of God, unless we persevere in prayer and frequent the sacraments, repenting for our sins, so as not to lose our connection with God. Our circumstances in life may change, we may go through crises yet we need to give God the first place.

St. Paul in the first letter to Timothy reminds us that the Lord Jesus came into this world to save sinners. Since we are all sinners, this is indeed good news. Let us be hopeful because Jesus makes all things new.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to hold on to you always.
Amen.

Monday September 12

24th Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
11:17-26, 33

Psalms
40:7-10, 17

Luke
7:1-10

Walking together as a community.

Our earthly life is not meant to be in isolation, it is built on relationship with God and people. Today's Gospel proclamation tells us about the centurion who not only had astonishing faith, but also deep compassion. The miracle that unfolds illustrates the power of Christ. It shows us the power of God revealed through the vessel of community and friendship. In the First reading, Paul also emphasises the power of Christ's body. The body of Christ is not only Christ's body given in sacrifice, but also Christ's body on earth, the church. Paul instils in us an awareness of others. At times, we are in the position of the centurion, where we are called to stand in the gap for another. At other times, we may be in the slave's position, too weak to seek God using our own strength. We are not lone soldiers, but we belong to a community that serves the Lord. Let us remind ourselves of the power of the body of Christ - the power of intercession, and the power in reaching out to people that God places in our life as we walk this journey together.

Prayer: Abba Father, release your spirit of compassion upon your church. May we be bold and active in our love for each other. Amen.

Tuesday September 13

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

1 Corinthians
12:12-14, 27-31

Psalms
100:1-5

Luke
7:11-17

We are his people, the sheep of his flock.

The first reading tells us that we are the body of Christ, and each one of us individually is a member of it. There is a large number of instruments in an orchestra, of which the smallest is a piccolo. Once during a rehearsal the musician who played the piccolo felt insignificant and kept idling while all other instruments were played. But the conductor realized this and asked why the piccolo sound was missing. This made the musician understand that together, in a variety of different instruments even the smallest is equally important. It is for a particular purpose they are put together to be combined in harmony. Everyone's role is important when building the church, the body of Christ. We are vital parts that have to function together, therefore we are called to give our best. The Gospel proclamation shows God's compassionate heart for the weak and the vulnerable. God wipes our tears, feels our pain and rushes to soothe, ease and bind our wounds. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and our pain will not go unnoticed by him.

Prayer: Abba Father, make us understand our uniqueness in building the church, that we may know we are here for a purpose. Amen.

Wednesday September 14

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Numbers
21:4-9

Psalm
78:1-2,34-38

John
3:13-17

Lord, by your Cross you have redeemed the world.

Isn't it fascinating how we turn to God with all our heart, strength and might when things go bad for us? Often we get on with our lives during good times. When facing challenges, we dedicate more time to pray, offer sacrifices and do penance hoping for a change of circumstances for the better. This was the same that happened with the Israelites when they were dying of snake bites as a punishment for their own rebellion against God: However sinful they had been, they chose to repent and turn to God. They chose to fix their gaze on a symbol of the thing that brought them pain and death because God directed them and in doing so experienced healing. In the same way, on this feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we are being gifted with a symbol to fix our gaze on. A symbol of shame and suffering from a secular point of view, transformed into a life-giving reality in the hand of God, offering us the gift of forgiveness, healing, love and mercy. Let us embrace the Holy Cross, the sign of our salvation.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus who made salvation a reality for us. Amen.

Thursday September 15

Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

Hebrews
5:7-9

Psalm
31:2-6,15-16,20

John
19:25-27

Mary, the mother of us all.

Let us imagine this scene: Mother Mary, looking at Jesus hanging on the cross. She could have reached out to touch him from where she was, but the guards would not allow her. In our lives, often God seems so unreachable. But the blessed Mother was determined to stand near Jesus to partake of the suffering he endured. The Woman who stood by his cross only wanted to console her flesh and blood, the son she nurtured in her womb. She brought the Son of God into the world, but now it seems like she would lose him. But Jesus knowing her situation, wanted to make sure that his Mother is taken care of once he leaves. This is the reason why he asked John to take care of her and for the blessed Mother to accept his care and protection. What an amazing plan God had, he gave human nature to his Son through the blessed Mother. In turn, she became the mother of us all. This act of salvation is difficult to fathom by our human minds. God who is mystery, mysteriously brought about this amazing act of grace.

Prayer: Abba Father, we long for your amazing grace.
Amen.

Friday September 16

Memorial of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, Martyrs

1 Corinthians
15:12-20

Psalm
17:1,6-8,15

Luke
8:1-3

Power of the resurrection.

Even today there are people who question the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Christians, it is a fundamental belief that we profess. As St. Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty." Christianity will be reduced to a mere social movement. Our faith in the Risen Lord is what motivates our thoughts, words and actions. Let us examine our hearts today, have we allowed the power of the resurrection to transform us? As we journey with the Lord, have we imposed restrictions on God's action in our lives. Do we seek his mind and will before we take decisions? Are our actions inspired by his Word? Let us seek to please God alone, in whatever we do. When we do that, the power of the resurrection will radiate to those around us, and others will also be inspired to follow the Risen Lord. May our voices be raised in praising the mighty things that God has done in our lives and in the lives of those around us. May we become authentic witnesses to the resurrection of Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, transform me so that I may become a true witness to your love. Amen.

Saturday September 17

24th Week in Ordinary Time

1 Corinthians
15:35-37, 42-49

Psalm
56:10-14

Luke
8:4-15

What you sow cannot sprout until it dies.

Life is an invaluable gift that has been given to us. It becomes more meaningful when it builds and transforms many other lives. Yet life never stops throwing challenges or situations that are difficult to deal with. Sickesses, financial troubles, relationship issues and pressures outside our control are a few to mention. Today in the Gospel proclamation we are reminded that the real purpose of our life is to yield fruit for those who are around us. This sounds absurd as the world today does not teach us to sweat for others. The world does not teach us to share what we have with others. It defines success on its own terms. What our Lord Jesus teaches us is exactly the opposite of the teaching of this world: to die for others. He set an example by transforming His earthly life into a more glorious life through his resurrection. Today we are invited to follow him in his footsteps. To be soil, to accept the word of God which will eventually lead us to be a Christ like person: a person who yields heavenly fruits.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to retain the word of God when we hear it and put it into action to fulfil our purpose on this earth. Amen.

Sunday September 18

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos
8:4-7

Psalm
113:1-2, 4-8

1 Timothy
2:1-8

Luke
16:1-13

See the good in everyone.

The prophet Amos criticizes the people who are powerful, rich and at the top of society for ignoring, trampling and cheating the poor for their own benefit.

In today's Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus speaks to us about the dishonest steward who was put in charge of managing the master's business. He failed to do so out of selfishness to enrich himself and cheated those whom he was supposed to care for.

The master finds out and is going to let the steward go. The steward realizes that he did something wrong and has to face consequences in his life - he will lose his job. He uses his power to change the outcome of his consequence by sacrificing the commission he was to gain. The master then praises this dishonest steward for being prudent.

The steward intentionally did something wrong and at the same time was capable of doing good. Hence we cannot categorize people as totally good or totally bad. The truth is that we are all imperfect. It is easy to see the wrong in others and difficult to see the good – but as disciples of Christ we are called to see the good in everyone – the gold in them, just like our Lord Jesus would.

Try drawing a circle with each of your hands at the same time – you will be able to do this. Now try drawing a circle with one hand and a square with the other at the same time – you cannot do this. This is the principle in today's Gospel proclamation – we cannot serve two masters simultaneously. We have to make a choice if we are to serve God or money – money is not just wealth but anything that we turn into idols and have more regard for.

God invites us to reflect on his generous love and care for others in every possible way in this world, every day of our lives, specially during challenging times.

St. Paul tells us that “This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”. We are able to do so through our Lord Jesus and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So let us examine the roots of our hearts today. Are we rooted in worldly treasures and the love of money which is a root of all kinds of evil? Or are we rooted in God our Father, our creator from whom all good things come. Let us look deep into our hearts and make the right choice, because as the Lord said: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and lose their soul?” (Mark 8:36)

Prayer: Abba Father, mould me and use me for your glory.

Amen.

Monday September 19

25th Week in Ordinary Time

Proverbs
3:27-34

Psalm
15:2-5

Luke
8:16-18

Let your light shine brightly.

Today's Gospel proclamation talks of the lamp that is placed on a lamp stand. God made us to be bearers of light in this world. We have been entrusted with a mission from God. Along the way, at times we tend to forget that our light needs to shine. We tend to be like the lamp that is covered up. Our light does not shine, when we do not do what God expects us to do. We often get distracted with the ways of the world. Materialism, greed, jealousy, anger and hatred take over. This is when we start to lose focus and react from our flesh. The more we live in our flesh the less we produce good fruit. God has set in our path people who need to see the light, those who need to experience his love. They may not know the Lord but they know us. We may be the link that they need to know and feel the love of God. Are we being the people God wants us to be? Are we shining his light into darkness? Are we producing good fruits? We can be the light when we are connected to God, and shine his light where there is darkness.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to be connected to you so that I can be the light you want me to be. Amen.

Tuesday September 20

Memorial of Saints Andrew Kim, Paul Chong and Companions, Martyrs

Proverbs
21:1-6, 10-13

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

Luke
8:19-21

Am I a disciple or a devotee?

Who am I? Am I a disciple or a devotee of Jesus? This is the indirect question in today's Gospel proclamation. A disciple is one who is totally committed to the Master's words and deeds. Once he or she is aligned with the word of God, they are closely connected to the Master. How often am I connected to my Master? How often are my words and deeds in compliance with my Master? Or am I living according to my own whims and fancies? The prime focus of a disciple is only to do what was taught by the Master. Let us ask ourselves, am I able to follow what I was taught by Jesus? Am I able to call myself as a sister or brother of Jesus? If so, I am a disciple. If I cannot do so, I do not have to worry, because Jesus is at the doorstep eagerly calling me to be his disciple from now on. All we have to do is to follow the footsteps of our Master and Saviour. Of course at times we may fail. But no matter how many times we fail, we can get up and follow the Master in true discipleship.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to connect with you daily.
Amen.

Wednesday September 21

Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Ephesians
4:1-7, 11-13

Psalm
19:2-5

Matthew
9:9-13

Jesus loves everyone.

The Lord reminds us, that he is with us no matter who we are, his love is for everyone. He is a peace maker, his arms are wide open, waiting to embrace us. Often we do not accept his embrace because we think our sinfulness is a barrier to reach him, but he himself tells us, that he did not come for the righteous but for sinners. What a privilege for sinners like us. If we look at the church history many great saints had a sinful past but after they encountered the love of Jesus, they changed. The Holy Spirit took control of their lives and they became saints. We cannot become saints overnight, we need time because we are weak and are tempted to fall back to our sinful nature, therefore, we need the Holy Spirit to walk this journey, only then we will become strong in the Lord. When we start to spend time with him our sinful nature will gradually melt like wax and we will become more like Christ. Let us take this step in faith, no matter what we are facing right now, let us open our hearts to the Lord and invite him into our lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be transformed and become more like Jesus.
Amen.

Thursday September 22

25th Week in Ordinary Time

Ecclesiastes
1:2-11

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

Luke
9:7-9

Jesus, the Son of God.

In today's Gospel proclamation we see that people found accepting Jesus as the Son of God was so difficult that they tried to come up with other explanations. Many thought that Jesus must be someone who had come back to life, perhaps John the Baptist or another prophet. Some suggested that he was Elijah, the great prophet who had not died but had been taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. Few found the correct answer, as Peter did. Many people today still have difficulty accepting Jesus as the fully human yet fully divine Son of God. People are still trying to find alternate explanations such as a great prophet, a radical political leader, a self-deceived rabble-rouser. None of these explanations can account for Jesus' miracles or specially his glorious resurrection. In the end, the attempts to explain Jesus away are far more difficult to believe than the truth. When everyone pointed out to my mother the difficulties of bringing up a child, she chose to raise up the child trusting in Jesus. Let us also listen to God not the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the eyes of Peter as he saw Jesus in glory, that we may reflect it to others. Amen.

Friday September 23

Memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest (Padre Pio)

Ecclesiastes
3:1-11

Psalm
144:1-4

Luke
9:18-22

Discovering what God has done.

Jesus stepped out from eternity into the confines of time and space. He entered the earth, a formless wasteland where darkness covered the abyss. Sin ravaged everything and death was the consequence. Death however, does not exist in eternity. God in His love for us, wanted us to live with Him. He sent His Son for us to share in His glorious life. As I write this reflection, I see long queues for fuel wind their way, for a mile or two past my house. In time to come all this will be a fleeting memory. People from different walks of life converge, sharing meals and a shared partnership in their struggle. Every human activity and experience transforming the depths, from imperfection to perfection. From this perishable body putting on what is imperishable; mortal to immortality. Our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that never die. We step into eternity beyond the confines of time and space. The formless wasteland, where darkness reigned gives way to Paradise and the glory of God. Death and despair swallowed up in victory.

Prayer: Abba Father, you give us victory through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Saturday September 24

25th Week in Ordinary Time

Ecclesiastes
11:9--12:8

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

Luke
9:43-45

What is preventing us from grasping what Jesus says?

A week ago a colleague passed away after a brief illness. He lived in a beautiful home with ample garden space and a lush green canopy. It even contained a pond. As I stood there condoling his wife, I realised that he owned it all but now he was gone and it would pass on into new hands. The rude realisation was that we are temporary and life will go on. Today's readings remind us of that reality and advise us to enjoy our youth and look to our maker in gratitude because time will pass quickly but surely our fate awaits us. But it is not as sad as it seems for the Word tells us that our spirit will return to God who gave us life. If we spend our days in prayer we will carry the right perspective. While the disciples were amazed at all our Lord said, they were caught up in that phase of popularity and power. Subsequently when Jesus spoke about his impending death, they became livid and unable to grasp what He said. May the wisdom and comfort of God fill us today to accept the reality of life and death.

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for the grace to turn to you at every moment of our life and receive our perspective of life and death from you. Amen.

Sunday September 25

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos
6:1, 4-7

Psalm
146:7-10

1 Timothy
6:11-16

Luke
16:19-31

Caring for our brothers and sisters.

“Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.’ (Luke 16:25)

Psalm 146 opens a collection of five alleluia psalms or psalms of praise at the end of the book of Psalms. Each of these psalms starts and ends by encouraging everyone to “praise the Lord!”.

Psalm 146 applauds the good news that in the face of human weakness and death God remains faithful. What is more, God’s sovereignty from creation to eternity is committed to assisting those in deepest need and grimmest conditions.

In today’s second reading these are the instructions that St. Paul gives Timothy as he completes his letter to his true son in the faith. They are great for us today too. Scripture calls us to run away from sin and race to Christ. But how? What will inspire us, strengthen us, and empower us to finish our race? Consistent with St. Paul’s words of inspiration, the apostle never said, “just do it.” He always gave Christ-centered reasons and God-directed revelations to help the followers of Christ run their race with steadfastness.

The Gospel proclamation focuses on the reversal of fortunes that takes place after Lazarus and the rich man die. It links pain or comfort after death with how we treat the less fortunate around us, much like St. Matthew’s Gospel connects eternal life and punishment with how we treat the starved, the thirsty, strangers, the naked, the sick, and those in prison.

In this story, God’s everlasting judgment has everything to do with how we use our wealth in this life and whether we attend to those less fortunate in our midst. Our temptation is to enlighten away a story like this and to eliminate its blatant illustration of how God will eventually justify the cause of the poor. But the message has been clearly expressed. Like the rich man’s five brothers, we have been given all the warning we need.

Caring for the poor is not an option, it is a commandment. As the Lord has blessed and provided for us, we are also expected to provide for the less fortunate.

Let us bow in the presence of God, acknowledging that we are nothing without him, because we cannot even discern the meaning of the words of the Gospel, unless the Holy Spirit comes and opens our hearts to understand these divine secrets.

Prayer: Abba Father, enable us to see Jesus in the poor.
Amen.

Monday September 26

26th Week in Ordinary Time

Job
1:6-22

Psalm
17:1-3, 6-7

Luke
9:46-50

Let us become servant leaders.

In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus teaches us about servant leadership. He explains that whoever wishes to be the greatest should be the least of all or the servant of all and to be like little children. The hearts of children are simple and undivided. We should be humble as little children. Jesus always practiced what he preached. In John 13, Jesus gave the most dramatic demonstration of servant leadership by washing the feet of the disciples. Knowing that they will betray and reject him, Jesus became a servant to wash their feet. Jesus said to Peter, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (John 13:8). What the world teaches us is different from what Jesus taught. It was different even from the way in which the religious leaders lived and worked at that time. Jesus calls us to give servant leadership in our parishes, communities, workplaces and in our homes. To what extent we see it in religion today is a question but, on our part, we need to do what the Lord Jesus did and fulfil His will by becoming servant leaders.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to be a servant like Jesus and to always do your will. Amen.

Tuesday September 27

Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest

Job
3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23

Psalm
88:2-8

Luke
9:51-56

I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back.

We are familiar with the hymn: "I have decided to follow Jesus". It is said that these were the last words of a man from India, who was being marched to his death because he refused to deny his faith in Christ. This martyr was following the footsteps of Jesus his Master. Today's Gospel proclamation opens with the words; "When the days for Jesus to be taken up were fulfilled, He resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem." At the beginning of that journey Jesus is met with rejection from the Samaritans and it is in Jerusalem that Jesus is going to be finally rejected with condemnation, torture and death. Finally it will lead to his resurrection and ascension. Let us ask ourselves: Do I want to go with Jesus on this journey to Jerusalem, a place of rejection and pain? Wouldn't it be wiser to turn back and run away from what is uncomfortable and challenging? Jesus offers his followers not a bed of roses but a cross. In the face of darkness, confusion and uncertainty can I, like Jesus, resolutely be determined to journey to Jerusalem?

Prayer: Abba Father, I have decided to follow you. Help me to not turn back. Amen.

Wednesday September 28

26th Week in Ordinary Time

Job
9:1-12, 14-16

Psalm
88:10-15

Luke
9:57-62

Dive into deep waters.

In today's first reading we read about Job, a person who suffered unjustly. He was a good person and a faithful servant of the living God. He was tested severely; he lost his children, possessions and finally he suffered a dreaded skin disease. Worst of all was when his friends started to be critical about his faith and portrayed God to be unfaithful. However, even in this situation Job did not speak ill of God nor agreed with the critical comments of his friends. Job remained faithful to God and accepted everything from the hands of God. Often we tend to lose God when we are tested. We react towards people and lose faith when tribulations are high. We seek our own way out of troubles. Today's Gospel proclamation explains to us who we should become. We need to move beyond our capacity to become faithful disciples. This is God's expectation of a disciple. It is easy to leave our disturbed grounds and move away to find peace, yet, are we doing God's will? Let us reflect deeply and focus on following Jesus alone.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to leave my familiar shores and dive into deep waters, because my destiny is faithful discipleship. Amen.

Thursday September 29

Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels

Daniel
7:9-10, 13-14

Psalm
138:1-5

John
1:47-51

The heavens opened as the angels ascended and descended!

Today is the feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael the Archangels. Saint Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she was chosen to bear the son of God. Saint Michael is the archangel who led the heavenly battle. Saint Raphael was summoned for difficult problems; Tobit and Sarah encountered him. Daniel the prophet beautifully portrays his vision of heaven in a dream, a transcendental moment: seeing the Son of man receiving dominion, glory, and kingship. In St John's Gospel we see the encounter of Nathaniel a man of prayer, with Jesus. Jesus promises him the opened heavens, he will see the angels ascending and descending upon the son of God. Let us open our hearts to the revelation of Jesus, then a fire will begin to burn in us for our Saviour. Our desire to know him will burn even more brightly, eventually consuming us so that heaven will open for us. When we seek him with all our hearts in total surrender, heaven opens for us and we receive a transcendental experience of his holy presence.

Prayer: Abba Father, open the eyes of my heart so that I may see you in all your glory. Amen.

Friday September 30

Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Job
38:1,12-21; 40:3-5

Psalm
139:1-3,7-10,13-14

Luke
10:13-16

Allow God to lead our lives.

Where is the way to the home of light? And where does darkness dwell? When are we going to realise? So many signs, miracles, so much depth and vastness of God's creation. So much of evidence and proof, yet we are so slow to believe in God, so slow to trust in him, our faith is weak. When will we realise the truth? Both readings feel like a cry of God to return to the source of life and to repent. If only we follow God and walk in his footsteps, peace and joy will be in our hearts. Yet we are so slow to believe and we suffer. We live as if everything is our own, my rights, my privacy, my future. Our selfishness, our ego is destroying us and the world around us and we blame God for them. Today's reading is a call for repentance and to accept God's love. Often we try to control our lives, to do everything by our own strength. Then we fail and become unhappy. At times we cannot see a way out of our problems. Let us hold on to God and wait for his providence. Let the love and forgiveness of God flow through our lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, grant us true peace and joy that we long for.
Amen.

Prayer for the Synod on Synodality

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.
Amen.

Praise the Lord !

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St. Rosalia

Saint Rosalia was born in 1130 to a Norman noble family that claimed descent from Charlemagne. In her youth, her heart turned from earthly vanities to God.

She left her home and took up her abode in a cave. Tradition says that she was led to the cave by two angels. On the cave walls she wrote these words: "**I, Rosalia, daughter of Sinibald, Lord of Roses and Quisquina, have taken the resolution to live in this cave for the love of my Lord, Jesus Christ.**" She remained there entirely hidden from the world. She practiced great mortifications and lived in constant communion with God.

Afterward she transferred her abode to Mount Pellegrino in order to triumph entirely over the instincts of flesh and blood. She died alone in 1166, ending her strange and wonderful life unknown to the world.

1624 Plague

In 1624, a plague beset Palermo. During this hardship, Saint Rosalia reportedly appeared first to a sick woman, then to a hunter, to whom she indicated where her remains were to be found. She asked him to bring her bones to Palermo.

The hunter climbed the mountain and found her bones in the cave as described. He did what she had asked in the apparition. After her remains were carried around the city three times in procession, the plague ceased. After this Saint Rosalia was venerated as the patron saint of Palermo, and a sanctuary was built in the cave where her remains were discovered.

Saint Rosalia was proposed as the patron saint of evolutionary studies by G.E. Hutchinson. This was due to a visit he paid to a pool of water downstream from the cave where Saint Rosalia's remains were found, where he developed ideas based on observations of water boatman.

Feast

The feast of Saint Rosalia is on September. 4. Interestingly the devotion to Santa Rosalia is widespread among the large and mainly Hindu Tamil community of Sri Lankan origin settled in Palermo.

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.

