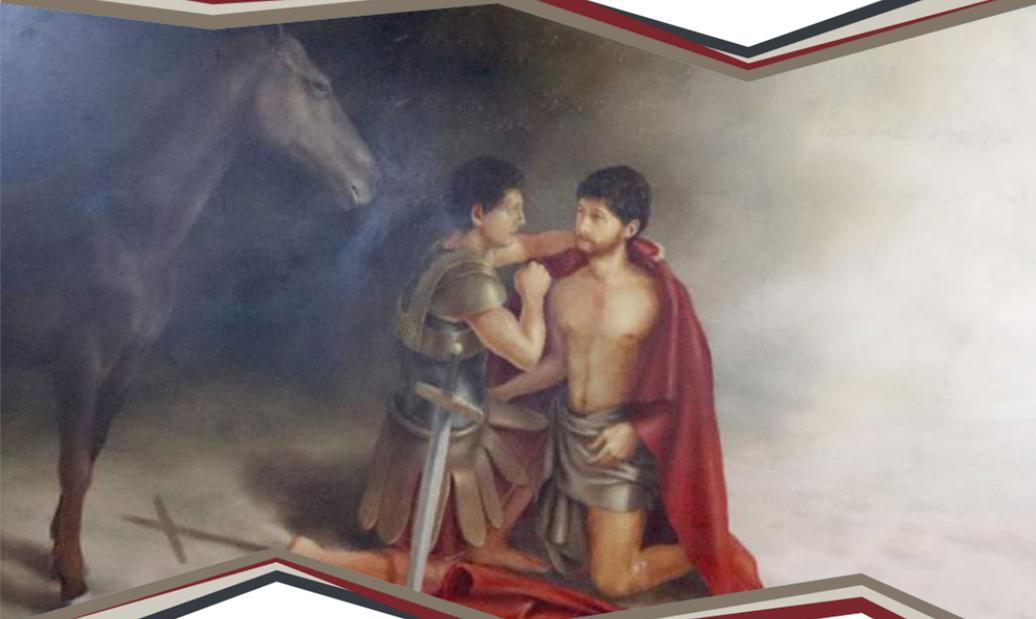


ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



St. Martin of Tours

Memorial: November 11



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

NOVEMBER
2022

“Everything, even sweeping,
scraping vegetables,
weeding a garden
and waiting on the sick
could be a prayer,
if it were offered to God.”

Saint Martin de Porres

Published by:

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

Editors

Lalith Perera
Louis Benedict

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The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. (Pope Saint Paul VI)

Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descends on Jesus of Nazareth at the moment of his baptism when the voice of the Father- "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased" - manifests in an external way the election of Jesus and his mission. Jesus is "led by the Spirit" to experience in the desert the decisive combat and the supreme test before beginning this mission. It is "in the power of the Spirit" that He returns to Galilee and begins His preaching at Nazareth, applying to Himself the passage of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me."...To the disciples whom He was about to send forth He says, breathing on them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

In fact, it is only after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that the apostles depart to all the ends of the earth in order to begin the great work of the Church's evangelization. Peter explains this event as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel: "I will pour out my spirit." Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can speak to the people about Jesus, the Son of God. Paul too is filled with the Holy Spirit before dedicating himself to his apostolic ministry, as is Stephen when he is chosen for the ministry of service and later on for the witness of blood. The Spirit, who causes Peter, Paul and the Twelve to speak, and who inspires the words that they are to utter, also comes down "on those who heard the word." It is in the "consolation of the Holy Spirit" that the Church increases. The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. (Excerpt from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*)

Tuesday November 1

Solemnity of All Saints

Revelation
7:2-4, 9-14

Psalm
24:1-6

1 John
3:1-3

Matthew
5:1-12

We are called to be saints!

As we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints, we are reminded of two important things: our identity and our mission. We are invited to reflect on who we are and why we are here on this earth. We might see ourselves in many different lights and even be tempted to be conformed to the definitions the world offers. But as St. John highlights in his first letter, we are beloved children of God, and our inheritance is heaven. The Saints whom we honour today have gone there ahead of us and left a trail behind them for us to follow. In the Gospel proclamation, our Lord Jesus offers us a sure formula to help us in our journey to sainthood. Today, we might be going through many hardships, carrying sorrow and pain within our hearts, struggling with worries and temptations, persecuted and insulted for our faith and have lost heart. Let the example of the holy ones who have walked the life's journey before us be our guiding light to endure through good and bad times alike. Let us seek their intercession.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to endure suffering with a heart of praise. Amen.

Wednesday November 2

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed

Wisdom
3:1-9

Psalm
23:1-6

Romans
6:3-9

Matthew
25:31-46

Eternal joy beyond the grave.

Today is the commemoration of all the faithful departed, commonly called "All Souls' Day". Surely there is a day for us all to leave this world. As Christians, death is the transit point where we enter eternal life. We are called to live this life as a preparation to enter into our eternal abode. We often forget and live as if we can be here forever. We need to prepare by feeding the hungry, giving a drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned and carrying out the corporal works of mercy. The saints who have gone before us, such as St. Teresa of Calcutta are shining examples. When we visit the homes, orphanages and schools founded by her congregation - Missionaries of Charity - we are inspired. Once when she was challenged by a critic as to how she was going to help thousands in Calcutta by herself alone, her response was "any great number has to start with one". Isn't this the attitude we need to have? Let us do our best for the poor and the suffering. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to make myself available to do you will.
Amen.

Thursday November 3

Optional Memorial of Saint Martin de Porres, Religious

Philippians
3:3-8

Psalm
105:2-7

Luke
15:1-10

Born to become a new creation.

All our ways however commendable they maybe, are nothing compared to knowing Jesus Christ. He alone gives us the gift of becoming a new creation. Boasting of all that we have done or accomplished in life can never measure up to becoming a new creation in Christ. He is able to change us interiorly. In the intimacy of his presence we are energized. We experience a gaping emptiness that only his presence can fill. We were designed for close communication with our Creator. When we commune with him in the garden of our heart we are blessed. This is the Lord's way of living in the world - through us. Together with Christ we can push back the darkness. 'Whoever follows him will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' St. Augustine says "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you". It captures something that resonates deep within us. Having all that the world could give yet we will be restless till Christ fills that vacuum.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I become a new creation in Christ who offers us eternal life. Amen.

Friday November 4

Memorial of Saint Charles Borromeo, Bishop

Philippians
3:17 -- 4:1

Psalm
122:1-5

Luke
16:1-8

Our inheritance is in heaven.

Today's Gospel proclamation illustrates the parable of the shrewd steward, who takes the initiative in giving his masters debtors a discount by probably waving off the commission he kept for himself. Therefore, although he had been dismissed from his services for his dishonesty, the master ultimately ends up praising him for his shrewdness. He was clever enough to foresee circumstances and act in a manner that would mitigate his loss. It is clear that the steward acted like that, as he was greatly concerned about his livelihood here on earth. However, through this parable Jesus invites us to contemplate on whether we are as much concerned about our eternal life. Do we contemplate as to what steps we should take to secure our spiritual life? It is because of this reason that St Paul writing to the Philippians teaches us that choosing to stand firm in the Lord Jesus Christ would be the wise choice. For Jesus Christ is our Saviour, through whom we will be able to overcome earthly temptations and gain our inheritance in heaven.

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with your wisdom and guide us to eternal life.
Amen.

Saturday November 5

31st Week in Ordinary Time

Philippians
4:10-19

Psalm
112:1-2, 5-6, 8-9

Luke
16:9-15

Who is your Master?

Today's readings speak to us about worldly wealth versus the wealth of the Kingdom. Worldly wealth can win a lot of respect and recognition for us, but it could also result in losing our soul. In contrast, in the First Reading we see St. Paul sharing about God's providence and being dependent on God alone. As said in the Gospel proclamation, we cannot serve two masters. We need to make a choice and stand by it no matter what happens. It is a simple but profound choice. Therefore, serving God would result in God himself looking after our personal needs. Sr. Clare Crockett, a young nun, who gave her life to the service of God, once said that when she looks after God's things, God will look after her things. That gave her the freedom, to leave behind her family, her country, her language and give herself completely to serve God, this is our call as well. Even in today's Responsorial Psalm, the Psalmist says, "Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice." (Ps 112:5).

Prayer: Abba Father, may your Holy Fire burn deeply within my spirit, giving me the grace to serve you first. Amen.

Sunday November 6

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Maccabees
7:1-2, 9-14

Psalm
17:1,5-6,8,15

2 Thessalonians
2:16 -- 3:5

Luke
20:27-38

Let us die to self and live for God.

'Dying to oneself' is an idea that tends to intimidate most Christians, including myself. However, it is a sanctifying process that the Scriptures teach us about continually, as in today's liturgical readings. While the type of physical torture and scourging endured by the seven brothers and their mother in the First Reading is a rare encounter in the present day, we are still given the opportunity to suffer for Christ in other ways.

The choice to live for Christ finds us in even the most mundane moments of life. The simple choice to say no to the world and yes to the Kingdom, and no to the flesh and yes to the Spirit is offered to us in the words we speak, the decisions we make, among the company we keep and the reactions we give to the world around us. These simple yet testing choices leave us hesitant, and we realise that the costs of following Christ are not ones we are always ready to bear.

However, as the bold brothers in the Second Book of Maccabees, when heaven becomes our sole focus, even the deepest strikes to our flesh and the greatest sacrifices become endurable.

The good news is that this journey of sanctification, this path of dying to ourselves and living solely for Christ is not one we are called to tackle with our own strength.

Today's Second Reading reminds us that the Lord strengthens us, guards us, and best of all, directs our hearts to "the endurance of Christ". The one who withstood the greatest ache, the deepest pain, and the heaviest burden lends to us his supernatural endurance to follow him in leaving the world behind and embracing heaven as our reality.

Dying to oneself is not such an intimidating idea when eternity is our perspective. As today's Gospel proclamation states, the children of God are the ones who will rise.

When our eternal ascent is guaranteed, why would we fear the temporary valleys of this world? If at the appearance of the glory of the Lord, our joy is made full, then why would we not pursue his glory at all costs? If the God of the living is on our side, then why would we not die to every part of ourself that stands in the way of his glory?

So, let us embrace the Kingdom perspective that today's readings offer us. The kind of vision that reduced the sufferings of the 7 brothers to a mere nothing. The kind of vision that infuses us with the desire to die to the earthly, the temporary, and the self, and live only for the eternal, glorious, and the Everlasting One.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we fix our eyes on you,
so that we may live for you alone. Amen.

Monday November 7

32nd Week in Ordinary Time

Titus
1:1-9

Psalm
24:1-6

Luke
17:1-6

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.

In today's readings, we are reminded of our purpose on earth. Some of us live on this earth not as a pilgrimage but as if everything would end here. We are full of pride, passion and attachment to the things of this world. However, eternal life has been the promise from the beginning. This is what Jesus came to remind us of. And he even changed our perception of God where we can call him our Father and Jesus Christ our brother and become one body and one family. We often tend to forget this as we get caught up in the day-to-day activities and the things we love. Jesus Christ always knew this as the truth of his life. Not that the world will pass but that his Father is the Alpha and the Omega. Our beginning and the end. This truth sets apart any other concepts we have in life. We just need to hold on to this truth and it will help us face any difficulty in life. Our life does not end on earth. What ends here is just our body of flesh. Let us keep this in mind so that we truly live in this truth knowing what is truly important in this life.

Prayer: Abba Father, nothing is impossible for you. I believe that you can intervene in all situations and make the impossible happen. Amen.

Tuesday November 8

32nd Week in Ordinary Time

Titus
2:1-8,11-14

Psalm
37:3-4,18,23,27,29

Luke
17:7-10

Live in love.

Today's first reading gives practical steps that we can follow as we live our Christian calling. While St. Paul gives detailed instructions, it is clear that we need to live in a manner that suits our heavenly calling. Our actions need to be louder than our words. In today's context, one simply needs to access YouTube and there are hundreds of preachers, sermons and reflections. It is important that we be witnesses to the Gospel of Christ. People need to see that we are different from the ways of the world; that our actions are motivated by love; love of God and love of others. As we live as Jesus expects, let us not become proud thinking that we are better than others. We are simply doing what is expected of us. As we read in today's Gospel proclamation, we should not expect praise and admiration, instead we need to live in love, because it is what God expects of us. May our lives inspire others to seek the Gospel of Christ. May our example encourage others to live in love.

Prayer: Abba Father, strengthen me in my resolve to follow Christ. Amen.

Wednesday November 9

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Ezekiel
47:1-2,8-9,12

Psalm
46:3-6, 8, 11

John
2:13-22

Jesus came to save the lost.

As we celebrate the feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica let us reflect on Zacchaeus' story, as it gives us hope to prepare us to become worthy temples for God's presence. Luke 19:10 says – "For the Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost". Jesus himself says that salvation has come to Zacchaeus' house on account of being a descendant of Abraham. Why is such importance given to Abraham, the father of faith? When we study the nature and character of Abraham, other than Jesus himself coming from his lineage, Abraham's complete and utter dedication and obedience to God is a trait that God loved. We too are descendants of Abraham and heirs to salvation in Christ. Do we need to be sought out and saved? Have we lost our way like Zacchaeus? Do we even realise if we are lost? Just like Zacchaeus climbed up the tree and began his journey to be saved, let us do a self evaluation. When we make the first move, the Lord Jesus will do the rest.

Prayer: Abba Father, I desire to be sought and found by you. May your salvific grace convict me so that I live out my calling. Amen.

Thursday November 10

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

Philemon
7-20

Psalm
146:7-10

Luke
17:20-25

The Kingdom of God is within you.

The seed of the Kingdom of God is planted within each believer at Baptism. Our life journey is to allow this seed to grow and mature by surrendering more each day to God. As we remain in the Lord, he remains in us, and as we grow in him, he transforms us from within. In the first reading, we see St. Paul bear witness to this transformation in Onesimus whom he says was formerly useless but is now useful because of his new life in Christ. If we look at the first reading as a whole, it points to a new life in the Lord Jesus, where the inner transformation extends to the outer transformation of relationships. We see the distinction of master and slave being superseded by a relationship of brotherhood in Christ. In our own lives as we remain in the Lord, allowing him to flow in and through us, we too are transformed into the image and likeness of our Master, and as the Kingdom of God blossoms and grows within us, it brings transformation not only to us but if allowed to reach full maturity will transform the world we live in.

Prayer: Abba Father, you are the potter, I am the clay, I surrender myself into your hands. Mould me and make me into the image of your son, Jesus. Amen.

Friday November 11

Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours, Bishop

2 John
4-9

Psalm 119:
1-2,10-11,17-18

Luke
17:26-37

Let the Word dwell in you.

In today's second reading St. John reminds us that we need to walk in love. If we do not love and remain within the teachings of Christ, we will lose God's presence. We may pray and start the day, but in times of trial, we may react negatively. Our thoughts and emotions may take control of us and give rise to words which may be hurtful to another. Today let us search our hearts, are we returning to the Lord as soon as we fall or do we postpone, making us vulnerable to the enemy. We must keep returning to the Lord in repentance and surrender. It is never too late to return, no matter what we have done, the Lord is waiting for our return. Can we be humble and courageous to go before him as we are? The Psalmist says in Psalm 119:11, "I have hidden your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." Though we face many trials let us return to the Lord immediately and hold on to the Word in faith, without giving way to negative thoughts and emotions. This is the journey to holiness.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to hold on to your Word in times of trial.
Amen.

Saturday November 12

Memorial of Saint Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr

3 John
5-8

Psalm
112:1-6

Luke
18:1-8

Be prepared.

As St. Paul said, the mystery of God was kept unveiled until this generation. We are made to walk the earth at this day and age, to know the author of life more deeply and intimately. To know this mystery of his will, we have to be ready and prepared. Are we ready? When we look at life itself, we get ready almost every day for life's events as a routine: but is there a daily preparation to act according to the will of God? To enter into the plan and will of God, we should seek his wisdom. We read in Luke's Gospel, that some servants were ready for their master's return even though the hour was not known. They were ever ready in expectation of the arrival of the master; as was the case of some maids who were well prepared to receive the master. They all entered the glory of the Master and was joyful with him! We also can enter his glory upon his arrival if we are ready. The day is hidden from us, so that we may be ready for him on a daily basis. May we have the inner strength and power to seek the wisdom of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, we seek your wisdom until we enter the bliss of your kingdom. Amen.

Sunday November 13

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Malachi
3:19-20

Psalm
98:5-9

2 Thessalonians
3:7-12

Luke
21:5-19

Only by His cross.

Today's Gospel proclamation warns of the end times. The end is imminent but we are not to be terrified. How we prepare ourselves is what is most important as Christians in our walk with the Lord.

The reading also captures at the outset a warning by our Lord Jesus Christ to not be deceived of those who may come in his name yet lead his flock astray. It is so easy for us to go here there and everywhere seeking hope yet unknown even to us we may be filling our minds with false truths or doctrines. For example there are those who faithfully preach Jesus Christ but do not mention the Cross of our Lord.

St. Francis De Sales (1567-1622) in his book; "Introduction to the Devout life" mentions this; "If our Saviour himself has declared, 'by your endurance you will gain your soul,' should it not be a man's great happiness to possess his soul? The more perfect our patience, the more absolutely we possess it...our Lord has saved us by patient suffering, so we also ought to work out our salvation by sufferings and afflictions, enduring injuries and contradictions with all possible meekness."

How do we endure if not for the cross? Only the Cross in the most perfect way, shows us how. Every time I am faced with a problem I seek the Lord Jesus Christ and look at the holy cross. My human tendency is to avoid hardships and accept only that which I can handle. But as I ponder Jesus on Calvary I find strength to endure my own trials. As we meditate on God's word and Christ suffering on the Cross we receive power to gain our souls and not lose it by our human reactions.

Reflecting on the Cross and on what Christ endured for our sakes; his pain, shame, humiliation, defeat and ultimate death gives us a different perspective to endure our own crosses of pain, shame and humiliation. The worst humiliation can be endurable as I see that Christ had suffered far greater hanging naked on that cross. My pain seems small as I reflect on his pain and shame. That is how I endure by his cross. Just as there would be no resurrection without Calvary, there would be no victory without the cross.

Endurance produces character...we grow into the likeness of Jesus not tossed by every wave, not easily offended and able to forgive. Character produces hope in God's goodness. Hope does not dissappoint us because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:3-5). Those who lose their lives for the sake of Jesus, will gain it for eternity....and that is how by endurance we gain our souls.

Prayer: Abba Father, you care about us and your will continues to unfold in our lives. Give us strength to do our part so that we may rejoice in you. Amen.

Monday November 14

33rd Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
1:1-4, 2:1-5

Psalms
1:1-4,6

Luke
18:35-43

Repent and turn back.

In today's Gospel proclamation, is a blind man, begging by the roadside, in a hopeless and helpless situation with no escape and in total darkness. Nothing and nobody could lift him out of his status. Jesus hears his cry for mercy and restores his sight. Looking back into our lives, we were not physically blind but distant from God's ways. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 40:12, "troubles without number surrounded us and our sins overtook us, we could no longer see". Jesus in his mercy revealed his love into our hearts and restored our lives. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because he first loved us." The question we have to ask ourselves according to the first reading is, 'where are we today?' Things may run smooth outwardly yet in our hearts do we love Jesus? Has serving God become monotonous and lifeless for us? The Lord is reminding us today, to repent. If we hear his voice today and take it to heart, we are blessed because the time is near. Let us repent, turn back and reset our lives for the glory of God.

Prayer: Abba Father, open our hearts to unite with you by the power of the Holy Spirit, to treasure once again the power of your love. Amen.

Tuesday November 15

33rd Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
3:1-6,14-22

Psalms
15:2-5

Luke
19:1-10

Let us shift from storing to sharing our resources.

There is a difference between how people see people and how God sees people. People are quick to categorize good people and bad people, righteous people, and sinful people. Zaccheus was a sinful man in the eyes of people for many reasons. He was not well respected and accepted in the society for what he was. Yet Jesus offered to come and stay with him in his house and transformed Zaccheus instantaneously from old ways of living to new ways of living. Jesus shifted his focus from storing wealth to sharing wealth. From being unjust to becoming a just man. From sinfulness to righteousness. From rejection to welcome. Today we are reminded by the Gospel proclamation that it is not what we have been in the past but the desire in our hearts that attracts Jesus to ourselves. Desiring to see him and meet him will lead us to the divine encounter that will completely transform us. Divine transformation that gave salvation to Zaccheus and his household will reach our houses too.

Prayer: Abba Father, open our hearts and minds to see your Son. Amen.

Wednesday November 16

33rd Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
4:1-11

Psalm
150:1-6

Luke
19:11-28

I came here with nothing, but all you have given me.

God gives us resources, talents, gifts for stewardship - the responsibility we are given at baptism. We have to remember that everything that is given by God is for the glory of God and the betterment of his creation including our environment. "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (Psalm 24:1) St. Gertrude and St. Margaret teach us that after they encountered God at a deeper level, they used their talents such as knowledge, insight, kindness and holiness for the glory of God. We are given a glimpse of heaven through John's vision. The Spirit of God - wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of God, are gifts from God. Eternal communion with God the Father in the presence of angels, saints and everyone else continuously praising God is our eternal reward! It should only be natural to us to glorify God in everything. The Lord Jesus is not calling us to just live and die but to carry out the mission that he has entrusted to us.

Prayer: Abba Father, as I live in surrender and take Jesus to the world may I never seek a crown, for my reward is giving glory to you. Amen.

Thursday November 17

Memorial of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Religious

Revelation
5:1-10

Psalm
149:1-6,9

Luke
19:41-44

Amazing grace.

In today's Gospel proclamation we can see how the Lord Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. Why would the Lord Jesus weep over a city? What could cause our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to cry over a city full of people? Why does anyone weep? Only when someone's heart is broken and overwhelming sadness or pain takes over, would it bring tears. The thought of his chosen people turning away from God, not recognizing the presence of the Lord or his Word causes the Lord Jesus to weep. We are also like these people. We are so caught up in the world and in our flesh that we often do not recognize the opportunities presented to us by God. We keep on rejecting him unintentionally by the choices we make. Yet he waits for us. His love is so great that though we have caused him much pain he still comes looking for us, the one lost sheep. Such is his unfathomable love and amazing grace. Are we willing to listen to God and give him our lives today?

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

Friday November 18

33rd Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
10:8-11

Psalm 119:
14.24.72.103.111.131

Luke
19:45-48

God's presence within us.

God lives among his chosen people from the beginning of creation. His presence was manifested in different ways in the Old Testament. Then his presence was seen in the Ark of the Covenant and subsequently in the Temple of Jerusalem. As Jesus entered into the temple, he felt embarrassment. Today Jesus is dwelling in our hearts, and his presence is seen in the Holy Eucharist. Is my heart pleasing to God? Is he happy to dwell within me? Or am I a bad host? Is my heart pleasing to my neighbors, colleagues, family members? Am I pleased with the desires of my heart? If our hearts are not pleasing to God, let us pray as King David: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." This should be our daily prayer. Are my deeds and words pleasing to God? Am I aware of God's presence?

Prayer: Abba Father, become alive in my heart.
Amen.

Saturday November 19

33rd Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
11:4-12

Psalm
144:1-2,9-10

Luke
20:27-40

Your presence is heaven to me.

In today's Gospel proclamation our Lord Jesus shows how we can engage with him in a simple and constant conversation. We see some Sadducees asking Jesus an important question about heaven. Jesus teaches us that once we are in heaven, things will be considerably different than they are here on earth. This is a beautiful example how we can converse with Christ. We simply need to ask him questions: questions about our faith, about difficulties we may be having with certain relationships or about career changes. The answers we receive may not be what we were expecting or hoping for, but what is important is that we engage Jesus in our every day conversations and that we seek to please him in everything we do. This open, warm contact with our Lord is already a little taste of heaven. Let us resolve today that we will converse with the Lord and bring to him our doubts, queries and concerns so that he truly becomes alive to us and his presence will remove all the obstacles for us to live as children of the resurrection.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I know your heart and enjoy your fellowship, which is a foretaste of heaven. Amen.

Sunday November 20

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

2 Samuel
5:1-3

Psalm
122:1-5

Colossians
1:12-20

Luke
23:35-43

Remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

In today's first reading we meet David who has finally been enthroned as the king of Israel. Yet, it was about 15 years before that when Samuel anointed him king. Saul continued to be the king in the eyes of people. However, in the eyes of heaven, David was the king, even during those 15 years. This speaks to us about two realities. One reality is the reality we perceive through our 5 senses. The other, the reality we perceive through the voice of the Lord.

The people confess, that although Saul was king in their reality, they saw something special about David even while Saul was King. Even while the reality of people and the reality of God coexist, God was still at work.

In today's Gospel proclamation the Church presents us the scene of the crucifixion as the court of Christ the King. It is not a court of human power, honour and authority. Our Lord Jesus was treated as a criminal, although he was the Sinless One. Such is the extent of the love of our King, that he suffered humiliation for our sake.

God's love manifests itself in places and ways that we least expect it. We see the leaders mocking him assuming that their understanding of kingship is the only way. Generally, subjects obey their rulers out of fear often accompanied by complaint and resentment.

Dismas, the thief on the other side, recognizes that our Lord Jesus is a king indeed, and even realizes that this is not his kingdom. He appeals to our Lord Jesus to remember him when he gets to his kingdom. Unlike the subjects of human kings, Christ the King elicits obedience and compliance willingly. Christ the King has authority and access to places beyond the reach of human kings, no matter how strong they are.

In today's second reading St. Paul reveals that by the Lord's saving grace, Christ the King has removed us from the kingdom under the power of darkness, which prevents us from seeing the Kingdom of God.

During difficult times, when there does not seem to be any human answers, we are invited to submit ourselves to God's saving grace. Like the 15 years where Saul continued to be king after David was anointed by Samuel, there will be a period where the reality of earth will coexist with the reality of heaven. Even during that time, just like Dismas, the good thief and the Israelites during the reign of Saul, we too will see the hand of God. In the fullness of time, the reality of heaven will prevail over the reality of the Earth.

Prayer: Abba Father, I place my life under the lordship of Christ the King.
Amen.

Monday November 21

Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Zechariah
2:14-17

Luke
1:46-55

Matthew
12:46-50

All to Jesus I surrender.

In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus was in the area of the Temple called the Court of Women. In this area were seven boxes in which worshippers could deposit their Temple tax and six boxes for freewill offerings. In contrast to how most of us handle our money, this widow gave all she had to live on. When we consider ourselves generous in giving a small percentage of our income to the Lord, we resemble those who gave "a tiny part of their surplus." Here, Jesus admired the woman's generous and sacrificial giving. As believers, we should consider increasing our giving - whether money, time, or talents to a point beyond mere convenience or comfort. This widow was not only poor but had few resources for making money. Her small gift was a sacrifice, but she gave it willingly. I think we have all been in this woman's position. A few times when I had to make offerings to the Lord, I did not have much, but I gave all I could. To my surprise there was always a bonus blessing to follow. Most importantly the Lord sees our hearts.

Prayer: Abba Father, I desire to give myself completely to you.
Amen.

Tuesday November 22

Memorial of Saint Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr

Revelation
14:14-19

Psalm
96:10-13

Luke
21:5-11

The Church is built on the blood of the martyrs.

The book of Revelation was written during the height of the Roman persecution. Christians were persecuted severely and St. John the Apostle was imprisoned at Patmos. This was the time St. John received these revelations from God. There is a saying that strengthens the Church: the Church is built on the blood of the martyrs. The true meaning of being a Christian was beautifully spoken through these revelations, which St. John received from God. The Gospel proclamation too is projected towards the end times. Eschatological awareness is brought forth in these readings to strengthen us who hold the baton in our hands at present. The Saint we honour today is St. Cecilia, virgin and martyr. She pledged her purity to God and remained a virgin and by her strong faith became a Christian martyr. When we go through challenges and persecution it may seem to us as the end of the world but surely it is not the end of our lives. We are eternal beings who enter the throne room of our Heavenly Father; this is our Christian hope.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we become worthy to enter heaven, which is our destiny. Amen.

Wednesday November 23

34th Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
15:1-4

Psalm
98:1-3,7-9

Luke
21:12-19

Bearing witness to Christ.

Today's Gospel proclamation warns us about possible persecutions that may take place for believers in Christ. However, it has been 2000 years and the Christian faith does not show signs of faltering or growing weak. Even in our trials and tribulations the Lord strengthens us. He promises to be with us even when the world seems to rise up against us. Therefore we do not have to fear, with God at our side what can happen to us? It would be safe to say that most of us who are reading this reflection are living in countries where Christians are not threatened with death. But let us remember that many of our brothers and sisters are persecuted on a daily basis in many countries. Let us thank God for their powerful witness for the Gospel of Christ. Let us also be bold in bearing witness to our Lord Jesus Christ by living in a manner that is worthy of our calling. If we are patient we will reign victorious with Christ. Let us not lose hope, let us be courageous disciples of Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be bold in living according to your Word.
Amen.

Thursday November 24

Memorial of Saints Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions, Martyrs

Rev 18:1-2,21-23,
19:1-3,9

Psalm
100:2-5

Luke
21:20-28

Trusting God in our troubles.

Today's readings speak of terror, desolation, and fear. The initial impression given is that this seems unfair to the people of these cities, and to us, because the Lord speaks, guides, and warns us through scripture. However, it states in Revelation 19:2 "His judgments are true and just". Which means the terrifying acts that will take place are the consequences of the people's disobedience to the Lord. Yet through the Bible we realize how much God our Father lovingly guides his people and how many times he rescues them from slavery, enemies, and many other calamities. Often people are faithful only for a short time and after that God is forgotten and they go on their own way. How does this relate to us? Did we also come to the Lord because of a crisis we could not handle? The Lord draws us into a deeper relationship with him and prunes us into what he wants us to be. Often, the process is painful but amid our crisis if we trust in the Lord, we too will be resurrected into a new life.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to trust you amid crises and to surrender to your will. Amen.

Friday November 25

34th Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
20:1-4,11 -- 21:2

Psalm
84:3-6,8

Luke
21:29-33

A new heaven and a new earth.

God is giving us an invitation for a renewed life through the scriptures. A renewed life led by trust in the word of God. Let us reflect on a promise God has given. No matter what the circumstances in our life may look like, let us lay them down at his feet and build a throne of worship and thanksgiving to our God. Often when things do not happen in life as we have planned, it is difficult to hold onto God's word. Through the first reading God speaks to us of the water of life. When we surrender to God and claim his unfailingly word for our lives, he satisfies our spiritual thirst, blesses and nourishes us to receive fullness of life in him. Salvation has already been claimed for our lives through the blood of Jesus. Surrender and faith paves the way for the Holy Spirit to bring refreshment and fullness to our lives. As we build a throne of praise and worship let us look with the eyes of faith at the promises already brought to fulfilment through the blood of the Lamb and the power of the Holy Spirit! For the old has gone and the new has come!

Prayer: Abba Father, renew my life in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Saturday November 26

34th Week in Ordinary Time

Revelation
22:1-7

Psalm
95:1-7

Luke
21:34-36

God first loved us.

Human beings are sensory beings. We often get torn between the Spiritual world and the material world. Our senses push us to gain the material world and the Spirit within us calls to seek the face of the Creator. In the first reading we are given a glimpse of the eternal world. We are called to be the trees planted besides the river. The good news is that we need not wait until the end of our lives to enter this paradise. We are invited to enter this paradise while we are living in this world. We are called to heal this world and it is possible for us because God has loved us first and lavished his love upon us. What is expected of us is to be open and vigilant to this call and invitation of God. Today's Gospel proclamation warns us about blindness to God's call. When we become conscious solely of our worldly desires and are caught up, we could lose our experience of paradise that is spoken about in the first reading. We could fail in responding to God's call positively. Let us be vigilant.

Prayer: Abba Father, become the centre of my life.
Amen.

Sunday November 27

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah
2:1-5

Psalms
122:1-9

Romans
13:11-14

Matthew
24:37-44

This world is not our home.

In today's second reading St. Paul tells us that we must be aware of the present time. Have we ever been woken from a sound sleep? Perhaps we took a nap in the afternoon and were awakened suddenly. This is what St. Paul tells us we must do. We should wake from our sleep and realize where we are. We are to understand the present time. We need to realize that we live in a world that is hostile to the virtues of God. The values of our society are not the values of the Kingdom of God. We need to know that this world is not our home.

We also need to understand that our salvation is closer now than when we first believed. Perhaps St. Paul is asking us to realize that the second coming of Christ is closer than it ever has been or perhaps he is merely trying to say, "life is short" and we had better stop wasting our time. If we knew that we had only a week to live would we live differently for Jesus Christ?

Today's Gospel proclamation tells the story of what happened in the time of Noah. Jesus says: "As for the exact day or hour, no one will know it, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but God alone knows the time." None of us knows when "our time" will come. Perhaps this is a blessing. This reading reminds us of our responsibility: what happens to us after we die is determined by how we lead our lives each day. In many ways, we are the ones who decide what our "afterlife" will be.

Does it ever seem remarkable that God has given us his Word and entrusted the Good News to us and asked us to take it to the world – to the whole universe? If God was not Sovereign, he would be taking a great risk. But since he is Sovereign, everything must happen according to his plan and time

What is the pattern of our life? Do we share our time, talents and attention with other people? Do we share our gifts and love with our family members, the people we work with, with our neighbors or even people we do not know? If we choose to do these things, after our death we will be in God's loving presence!

Let us thank God our Father, that in his grace he chose to reveal his plan to redeem the lost race of humanity, through the sacrifice of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Let us thank our loving God for revealing to us, his people, things that are to happen in the future, and the signs of Jesus' return to earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, when he comes in power and great glory to rule and reign in righteousness.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we be ready for the second coming of your Son.
Amen.

Monday November 28

First Week of Advent

Isaiah
4:2-6

Psalm
122:1-9

Matthew
8:5-11

Believe and be constant in prayer.

Today's readings remind us about faith, which many of us struggle with at times. We may be faithful believers in our Lord Jesus Christ but often we fail. But, even if we fail our Lord loves us. To be a faithful son or daughter of God, we need to know him well. How can we get to know him well? We need to read the holy scriptures, then only we will know the heart of our God and how it works marvellously. If we know him well, our faith will also increase and we can have a close relationship with him as he desires. Then, whatever we ask in his name will be granted according to his will. This is what happened to the army captain in today's Gospel proclamation. He knew about the Lord and he had faith in him and that faith healed his servant. Let us ask the Lord to heal our unfaithfulness and ask him to make us faithful to him through prayer and contemplation. Let us ask pardon for our unfaithfulness. May he make us holy and humble like Jesus so we could experience his love, his presence and his favour in lives.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I become humble like Jesus.
Amen.

Tuesday November 29

First Week of Advent

Isaiah
11:1-10

Psalm
72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17

Luke
10:21-24

Infinite ocean of God's love.

In the past, I lived in a certain understanding of the world. I followed the trends of this world, latest fashion, new sports stars, entertainment and what ever gratified my desires. I wanted to become well educated with a well payed job. I was fortunate to live half of my life in a first world country where money, pleasure, all the basic needs were never an issue. With everything I knew and everything I had, I was in the understanding that life cannot get much better than this. It was when I encountered the love of God, that everything changed. It was as if heavenly wisdom dawned on me. I realised the truth about the emptiness of worldly things. All the pleasures I enjoyed in this world became nothing but an insignificant drop of water in the vast ocean of God's love and wisdom. I felt like most of my life was wasted doing empty things. God in his mercy chose to reveal true wisdom to me. "No one knows who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him"

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for revealing your self to us through your Son, take us deeper into your love and wisdom. Amen.

Wednesday November 30

Feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle

Romans
10:9-18

Psalm
19:8-11

Matthew
4:18-22

Let us welcome Jesus.

"If you confess with your mouth that, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." What a wonderful thing! So simple, yet so profound. Jesus has done everything for us. Not one thing was left unfinished by him, there is nothing left to do except to honour this new life offered through the Son of God. It is as simple as that! Jesus surrendered his whole life to save us, he is always there and ready to lend his helping hands. In today's Gospel proclamation there are 4 men who received a blessing from Jesus, who saw their excitement and determination to catch a lot of fish for them to survive in life. They followed Jesus without any delay because they trusted Jesus' words and works. We must open ourselves and welcome Jesus into our lives because in him all things are possible. Jesus always gives many blessings for the people who truly believe in his works, obey him and have a strong faith in him. If we follow in the footsteps of Jesus we will find the real essence of life.

Prayer: Abba Father, you are our strength and our shield; help us to carry out our responsibilities with your grace. Amen.

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization.

It is the Holy Spirit who explains to the faithful the deep meaning of the teaching of Jesus and of his mystery. It is the Holy Spirit who, today just as at the beginning of the Church, acts in every evangelizer who allows himself to be possessed and led by him. The Holy Spirit places on his lips the words which he could not find by himself, and at the same time the Holy Spirit predisposes the soul of the hearer to be open and receptive to the Good News and to the kingdom being proclaimed.

We live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit. Everywhere people are trying to know him better, as the Scripture reveals him. They are happy to place themselves under his inspiration. They are gathering about him; they want to let themselves be led by him. Now if the Spirit of God has a preeminent place in the whole life of the Church, it is in her evangelizing mission that he is most active. It is not by chance that the great inauguration of evangelization took place on the morning of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Spirit.

(Excerpt from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*)

Praise the Lord !

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St. Martin of Tours

Saint Martin of Tours was born in Savaria, Pannonia (Hungary) between 316 to 336 AD. His parents were pagans, but at the age of 10, Saint Martin chose to respond to the call of the Gospel and become a Christian.

At the age of fifteen, Saint Martin was required to follow his father into the cavalry corps of the Roman military. As a young soldier, he encountered a beggar in Amiens. The beggar was unclothed and it was very cold. Martin removed his cloak and with his sword, he cut it in half. He gave half to the beggar and dressed himself in the remnant. That night, Saint Martin had a vision in which Christ appeared to him and said: "Martin, a mere catechumen has clothed me." A catechumen is one who is being instructed in the Christian faith. In the early centuries of Christianity, that was a long process of instruction, and Martin was deeply dedicated to it.

About the age of 20, Saint Martin made clear to his superiors that he would no longer fight, following his newly formed Christian conscience. He refused his pay prior to a battle and announced he would not join in the combat. He became the first recognized conscientious objector in recorded history. Now out of the military service, Saint Martin could fully dedicate himself to service of Jesus Christ and the Church. He traveled to Tours where he began studying under Hilary of Poitiers, who is now recognized as a doctor of the Church.

He then traveled to Italy, and according to one account, Saint Martin was confronted by a highwayman and led him to faith in Jesus Christ. Another account tells of Saint Martin confronting the Devil. While on this journey, Martin had a vision which compelled him to return to his mother in Pannonia. He did so and led his own mother to faith in Jesus Christ. He also attempted to persuade his father to embrace faith in Jesus, but his father refused.

Saint Martin's teacher, Hilary, returned to Tours, so Martin traveled there to work and study. Hilary gave him a small grant of land where he and his disciples lived. Martin established a monastery which would later be inhabited by the Benedictines.

The city of Tours needed a new bishop and the people called Saint Martin to the office. He did not want the job, so the people tricked him by saying he was needed to minister to a sick person. When he learned it was a trick, he hid himself, but was discovered. He was forcefully ordained, and later became a holy and hardworking Bishop.

Martin died in Candes-Saint-Martin, Gaul in 397. Many miracles and casting out of demons were attributed to Saint Martin during his lifetime. Saint Martin is the patron of the poor, soldiers, conscientious objectors, tailors, and winemakers. His memorial is on Nov 11.

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.

