



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



**St. Nunzio Sulprizio**

*Memorial: 05 May*

**MAY 2023** | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

MAY  
2023

“Do not grieve  
over the temptations you suffer.  
When the Lord intends to bestow a  
particular virtue on us,  
he often permits us first to be tempted  
by the opposite vice.  
Therefore, look upon every temptation  
as an invitation to grow in a particular  
virtue and a promise by God  
that you will be successful,  
if only you stand fast.”  
Saint Philip Neri

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## Monday May 1

Memorial of Saint Joseph, the Worker

Acts  
11:1-18

Psalm  
42:2-3; 43:3-4

John  
10:11-18

Who is my shepherd?

Evil comes masquerading as a shepherd. Worldly values inspire us to search for recognition and self worth. Evil's impulse is to steal and destroy the good things and blessings bestowed by God. When I focus on anyone other than the Lord, I live in disillusionment and despair. Sheep are generally timid and cannot survive without a shepherd. They would not follow anyone except the one they trust. If we personally know the Lord, we will not follow worldly shepherds. The world favors the powerful, but the Lord favors the weak. The scriptures reveal secrets to those who are his. "My power is made perfect in weakness. I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell with me...for when I am weak then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10). Jesus is able to multiply loaves and fish in deserted places. He provided flour and oil for a widow during a famine. We may be sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing everything. What a Shepherd we follow!

Prayer: Abba Father, may we follow your Son as we turn our back to evil.  
Amen.

## Tuesday May 2

Memorial of Saint Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Acts  
11:19-26

Psalm  
87:1-7

John  
10:22-30

My home is within you, O Lord.

Where is your true belonging? If someone asked that question our natural response would be to name our country of birth or our hometown. Even though accurate, it is a place of temporary identification. Today's Gospel proclamation tells us that we have a greater place of belonging, an eternal home: a place in the sheepfold of our Lord. Jesus describes that it is not a physical place, but a position of him knowing us intimately and us coming to know him intimately. A sheep does not recognise a stranger's voice, nor does it follow a stranger but only the shepherd. Our Lord Jesus is vocalizing a prophesy that in the future, many will come to hear his voice and be nourished by the pastures he will provide. Further, our Lord says that it is his Father's delight that this should happen. It is the Father's longing that many would come close and be dear to him. However, it is not something we could earn, work for or be worthy enough to receive, but a gift for those have been called by name.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to do your will.  
Amen.

## Wednesday May 3

Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles

1 Corinthians  
15:1-8

Psalm  
19:2-5

John  
14:6-14

Jesus is present with us.

Philip asked Jesus to reveal the Father. At times, we also ask Jesus to send us signs that he is with us. Trusting faith are difficult in our human relationships and perhaps even more so in our relationship with God. At least, with human beings we can see them, hear them, and talk with them. We see their facial expressions and their body language. These expressions can communicate volumes of information to us. However, we cannot see God. To believe without proof is difficult for most of us. However, Jesus desires that we believe and trust without seeing him. We can choose to believe in Jesus and trust in his love and care for us or we can wander through life without an anchor, without believing in anyone greater than ourselves. Trusting faith is challenging, specially during difficult times. We need to trust that Jesus is with us. However, when we are able to trust that Jesus is present with us, then we have strength and hope. These gifts of trust and hope enable us to open our minds and hearts to see Jesus.

Prayer: Abba Father, be with us, strengthen us and lead us.  
Amen.

## Thursday May 4

Fourth Week of Easter

Acts  
13:13-25

Psalm  
89:2-3,21-22,25,27

John  
13:16-20

God chose to become one of us, so we can become divine.

Today's readings reveal that God chose the people of Israel. He led them out of Egypt to a land he chose as their inheritance. Yet, they rebelled, disobeyed and worshipped other gods. God sent judges and prophets. Finally, he sent them King David, whom God called "a man after my own heart". From King David's descendants God gifted his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Saviour to redeem his people. It is the story of a lover wooing his beloved. He says to us: "Return to me, you are mine". Our true identity is revealed in this love encounter and intimacy. Yet, as I reflect on my life, I see the pattern of sin and disobedience. My choice to separate from God's plan takes me to a desert experience. Lost and broken I often end up worshiping other gods. Yet, his merciful love draws me to repentance. Washed clean in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, my identity is restored. I am a precious child of God, sent on mission. This same opportunity is available for anyone who desires it.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to be deeply rooted in this divine partnership with you. Amen.

## Friday May 5

Fourth Week of Easter

Acts  
13:26-33

Psalm  
2:6-11

John  
14:1-6

Jesus is enough for me.

Life can be difficult sometimes. It can leave us feeling disappointed. The Lord Jesus is coming to us today bringing comfort and encouragement. He is gently shifting our perspective and lifting our gaze heavenward. Every situation has a solution in the Lord Jesus. In every situation we face and in what we do in life, we need to remind ourselves of this one thing. Doing this takes intentionality. The Lord asks us to intentionally trust in him and not in anything else, to be the source or means of our joy, peace, contentment or security. Every negative emotion we struggle with, is an indicator to us that we are depending on something or someone else, other than the Lord Jesus, to have our needs met. The Lord gently draws us entreatingly, asking us to believe in him. Believe that he is the way, the truth and the life. Believe that he is enough, believe that he is the answer, believe that in him is the answer to every crisis we will ever face. Believe that every human need finds its fulfillment in him.

Prayer: Abba Father, show me if there is anything in my life without which I am stressed, unsatisfied or empty. You are enough for me. Amen.

## Saturday May 6

Fourth Week of Easter

Acts  
13:44-52

Psalm  
98:1-4

John  
14:7-14

Experience God's love.

Jesus is the way to the Father, and knowing him is knowing the Father. Jesus tells his disciples that if they know him, they also know the Father. This is a profound statement that speaks of the close relationship between Jesus and God the Father. It suggests that by knowing and following Jesus, we can come to know and experience God's love and grace. Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father, and Jesus' response highlights the fact that Jesus is a reflection of the Father's love and character. He also emphasizes this relationship, saying that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. This idea of unity between Jesus and God the Father is a central tenet of the Christian faith, and is a powerful reminder of the deep connection between Jesus and his followers. In a nutshell this is a powerful passage that offers much reflection and insight into the nature of Jesus and his relationship with God the Father. It emphasizes the importance of faith and offers a promise of power and possibility for those who believe.

Prayer: Abba Father, I belong to you, as you are united with Jesus. Amen.

## Sunday May 7

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts  
6:1-7

Psalm 33:  
1-2,4-5,18-19

1 Peter  
2:4-9

John  
14:1-12

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

In today's Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus tells his disciples how they can enter heaven and be with the Lord Jesus in eternity. He says in John 14:6 – "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Lord is not giving his disciples the key, but he is telling us how we can enter the Kingdom of God. It is through a relationship with Jesus.

The Lord Jesus promises that when we have a relationship with him, we will be able to enter heaven and secure a place forever in his Father's house.

At the time when the Lord Jesus is explaining this to his disciples, Phillip may not have understood this teaching. His question makes the Lord realize that he has not understood what has been taught. He does not know the Father, even though he has followed the Lord Jesus.

As I read this passage, I realize I too am a Philip at times. I hear the words the Lord speaks, I want to do my best to follow them, but I cannot understand what is required of me or what I should be doing. The Lord Jesus is asking me to build a relationship with him through prayer. How many times have we heard this message?

Some days I can sit down and pray. However, other days I still find it difficult to sit down and concentrate on God. My mind runs wild, many other important tasks come to mind, and I push prayer aside for "another time". I forget that I need to build my relationship with the Lord. I forget the importance of this relationship and I carry on with my day. Like Philip some days I just don't get it. However, today's first reading helps me to re-focus.

Philip being a man filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit, is called to serve at the table. The apostle Philip was a puzzled disciple as we read in the Gospel proclamation. Somewhere along the way, he found the answer to his question and realized what he had to do. He could not have done it on his own. The reading tells us that he was filled with the Spirit and wisdom. It is the Spirit inside him that made the difference and changed him.

The Holy Spirit can do the same for us. If we are wondering how to become more faithful disciples of the Lord or how we can build this relationship with the Father and the Lord Jesus, let us call on the Holy Spirit. He is our counsellor and our guide.

Each day let us sit at his feet, surrender ourselves to him and wait upon his Word. He will guide us and lead us, as he guided the apostle Philip. We need to be patient and consistent.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be like Philip and lean on you to cultivate my relationship with you. Amen.

## Monday May 8

Fifth Week of Easter

Acts  
14:5-18

Psalm  
115:1-4,15-16

John  
14:21-26

God is in our midst.

God's Son manifests his dwelling in those who choose to respond to his love. We are invited to have a relationship. Earlier we were taught 'about' the Lord Jesus. We knew about him and what he did and taught. Now however we have come to not only know 'about' him but to 'know' him. Did we not when falling in love with our intended spouse, want to know that person intimately? And, in so doing would do almost anything that the person wanted, to win that person's approval and love? In that love, life was full of great expectations. Joy overflowed. How much more would that great expectation be when falling in love with the Author of love and the Creator of eternal life. We could talk to him and listen to that gentle voice. He tells us to not live based on the values of the world, the addiction to what flesh yearns for in the pursuit of pleasure. But rather his Kingdom values revealed in the Scriptures. We should live for a higher purpose. We have the power to mend the brokenness of humanity. Surely the Lord is in our midst.

Prayer: Abba Father, as your child may I do great things with you to mend the brokenness of humanity and the sinfulness of the world. Amen.

## Tuesday May 9

Fifth Week of Easter

Acts  
14:19-28

Psalm  
145:10-13,21

John  
14:27-31

God gives us peace.

In today's first reading we see how powerful Saint Paul's mission was. Though he was persecuted many times he came back much stronger and preached the Good News going from city to city and encouraging the followers of Christ. In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus is pouring his peace into the hearts of the disciples. The same peace is given to us through our baptism in the Holy Spirit. The peace he gives us is not what the world defines as "absence of war". His peace gives us perfect rest amid turmoil, problems and fear. Even when we are rejected and persecuted we can have perfect joy within us if we have the Lord's peace. As a community we are journeying towards God's kingdom and we carry this peace amid our people. Let us hold on to our Father who rules over all nations and rest in his promises because he can turn darkness into light. Let us sing like the psalmist trusting our God: "May my mouth speak the praise of the Lord, and may all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever."

Prayer: Abba Father, we thank and praise you for sending your Holy Spirit and filling us with everlasting peace. Amen.

## Wednesday May 10

Fifth Week of Easter

Acts  
15:1-6

Psalm  
122:1-5

John  
15:1-8

Be connected to Christ.

In today's Gospel proclamation Jesus says that he is the vine and we are the branches. As long as we are attached to the true vine we have life. It is the Lord who nourishes us with his word and pours out his spirit on us. We become a new creation when we surrender our lives to him. It is the Lord who sustains us day in and day out. The weight of the world and our circumstances make us detached from Christ and then life becomes a struggle and we have to pull our weight in the flesh. We lose our peace, love and joy. In my own life the more I remain in the Lord the more I have strength to go on. It is my Lord who carries me on his wings. Like St. Paul said: "when I am weak I am strong" because it is my God who sustains me. There was a time when I tried to live on my own terms but failed miserably and lost my joy and peace. But today being connected with my Lord I know that every struggle, every shortcoming is a blessing to see the amazing love of the Lord in my life. So are we willing to remain attached to the true vine?

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to surrender my life to you.  
Amen.

## Thursday May 11

Fifth Week of Easter

Acts  
15:7-21

Psalm  
96:1-3,10

John  
15:9-11

Our mission in life.

During the past few months we have reflected on how Jesus completed his mission on earth. In today's first reading we hear of St. Peter's mission to the gentiles. St. Peter says he was chosen by God to speak the 'Word' to the gentiles. Down the ages God has given those who are baptized, a mission that is special for each person. The mission is to our families, our friends, colleagues, the community where we live in, the church community and to the nation. We need to share the 'Good News' by deeds and words. All humanity needs to hear the Good News. We are saved through grace not by our strength. The Psalmist says: "sing to the Lord, praise his name, proclaim his salvation day after day, declare his glory and his marvelous deeds". In the first reading the disciples are discussing the problems they faced when taking the Gospel to the gentiles. In certain instances our environment may not be conducive for us to share the 'Word'. But many people need our prayers. So let us become intercessors.

Prayer: Abba Father, empower us with your Holy Spirit to carry out the mission that you have entrusted to us. Amen.

## Friday May 12

Fifth Week of Easter

Acts  
15:22-31

Psalm  
57:8-12

John  
15:12-17

You did not choose me, but I chose you.

Jesus speaks about true love and joy. Jesus uses the language of love to explain God's merciful heart to us. God sent his only son to this world and he experienced sorrow and pain and gave us salvation. How well do we understand God's language? According to the word of God it is not our choice to receive the ability to speak and understand his love, he has chosen us to give his love to the world through our words and actions. Are we prepared to deny ourselves for the sake of his love? Jesus calls us his friends. "You are my friends if you do what I command you". The love that we find in this world is conditional, limited and makes us slaves of our own flesh. We are chosen to experience God's unconditional and unlimited love which will make us free to experience real joy. We are God's appointed people to bear fruits in the world. Fruits which empower us to carry out the mission entrusted to us among the people. Are we ready to use our faith to ask and seek to manifest his glory on earth?

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

## Saturday May 13

Fifth Week of Easter

Acts  
16:1-10

Psalm  
100:2-3,5

John  
15:18-21

Seek the author of life.

Looking around us, we see the world being overwhelmingly happy about it's so called beauty. People honour celebrities and the self-glorified lives that they live. Thanks to the followers of the famous ones, the rich and famous become richer and more famous. The same thing happened during the time of Jesus and also after his death and resurrection. The majority of the people did not want to believe the truth nor accept the Messiah. At the time of Jesus, people were more than willing to be misguided by the misspelt truth of the world. People went to the extent of killing "the Way, the Truth and the Life" because they were blindsided by misconceptions. In Jesus' era, what seemed more important for the people were issues regarding rituals, practices and laws which were bound by human traditions and laws. Because of this, people were unable to see God even though he walked among them – their eyes were closed and their minds were tightened. And they did not recognize God.

Prayer: Abba Father, let your Spirit come upon me.  
Amen.

## Sunday May 14

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts  
8:5-8,14-17

Psalm  
66:1-7,16,20

1 Peter  
3:15-18

John  
14:15-21

### Focus on Jesus.

In today's first reading we are introduced to the aftermath of the persecution at the hands of Saul, who later became St. Paul. We find disciples fleeing Jerusalem and St. Phillip lands in Samaria.

After the Lord Jesus' resurrection, he identified Samaria as the next place where witnessing should happen.

The bad things that happen to us have the potential to open new doors and fulfil the plan of God in our lives. Just as much as Philip's suffering became a blessing for the Samaritans, our own sufferings can become a blessing for others in unexpected ways.

Through today's Gospel proclamation, our Lord Jesus tells us that the world cannot receive the Holy spirit because it neither sees him nor knows him. He tells them that "you know him, for he is with you." (Jn 14:17)

The signs and wonders that the Samaritans witnessed and the faith that resulted, set them apart from the world, to be counted among those who "see him and know him".

We need to take him at his word. He promised us that even though the world around us cannot and will not recognize the Holy Spirit, we will. Why? Because the Holy Spirit lives within every believer.

When our focus is to love the Lord Jesus, believing that he will do what he says, he will empower us to keep the rest of his commandments.

When we love him, we are loved by God the Father, and he will come and manifest his life in us. This is the reality we are called to live in as Christians. To live life knowing that the Holy Spirit lives within us, that we are passionately loved by God the Father and that the Lord Jesus himself will manifest his life in us.

In today's second reading, St. Peter tells us to "bless the Lord Christ in your hearts."

We must constantly have our eyes fixed on Jesus and our ears inclined to hear his familiar voice. We do this by the conviction of the Holy Spirit living within us.

We should keep our conscience clear. When we fail and fall, waste no time in being reconciled. As we keep returning, a miracle will happen in our hearts and the Saviour's saving power will spring into action.

"May the Virgin Mary, model of the Church, who knows how to listen to the Word of God and to welcome the gift of the Holy Spirit, help us to live the Gospel with joy, knowing that we are sustained by the Spirit, the divine fire that warms our hearts and illuminates our steps." (Pope Francis)

Prayer: Abba Father, may we become a blessing to those around us.  
Amen.

## Monday May 15

Sixth Week of Easter

Acts  
16:11-15

Psalm  
149:1-6,9

John  
15:26--16:4

To serve in spirit and in truth.

In the city of Philippi, God inspires Saint Paul's missionary work. It is God's work and his plan. When I take the initiative to honour my calling to serve, it is God who knows and moves his plan forward. Today's Gospel proclamation calls us to witness to Jesus in truth as the Spirit of truth will witness to Jesus. In this vociferously secular society we are called to serve in, where "Truth" is subjective in the chaos of suffering and unbelief, I struggle in the face of sarcasm and doubt. I stutter and splutter in the face of horror and wickedness that challenges the presence of a loving God. Today's message heartens me with Jesus' promise of the presence of the Holy Spirit to counsel and guide me, to lead me in truth and wisdom so I may not stumble as I navigate this path of his calling. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). I am invited to seek and listen to that voice and wait on God to lead the way, so that I could reach those he wants me to reach and carry with me those he wants me to carry on my path.

Prayer: Abba Father, here I am. Send me.  
Amen.

## Tuesday May 16

Sixth Week of Easter

Acts  
16:22-34

Psalm  
138:1-3,7-8

John  
16:5-11

Power of praise.

Paul and Silas' resolve to "Be still and know that I am God" is legendary! Imagine being stripped and beaten by rods for spreading the Good News of Jesus and then to be put into prison and tied to a pole that is usually set for burning. Can you even imagine yourself in this situation? Wouldn't we be knocked out and overcome with fear after being put through such an ordeal? Would praise arise from our hearts? This is not normal behaviour. And yet, this is what Paul and Silas did. Their hearts were at peace that they were able to have an attitude of praise. Romans 15:13 says "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit." Imagine further, you are in a prison with criminals and yet not one of them left their cell when the locks opened supernaturally! We can only assume, this overflow of hope had an effect on the criminals as well. What awesome power the display of trusting God and being in praise and worship can accomplish!

Prayer: Abba Father, may we have your grace to burst into songs of praise as a lifestyle choice. Amen.

## Wednesday May 17

Sixth Week of Easter

Acts  
17:15,22-18:1

Psalm  
148:1-2,11-14

John  
16:12-15

Born for his glory, born for more.

In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus says, "I still have many things to say to you". Often we are not ready to hear his truths, his revelations and divine mysteries as our hearts are occupied with the things of this world. A question that may be useful to ponder on this day is; "Is there room in my heart for Jesus?" I heard someone once say, "If only we would know what God has planned and purposed for us here on earth; that we were created for his glory, for much more, we would leave it all and embrace the cross, not counting its cost". His glory awaits our 'yes'. John 16:13 has also been life changing for me. Whenever I have been oppressed by negative thoughts or have listened to the lies of the enemy, the Holy Spirit gently reminds me to ponder on this verse, "When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth." As I keep meditating on God's word, trying to understand him, he reveals his truth to me, I recognise the lies of the enemy and I see clearly once more. Let us seek God's clarity and guidance.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me surrender my all to you: my past, present and future so that I stay ready for your Kingdom's glory. Amen.

## Thursday May 18

Sixth Week of Easter

Acts  
18:1-8

Psalm  
98:1-4

John  
16:16-20

Our sorrow will turn into joy.

Today's readings remind us of the times we live in and give hope for the times to come. Similar to St. Paul's experience attempting to reason with the Jews and the Greeks in Corinth, the people in today's world seldom listen to Jesus. As Jesus foretold his disciples, "you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy." We are in the phase before we see Jesus again. This phase is where the world is rejoicing in its earthly pleasures. The phase where Christians are not accepted for their beliefs because self-centred people believe more in themselves over having a relationship with God. This phase is where we must be like St. Paul. We must continue believing and deepening our relationship with God so that we may share the Good News of Jesus among our neighbors. Our sorrow will turn into joy once we see the Lord again in a little while and the earth itself will rejoice because all will truly know that our Lord reigns.

Prayer: Abba Father, let your holy fire be enkindled and cloak our hearts so that we know what you dream about us. Amen.

## Friday May 19

Sixth Week of Easter

Acts  
18:9-18

Psalm  
47:2-7

John  
16:20-23

### The agony and the ecstasy.

In today's first reading we see how Jesus led St. Paul through a dream. Wouldn't we yearn to be led that way too? How easy life would be. But we know it does not happen this way. However, the Lord still leads us in the same way if only we ensure that our focus is on the Lord and not on the numerous trials we face. The same voice of leading will be heard through the word, in a worship song, on a random board on the road or any mundane thing that we daily do. Today's Gospel proclamation is about the agony and the ecstasy of the journey we have with the Lord. When we took the decision to follow the Lord and to give him the first place in what we do, we signed up for the many nights of weeping that would come. We are weak and frail human beings and God as a loving Father will surely discipline us to mould us into the image and likeness we were originally meant to be. In that he will also surely lead us through the darkest of nights into abundant joy, if only we keep our focus on the Lord.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us never forget that you are larger than our biggest problem. Amen.

## Saturday May 20

Sixth Week of Easter

Acts  
18:23-28

Psalm  
47:2-3,8-10

John  
16:23-28

### God guides us.

In line with God's will, Jesus has proven that whatever we need, will be given to us. The early Christians were bold enough to hold on to his words and trust them. Apollos knew only the baptism of John but he was zealous for Christ and his teachings. If we look at our lives, from what type of brokenness and emptiness were we led into this journey? It would have been in a moment of hopelessness that we surrendered our life to the Lord and said that we are truly tired and unable to go ahead with our strength alone. Just by this one step, God has faithfully taken over our lives and given us the strength to live each day by loving and spreading his love to others. Jesus wants us to rise, to seek him, and to surrender. And he is assuring us his help, just like how Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos, the will of God is going to take place in our lives as well. We only need to give the little we can and he is about to take the biggest step towards us, into our hearts. Let us wait with expectant hope.

Prayer: Abba Father, hold us by our hands and guide us.  
Amen.

## Sunday May 21

### Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

Acts  
1:1-11

Psalms  
47:2-3,6-9

Ephesians  
1:17-23

Matthew  
28:16-20

#### Are we ready to meet the Lord?

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. As the first reading from the book of Acts affirms Jesus Christ was lifted up before their eyes in a cloud. We profess this in the Apostle's Creed as well: "he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty."

Thus we have a God who suffered and died for our sake and who was gloriously resurrected and ascended into heaven on the fortieth day after his resurrection to be at the right hand of the Father to receive our prayer. It is a joyous occasion for us as well as for the disciples who lived then, for the promise of the Holy Spirit was made and fulfilled through him.

The Gospel proclamation is about the great commission of our Lord. Clothed in the righteousness of the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, we are called to carry the message of Christ to all humanity.

Therefore let us be reminded that, as Jesus was lifted up to heaven, he will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. Hence we are to be prepared and lead others to repentance before the second coming of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Living in the twenty first century we are often bombarded with horrifying news about crimes, war, corruption, sickness, and natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and volcanoes. Is the world's condition deteriorating? Are we surrounded by evil in an era filled with wickedness? Are we alarmed at these or are we trying to ignore the fact that we have to read the signs of the time?

It is time we took the word of God seriously and turned away from sin in repentance. Do we have the power and authority to refute error and warn our brothers and sisters about the preparedness for the coming of our Lord?

Let us genuinely make an effort to take a "U" turn on our road of life, realizing that repentance is necessary. May this Solemnity of the Ascension remind us that we have our Savior and Redeemer who watches over us, seated on the throne. He will return for us and we are accountable for what we do on earth.

May we take up our responsibility and the great Commission empowered by the Holy Spirit to take the message that we have to observe all that our Lord has commanded us.

As we wait for his second coming, let us prepare our hearts by listening to his Word and practising it faithfully.

Prayer: Abba Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit may there be repentance and transformation. Amen.

## Monday May 22

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts  
19:1-8

Psalm  
68:2-7

John  
16:29-33

I have overcome the world.

There is nothing in this world that can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom 8:35). This is why God sent his only Son to this world. Jesus was obedient to the will of his Father even unto death. It was his obedience to God, that conquered sin, which was brought into this world by human disobedience. Therefore, Jesus has indeed overcome the world and this victory he earned, is extended freely to everyone who chooses to believe in him. Today's first reading illustrates, that those who believes in the Lord Jesus are granted the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who keeps us united to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He will always be with us and never leave us during times of trouble. Jesus does not promise us a life free of suffering but assures us that his presence will give us peace and as we remain in him we will gain the power to overcome whatever troubles, trials and temptations the world may throw at us because he has defeated the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ, through whom we gain victory over sin. Amen.

## Tuesday May 23

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts  
20:17-27

Psalm  
68:10-11,20-21

John  
17:1-11

Amazing grace.

We read about two prayers. The prayer of the Lord Jesus was fulfilled in St Paul, and he in turn prayed for his flock. That prayer of the Lord Jesus has echoed down history to our lives today. How do we experience the prayer of the Lord Jesus? Is it being fulfilled? If yes, to what degree? Are we living in perfect unity with Christ and with those whom the Lord has given us to minister? How about our prayers for those entrusted to us, to be ministered by us, primarily those in our own homes? Can we say, like St. Paul, that we too consider our life worth nothing to us, and our only aim is to finish the race and complete the task that the Lord has given us, to testify to the good news of God's amazing grace? Are we proclaiming God's will to those under our care? The Lord's prayer is enough to equip and empower us to do what is humanly impossible. Let us cling to him for his power is made perfect in weakness. When we say "yes", God will minister to us and empower us for ministry.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for refreshing my weariness with the showers of your mercy and grace. Amen.

## Wednesday May 24

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts  
20:28-38

Psalm  
68:29-30,33-36

John  
17:11-19

Be on your guard and be watchful.

In the first reading, St. Paul is bidding farewell to the elders in Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem. They were a group of believers to whom he had preached the Good News. St. Paul has shepherded them for three years and now they will have to shepherd others. They will have to face many challenges from outside forces and from within. Similarly in the Gospel proclamation, Jesus is bidding farewell to his disciples as he sends them out into the world. Jesus knows they will face many challenges and prays to the Father, "Sanctify them by the truth: your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). We too, have heard the Good News. We have repented, believed and have been filled with the Holy Spirit. A time will come when we will be sent out to share the Good News. Challenges, doubts and setbacks are inevitable. In such circumstances, the secret of remaining sanctified is revealed in today's readings. We can overcome by surrendering ourselves to God and to his grace filled Word and by holding on to Jesus - the Word made flesh.

Prayer: Abba Father, protect all your shepherds whom you have called by name. Amen.

## Thursday May 25

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts  
22:30; 23:6-11

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

John  
17:20-26

We are not alone, God is with us.

Today's readings remind us of the joyful expectation of the coming of the Lord into our lives. The Gospel Proclamation speaks to us of the heart of the Lord Jesus, as he conversed with the Father about us and those yet to come. The Gospel Proclamation, is not only a reminder of our calling but also makes us aware, that as God's children, we too have the same opportunity and privilege to have a dialogue with the Father, just as Jesus did. Jesus shares the desires of his heart with the Father and we too could do the same. We could share the truth of our hearts with him. The journey ahead, is not a promise of a bed of roses. However, today's readings not only comfort us, but also bring us hope to know that God is our refuge and fortress in times of trouble, persecution and despair. He will whisper in our ears, in the silence of the night, "Take courage, I am with you." This is our hope and the purpose of our lives: to stay connected with the Father, to draw strength from Jesus and comfort from the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Abba Father, I desire to be connected with you and to walk in your ways. Amen.

## Friday May 26

Memorial of Saint Philip Neri, Priest

Acts  
25:13-21

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

John  
21:15-19

Do you love me?

It is somewhat confusing to see our Lord, who has done the impossible, who has defeated death and risen victorious, repeatedly asking the same question from St. Peter and repeating the same command. Surely the Lord would have known the innermost depth of St. Peter's heart and seen the love he had for him but still went on to emphasise this to the point that made St. Peter uncomfortable and hurt. For in his heart, he must have still carried the guilt of his denial of the Lord but his love for the Lord was real. Often, we are left in St. Peter's shoes. However much we try to love the Lord, we end up failing to keep at it. Despite our best intentions of serving the Lord, we tend to look out for our own wellbeing and in the process deny the Lord the love he deserves. We sadly deviate from the original mission we embarked on and go our own ways. But we have a merciful God, who never gives up on us. When we fail, he comes behind us, giving us opportunities to repent. Are we ready to take up this offer of a second chance?

Prayer: Abba Father, forgive us for the many times we failed to love you.  
Amen.

## Saturday May 27

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts  
28:16-20,30-31

Psalm  
11:4-5,7

John  
21:20-25

Believe that Jesus is Lord.

St. Peter asked Jesus how St. John would die. Jesus replied that St. Peter should not concern himself with that. Often, we tend to compare our lives to others, whether to rationalize our level of devotion to Christ or to question God's justice. Jesus responds to us as he did to St. Peter: "What is that to you? As for you, follow me." Early church history reports that after St. John spent several years in exile on the island of Patmos, he returned to Ephesus where he died as an old man, towards the end of the first century. The purpose of St. John's Gospel was to show that Jesus was the Son of God (20:31). The writer clearly and systematically presented the evidence for Jesus' claims. When evidence is presented in the courtroom, those who hear it must make a choice. Those who read the Gospel of St. John must also make a choice - is Jesus the Son of God, or is he not? We are the jury. The evidence has been presented. We have to decide. During this season of Easter let us take the time to read St. John's Gospel and believe!

Prayer: Abba Father, help me focus on my relationship with you rather than comparing it with others. Amen.

## Sunday May 28

Solemnity of Pentecost

Acts  
2:1-11

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

1 Corinthians  
12:3-7,12-13

John  
20:19-23

Breathe upon me breath of God!

Happy Birthday to our Church! On this beautiful day the Church came into being in power, unity and in the Spirit!

In today's readings, two instances of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are revealed. Some say that John 20:22 represents the giving of the Indwelling Spirit and Acts 2 represents the Outpouring of the Spirit for empowerment in God's work. Both are beautiful experiences of the Spirit's outpouring.

The outpouring in St John's Gospel would have taken place first. I call it the Peace and Fire experience. This is because our Lord was almost saying, "Are you ready?" and again "Are you ready?" and then "Fire"; meaning go! Or breathe in, take a deep breath and then 'Fire'. It was given to the apostles and they were given the mandate to go into the world. They were also given the authority to forgive sins. In a way, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was also born on that day. Jesus 'breathed' on them, like on the day of creation. Our Lord could have simply spoken but here he breathes almost initiating a sort of 'Rebirth' for every person. A second chance to live in a supernaturally enlightened way, to see with God's eyes and to feel with God's heart and to operate with his spirit.

The second outpouring which we call the Empowerment has some beautiful points we need to take note of, through key words. Firstly, they were all together in one place in prayer and unity. They were waiting with baited breath. It says 'suddenly' - the Holy Spirit's action and timing is unpredictable. The sad reality of our worship today is that it is so time bound and we have fewer opportunities of touching the power of the Spirit. There was a sound and a rush of wind, filling the entire place. It was a physical as well as an internal experience. Tongues of fire rested on each of them. The word says 'all of them' were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. There were no exceptions. The anointed believers began to speak in new languages and began to talk about God's deeds of power. Not about themselves.

In the letter to the Corinthians it is clarified where St. Paul says no one can say Jesus is Lord without the Holy Spirit and the manifestations are only for the common good and not for personal gratification. Finally St Paul says, "In the one spirit we were all baptized and we were all made to drink of one Spirit". Hence this experience is meant for one church. Every Christian is called into it and breathed upon by our Lord with fire to share the Good News with the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, we rest in your presence in anticipation of a greater outpouring of your Holy Spirit that we may live for you. Amen.

## Monday May 29

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Genesis  
3:9-15

Psalm  
87:1-3,5-7

John  
19:25-34

The Lord heals what we expose, not what we hide.

Our nakedness, which the enemy meant to use as a weapon against us, was turned into a bridge to perfect communion with our Maker. Jesus is the one who clothes us in his grace and spirit. But to be covered by him, we must first recognise our nakedness, and come out of hiding. The Lord heals what we expose, not what we hide. Vulnerability, though so difficult, is transformative. Imagine that we are standing at the foot of the cross. As we gaze into the eyes of our Saviour, let us give him the truth of our hearts. The pieces we are ashamed of, the parts we regret and the moments we reproach ourselves for. We will not be met with anger or condemnation but with eyes of love. We will experience the knots in our chest unravel, the weight on our minds lift and the remorse in our spirits dissipate. Will we remain in the grave of our shame and self-pity, or will we join him in the garden of glory and joy? Will we choose to be afraid and guarded or be brave and vulnerable with him? Will we choose to hide or be healed?

Prayer: Abba Father, teach me to surrender the truth of my heart to you. Teach me to be open and honest in your presence. Amen.

## Tuesday May 30

Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Sirach  
35:1-12

Psalm  
50:5-8,14,23

Mark  
10:28-31

Choose the difficult road.

Today's Gospel proclamation invites us to detach from the things that we are attached to. It is alright to use the things of this world, but we need to give priority to God. We may be attached to fame, money, lust or pride and thereby lose the peace and joy of the kingdom of God. We should give first place to the Lord, which brings peace to us and our families. If we look at the world, many are unhappy, darkness seems to be conquering the world. People are desperately chasing after things which give them instant joy. As believers, we need to take the difficult road, as painful as it might be, and follow the Lord's light which makes us whole. Let us pray using the lyrics of this hymn:

"Give me faith like Daniel in the lion's den  
Give me hope like Moses in the wilderness  
Give me a heart like David, Lord be my defense  
So I can face my giants with confidence."

Prayer: Abba Father, I choose to follow your light.  
Amen.

## Wednesday May 31

Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Zephaniah  
3:14-18

Isaiah  
12:2-6

Luke  
1:39-56

### The virtues of the Visitation.

The first reading speaks of the promises of God. Throughout history God was preparing his people to accept the Messiah. The blessing which came forth out of the fall of humanity is God's Messiah. Humanity was created in the image and likeness of God. But this image was tainted by the fall of humanity. To restore humanity to its original state God promised the Messiah. We perceive our life settings as huge mountains surrounding us. We think that we are unable to defeat these challenges. This is because we have a distorted identity. We do not perceive ourselves as children of God. Let us rejoice by singing praises to God because he has restored our true identity and made us his children. Today we celebrate the feast of the Visitation. Mother Mary carrying God's Messiah in her womb, visited Elizabeth. The Canticle of Mary portrayed God's true nature. God's greatest gift to humanity is the Messiah. God's Messiah restored us and set us free. John the Baptist was set free while he was in his mother's womb.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for giving us your Son and his Mother. May we receive your grace to love your Son and Mother Mary. Amen.

## Pentecost 2023

"The Holy Spirit is an active memory; he constantly rekindles the love of God in our hearts. We have experienced his presence in the forgiveness of our sins, in moments when we are filled with his peace, his freedom and his consolation. It is essential to cherish this spiritual memory. We always remember the things that go wrong; we listen to the voice within us that reminds us of our failures and failings, the voice that keeps saying: "Look, yet another failure, yet another disappointment. You will never succeed; you cannot do it". This is a terrible thing to be told. Yet the Holy Spirit tells us something completely different. He reminds us: "Have you fallen? You are a son or daughter of God. You are a unique, elect, precious and beloved child. Even when you lose confidence in yourself, God has confidence in you!" This is the "memory" of the Spirit, what the Spirit constantly reminds us: God knows you. You may forget about God, but he does not forget about you. He remembers you always.

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." (Pope Francis)

**Come, Holy Spirit!**

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# St. Nunzio Sulprizio

Nunzio Sulprizio was born on April 13, 1817, in Pescara, Italy. His father died when Nunzio was only three years old. Nunzio's mother remarried, but his stepfather paid no attention to him. Still, Nunzio faithfully attended Mass, prayed, and studied the lives of the saints. Their stories helped him learn how to live a holy, faith-filled life.

When his mother died, Nunzio was sent to live with his grandmother. She encouraged Nunzio to remain strong in his faith. But she, too, soon died, and Nunzio was sent to live with and to work for his Uncle Domenico. His uncle was a cruel man who did not see to Nunzio's physical comfort or health and who overworked him. Domenico would beat or curse Nunzio if his work was unsatisfactory. Eventually Nunzio became very ill. He offered his pain and suffering to God.

In time, another uncle introduced him to a fellow soldier who provided for Nunzio's care and for his needs. Nunzio made some progress, but the pain persisted. He continued to place his trust in God and was well aware of the fact that the end was near. On the date of his death, he asked for a crucifix to be brought to him before summoning his confessor and to receive the sacraments for the last time. He died on 5th May 1836 at the age of 19. His remains are now located in the Church of San Domenico Soriano in Naples. He was canonized on 14 October 2018 by Pope Francis.

**On Our Knees - In His Hands** is a book of reflections and aid to prayer, based on the daily readings of the mass. Its purpose is to help Catholics and other Christians engaged in the normal hustle and bustle of life to discover God's presence and direction in the practical situations they are placed in. This is made possible by a group of writers who themselves are lay people living at the heart of busy day-to-day life.

