

INTRODUCTION

When we are deeply engrossed in some work and when are in the urgent need to finish it and someone comes to help us with that work, a feeling of relief comes to us and the work becomes lighter. At the same time an atmosphere of friendship is created between the helper and the one who is helped and one who got help from the other person is also inspired to do likewise. This same mechanism can happen in our life too if we allow Mother Mary to help us through her intercessions. Mother Mary can be our friend; our guide and our mother if we allow and turn to her and let her do her part in our lives.

This month of September is a month dedicated to Mother Mary. During this month let us continue to pray to Mother Mary so that she can continue to pray and intercede for us and be a source of guidance in our lives through her powerful intercessions. Let the holy rosary be a source of our communication with her.

2014 Sep 1 Mon: Ordinary Weekday/ Labor Day (Labor Day)

*1 Cor 2: 1-5/ Ps 119: 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102/ Lk 4: 16-30. Labor Day Proper
Mass: Blessing of Human Labor*

Luke uses today's gospel passage to mark the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus has just returned from the desert and began teaching in the synagogues across the region. Doing this, he amazed people and word began spreading about him. (See Lk 4:15, the verse immediately before today's gospel.) Today's passage begins as Jesus goes to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, like he did literally hundreds and hundreds of times before. There, his townspeople are the first to hear who Jesus is and what he came to do. They are amazed, admiring, curious, thinking, "Jesus says he is the anointed one who will give sight to the blind! Wow! Could it be that Joseph's son is the messiah!?" Now, when I first return to my everyday life after an experience that brings me closer to God, I don't proclaim I am fulfilling Biblical prophecy. But, similar to Jesus, I often do return to my world and "wow" the people around me - with the insight I can share, or the peace and contentment and newfound energy others notice about me. But, then Jesus does something very unusual, certainly not

what I would expect. Jesus told the townsfolk that he was the Anointed One who would cure the blind. Responding out of admiration and curiosity, the townsfolk (his own people!) ask him to cure the blind - show them an example of the prophecy being fulfilled. Now, when I am in this situation and I just captured an audience, after telling them I could do something, I would...well...I would really "wow" the people by doing what I said I could do! Jesus, though, does not do this. He does not meet their expectations. Instead, as he will do time and time again, Jesus challenges people to grow past their expectations. In this case, Jesus tells his own people that he will do no miracles, signs, or wonders; he goes so far as to equate himself with other prophets who were not accepted in their native land. So many times throughout my life, when I did not feel understood or accepted by my loved ones or those interacting with me, I took comfort from today's gospel passage. I would think to myself, "See, I am just like Jesus! No prophet is understood in his own land by his own people. So, I can feel better knowing I am like Jesus.

Maybe this passage has some new lessons for me about how my identity is tied to others in ways Jesus' identity was not. His identity came from the Father. He did not need to act in accordance with people's expectations to validate who he was. Maybe that is his challenge to me today: knowing he is the Anointed One, can I work harder to meet what God calls me to be instead of concerning myself so much with the expectations of others?

2014 Sep 2 Tue: Ordinary Weekday

1 Cor 2: 10b-16/ Ps 145: 8-9. 10-11. 12-13ab. 13cd-14/ Lk 4: 31-37

Throughout history great leaders have arisen to lead peoples and nations and kingdoms. There have been such leaders from ancient times until the present. I'm thinking **of leaders like Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Constantine, Tamerlane, Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent, and Napoleon.** All of these

leaders ruled vast territory and were followed by great numbers of people. Not all of these leaders were good men. Some of them abused their leadership and made life worse for their followers. All of these leaders died and eventually the empires they ruled disappeared.

In today's gospel Jesus is presented to us as a great leader. He is shown to be a teacher, an exorcist, and a healer. This visit of Jesus to Capernaum takes place at the very beginning of his public life here on earth. Jesus has not yet attracted the huge crowds that were to follow him later. He is able to visit the synagogue and there teach the people. Later on such visits would be impossible because the huge crowds that followed him were too big to be accommodated indoors. After this visit to Capernaum the number of people seeking to see and hear Jesus would steadily grow. St. Luke tells us that the people were **But in this scene we see that Jesus is already a leader. His words (the teaching) and his actions (the exorcism) demonstrate his leadership.** Astonished by his words and amazed by his exorcism of the evil spirit. We can well understand that they were. But we may ask what there was about Jesus that marked him as a leader and made the crowds want to follow him? The people of Israel had heard great teachers before. They had also witnessed exorcisms before. So what was it that made Jesus a leader, a person who was listened to and respected?

The dictionary tells us that authority is power or influence resulting from knowledge, fame or prestige. The authority of Jesus comes from the fact that he is God. **As God Jesus has infinite knowledge and prestige. As man Jesus was able to communicate that knowledge and prestige in a way that demonstrated the authority of which St. Luke speaks.** When Jesus spoke and acted with that authority, people were moved

to seek him out and to follow him. The result of Jesus speaking with authority was that news of him began to spread throughout all of Galilee and people began to come from all the surrounding area to see and hear him. Jesus is a great leader, but unlike the leaders mentioned above, his kingdom is not an earthly one. And unlike the kingdoms of these earthly leaders, his kingdom survived and grew larger after his death. It will continue to grow and survive as long as this world lasts.

2014 Sep 3 Wed: Gregory the Great, pp, r, dr M

1 Cor 3: 1-9/ Ps 33: 12-13. 14-15. 20-21/ Lk 4: 38-44

Today, we are facing a great contrast: people out in search of Jesus and him healing all kind of "sickness" (starting with Simon's mother-in-law); at the same time, "demons were driven out, howling!" (Lk 4:41). That is: On one side, goodness and peace; evil and despair, on the other. It is not the first time we see the devil being "driven out" that is, escaping from the presence of God amid shouting and expostulation. Let us remember the demon-possessed man of Gerasenes (cf. Lk 8:26-39). Yet, it is surprising that, here, it is the same devil that "comes out" to meet Jesus (though, admittedly, quite furious and angry, for God's presence was disturbing his shameful tranquility).

How often, too, we think that finding Jesus is just a nuisance! It bothers us having to attend Mass on Sundays; it flusters us to remember how long it is since our last prayer; we are ashamed of our mistakes, but we do not go to the Doctor of our soul begging for forgiveness... Let us ponder whether it is not our Lord who has to come out looking for us, when we are "reluctant" to leave our little "cave" to go out and meet He who is the shepherd of our souls and lives! This is simply called, half-heartedness. This behavior has a diagnosis,

though: apathy, lack of tension in our soul, anguish, disorderly curiosity, hyperactivity, spiritual laziness about matters of faith, pusillanimity, desire of being alone with ourselves... But there is also an antidote: to stop contemplating one's navel and getting down to work. To take the small commitment to devote every day a short while to look and listen to Jesus (this is what we call praying): Jesus did it too, for "He left at daybreak and looked for a solitary place" (*Lk* 4:42). To take the small commitment of defeating our selfishness in some small thing every day for the benefit of others (this is what we call loving).

2014 Sep 4 Thu: Ordinary Weekday

1 Cor 3: 18-23/ Ps 24: 1bc-2. 3-4ab. 5-6/ Lk 5: 1-11

In today's Gospel, Jesus starts off by using Simon's boat in order to preach to the crowds from a better vantage point. Often God has need of our generosity in material, everyday things to spread his message. We need to be open to lend our time and our skills when required for parish activities, for example. Maybe he needs us to drive someone to Church on Sunday in our vehicles. Or maybe we need to be generous with some charitable work that needs our support to spread God's word. Sometimes he uses material things in other ways. The next thing he uses is the fish with which he fills Simon's net in a miraculous way. This is less a matter of logistics (as it will be, in part, when he feeds the 5000) and more a matter of communication. By this miracle he shows Simon Peter that he, Jesus, can take Simon's human skills and multiply them a hundredfold - especially when Simon obeys with humility despite his doubts. Simon's humility - "At your command, I will lower the nets" - opens the door to God's power. We have

to learn to see God at work in our own lives when we are docile to his grace, and to submit to his manifest will with trust despite hesitation about our abilities.

There is a third element that Jesus decides to use in this Gospel passage: Simon himself. God does not just want us to serve him only with our material things, time and talents. He wants us to give him ourselves. Not that we are all called to be consecrated apostles like Simon Peter; rather, we are all called to be apostles and serve God in some way according to our particular state of life. He made us; we belong to him. He knows us from before we were conceived. False humility is not a valid excuse. He doesn't accept it from Peter when he objects that "he is a sinful man." He calls us to trust in his power to forgive and transform us, and to put our lives in his hands, knowing that he will take the helm when we do our best for him. That is true humility.

Peter had never had such a big catch of big fish. And he would never have another one like it, till after the Resurrection when Christ would repeat the miracle. Christ reveals himself as the most remarkable fisherman ever to walk the shores of Gennessaret. He is the fullness not only of the divine but also of the human. Christ brings us not only to the fulfilment of our supernatural vocation. He also leads us to the fullness of humanity. Only someone who, like Peter, knows his own limitations is able to accept that the fruit of this apostolic work is not his, but belongs to whom has been profiting from him, as of an instrument. The Lord told the Apostles that from then on they would catch men, but the true Fisherman is Him: the good disciple is nothing but the net that catches the fish, and this net only works if it is used as the Apostles did: leaving everything and following him (cf. *Lk 5:11*).

2014 Sep 5 Fri: Ordinary Weekday

1 Cor 4: 1-5/ Ps 37: 3-4. 5-6. 27-28. 39-40/ Lk 5: 33-39

Which comes first, fasting or feasting? The disciples of John the Baptist were upset with Jesus' disciples because they did not fast. Fasting was one of the three most important religious duties, along with prayer and almsgiving. Jesus gave a simple explanation. There's a time for fasting and a time for feasting (or celebrating). To walk as a disciple with Jesus is to experience a whole new joy of relationship akin to the joy of the wedding party in celebrating with the groom and bride their wedding bliss. But there also comes a time when the Lord's disciples must bear the cross of affliction and purification. For the disciple there is both a time for rejoicing in the Lord's presence and celebrating his goodness and a time for seeking the Lord with humility and fasting and for mourning over sin. Jesus goes on to warn his disciples about the problem of the "closed mind" that refuses to learn new things.

Jesus used an image familiar to his audience – new and old wineskins. In Jesus' times, wine was stored in wineskins, not bottles. New wine poured into skins was still fermenting. The gases exerted gave pressure. New wine skins were elastic enough to take the pressure, but old wine skins easily burst because they were hard. What did Jesus mean by this comparison? Are we to reject the old in place of the new? Just as there is a right place and a right time for fasting and for feasting, so there is a right place for the old as well as the new. Jesus says *the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old* (Matthew 13:52). The Lord doesn't want us to hold rigidly to the past and to be resistant to the new work of his Holy Spirit in our lives. He wants our minds and hearts to be like the new wine skins – open and ready to receive the *new wine of the Holy Spirit*.

2014 Sep 6 Sat: Ordinary Weekday/ BVM

1 Cor 4: 6b-15/ Ps 145: 17-18. 19-20. 21/ Lk 6: 1-5

What does the commandment "keep holy the Sabbath" require of us? Or better yet, what is the primary intention behind this command? The religious leaders confronted Jesus on this issue. The "Sabbath rest" was meant to be a time to remember and celebrate God's goodness and the goodness of his work, both in creation and redemption. It was a day set apart for the praise of God, his work of creation, and his saving actions on our behalf. It was intended to bring everyday work to a halt and to provide needed rest and refreshment. Jesus' disciples are scolded by the scribes and Pharisees, not for plucking and eating corn from the fields, but for doing so on the Sabbath. In defending his disciples, Jesus argues from the scriptures that human need has precedence over ritual custom. Why didn't the Pharisees recognize the claims of mercy over rules and regulations? Their zeal for ritual observance blinded them from the demands of charity. Jesus' reference to the *bread of the Presence* alludes to the true *bread from heaven* which he offers to all who believe in him. Jesus, the Son of David, and the *Son of Man*, a title for the *Messiah*, declares that he is "Lord of the Sabbath". He healed on the Sabbath and he showed mercy to those in need. All who are burdened can find true rest and refreshment in him.

2014 Sep 7 SUN: TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ez 33: 7-9/ Ps 95: 1-2. 6-7. 8-9 (8)/ Rom 13: 8-10/ Mt 18: 15-20

Through the first reading of today we are called to make a movement from evil to good. To begin with we must refrain ourselves from evil and must correct those who live in sinfulness. We are called to be the protector of others. We are called to say the truth and others to goodness. The truth that we are called say is love. We should be able to correct others in a friendly manner. Our call to Christian discipleship does not end there it calls us to go one more step beyond. As we correct the mistakes of others we must be able to correct our own mistakes and be a model to others. Jesus teaches us to hate sin and love the sinner. Though his life example Jesus calls us to love and pray for sinners. Patience is necessary to act in such a manner. Patience is the

fruit of the Holy Spirit. We must always pray for the working of the spirit in our lives.

How far can we move from the conditional love to a true self giving love?

Am I courageous enough to correct others?

How open am I to be corrected by others?

How do I correct others, is it out of love of our neighbours?

2014 Sep 8 Mon: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary F

Mi 5: 1-4a or Rom 8: 28-30/ Ps 13: 6ab. 6c/ Mt 1: 1-16. 18-23

Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham's lineage through the line of David, King of Israel. Matthew concludes his genealogy by stating that both Mary, Jesus' mother and Joseph, his foster father, came from the line of David. Mary was asked to assume in faith a burden of tremendous responsibility. It had never been heard of before that a child could be born without a natural father. That required faith and trust. Second, Mary was not yet married. Pregnancy outside of wedlock was not tolerated in those days. Mary was only espoused to Joseph, and such an engagement had to last for a whole year. She was asked to assume a great risk. She could have been rejected by Joseph, by her family, by all her own people. Mary knew that Joseph and her family would not understand without revelation from God. She nonetheless believed and trusted in God's promises. Joseph, a just and God-fearing man, believed the message given to him to take Mary as his wife and to accept the child in her womb as the promised Messiah.

It is difficult for us to imagine not having Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in our faith, our Church and our very lives. She is indeed God's gift. Jesus himself gave her to us as Mother when from the cross he told the apostle, John, "Behold, your mother" (Jn 19:27). Her importance in the Church is realized in all her feast days that tie her so closely to the whole story of salvation. September 8 marks Mary's birthday. Ancient tradition tells us her parents were named Anna and Joachim (feast day July 26). Isn't it good to know that Jesus had grandparents? This is another wonderful reminder of how "human" the Son of God became when he was conceived by Mary and took on a human nature like ours.

2014 Sep 9 Tue: Peter Claver, p, r, ms M

1 Cor 6: 1-11/ Ps 149: 1b-2. 3-4. 5-6a and 9b/ Lk 6: 12-19

Jesus, we are told, went up into the mountains to pray and spent the whole night there in prayer to God. Some might wonder what Jesus would have to pray about. Such a question may reveal a limited concept of what prayer is. It is not just a question of asking for things. It is even less a question of fulfilling a religious duty, "saying our prayers". Prayer is ultimately making contact with God, the beginning and end of all things. It makes a lot of sense that Jesus would have wanted to be in intimate contact with his Father and to have spent long periods with him. One of Jesus' main concerns was that he do the will of his Father. Prayer was one way of making sure that there was completely harmony with that will. Luke's gospel shows Jesus at prayer more than any of the others. He also shows **Jesus praying before all the important stages in his public life**. As soon as this period of prayer was over, he called together his disciples and from them he chose twelve as apostles.

We know that among those who came to hear Jesus was a group, comprising both men and women, who regularly followed him and were committed to his teachings. **Elsewhere we know of 72 such disciples who were sent out on a mission to do what Jesus was doing**. After the ascension, we are told of 120 believers waiting for the coming of the Spirit. **It is from these that Jesus chooses 12 to be Apostles, with a special mandate to continue his mission for the Kingdom**. Although the order of names varies in the different gospels, the list is always **headed by Peter while Judas is placed last**. We can sometimes be rather casual in our use of the terms 'disciples' and 'apostles' but they have very distinct meanings. The word 'disciple' is applied to any person who commits himself to be a follower of Jesus. The word 'disciple' comes from a word which means 'to learn'. There is a passive element present, in the sense of the disciple sitting at the feet of the guru and learning from him. Jesus' disciples regularly called him 'Rabbi' or teacher. **'Apostle' however has a much more active meaning. It refers to a person who goes out as an emissary, delegated to pass on information or commands or instructions to others on behalf of some authority.**

2014 Sep 10 Wed: Ordinary Weekday

1Cor 7/25-31 Lk 6/2026

In today's first reading, Paul tells us that we should not be defined by the world "for the world in its present form is passing away." We are not who the world says we are nor are we limited by what the world says we can or cannot do. Jesus extends this detachment from material 'things' to more abstract ideas of control, security and esteem. It is not to say that you reject or deny security or esteem or material comforts, but you do not depend on them and make them your priorities' (idols) or try to gain or hold onto them at all cost. We need to let go of our fears so we can be courageous. We need to let go of our doubts so we can trust. We need to let go of being in control so we can be vulnerable. We need to let go of our need for affirmation to be free to say what is true. We need to let go of our need for security so we are free to risk everything for the building of God's kingdom of unity. Jesus tells us we are blessed if we have a healthy attitude of acceptance of all we have as gift, the bad and the good, understanding that the 'things' are not you nor are they proof of God's love for you. The real you, the you God knows and loves, is not defined by the 'things' you have, or by the view that the world has of you. What the world values is not what God values. What the world sees is not what God sees. Today's Psalm sings of the beauty of who you are in God's eyes. God desires your beauty over all others. You are glorious in God's eyes. Listen to God's song of love to you. Let go of everything else.

2014 Sep 11 Thu: Ordinary Weekday

1 Cor 8: 1b-7. 11-13/ Ps 139: 1b-3. 13-14ab. 23-24/ Lk 6: 27-38

Here Luke presents only a few of Jesus sayings which Matthew combines in chapters 5 to 7 of his Gospel. Some people feel cheated when they see that Jesus speaks about changing our life rather than about reforming society let us not reproach Jesus for not mentioning social reform at a time when few understood what it was. The reason is elsewhere: Jesus deals with the essential. The root of evil is within people. It is from living and growing. It is equally obvious that not a single revolution, however many benefits it may bring, can establish a less oppressive society, as long as people

themselves are not transformed according to the Gospel. Jesus teaches us the way toward growth and freedom.

All need conversion to Jesus word. A Jesus obvious fondness for the poor and oppressed does not mean they are better. It means God is compassionate, sharing a deeper mercy where misery is deeper, offering hope and total liberation where hope is dimmest the oppressed person is not innocent if they were not paralyzed by fear divisiveness, and greed for the advantages offered to him by his oppressor he would attain a moral power capable of renewing the world. Thus the oppressed will not be freed unless they grow in confidence in God, which will enable them to understand each other and risking a way of reconciliation.

Give to the ones who ask. Jesus does not give a rule which is automatically applicable in all situations we know there are times when we should not give because it would encourage bad habits. Jesus wants to challenge our conscience: why do you refuse to give. Are you afraid you will not be paid back? What if this was the opportunity to trust your father and to let go of something which is your treasure. You who wish to be perfect why you ignore so many opportunities to give up your own wisdom in order to let god take care of you.

2014 Sep 12 Fri: Ordinary Weekday/ Holy Name of Mary

1 Cor 9: 16-19. 22b-27/ Ps 84: 3. 4. 5-6. 12/ Lk 6: 39-42

The context of the first letter of St. Paul to Corinthians is worth mention. In Corinth, there existed a dynamic though not well ordered church, composed of Jews and Greeks converted by Paul. Many of them were in danger of returning to the vices of their former lives, once the enthusiasm of their first years as Christians had worn off. Those responsible in the church apparently were not capable of dealing with many problems. Internal divisions and doubts about faith. They therefore, called upon Paul who wrote the present letter.

The context of the message is renouncing one's rights: and Paul gives his own example. For the sake of the gospel Paul renounce his rights of better treatment from the people. With the poor he became poor and one among them; with the weak he became weak for the salvation of souls. He is ready to adapt to the situations and lives of people in order to

understand them better and gain their souls in return. Paul stands as an example not only to the people of Corinth but to all the Christian faithful in today's context. As Disciples of Christ we are challenged to let go our ego and to renounce the status and privileges that we enjoy for the sake of the gospel.

In the gospel reading Jesus gives important to the self evaluation and self examination of one's own life and not to look at the life and weakness of others. It is a human nature to look at the weakness of others and criticize them. As result people despise others, for they consider themselves righteous and holy. Therefore, whatever unholy is rejected and despise and look down by the self righteous people. However, Jesus goes against this human nature and change the perspective towards life. Jesus challenged the Christians to go against the current of the society. We are invited to examine and correct our own self first before we correct others. Be the change you wish to see in the world.

2014 Sep 13 Sat: John Chrysostom, bp, dr M

1 Cor 10: 14-22/ Ps 116: 12-13. 17-18/ Lk 6: 43-49

Today, the Lord surprises us by "advertising" himself. It is not my intention to "shock" anyone with this assertion. It is only our earthly publicity that lessens the great and supernatural things. What induce us to suspiciously look at publicity are, for instance, promises such as those assuring us that, within a few weeks, we will be losing five or six kilograms if using a certain "trap product" (or others to the same extent). But, when we have a hundred per cent guaranteed "product", and –as in the case of the Lord– nothing is being sold in exchange of money, and we are only asked to believe him while considering him our leader and a model of a certain life style, then this kind of "publicity" should not surprise us and can be accepted as totally legitimate. Has not Jesus been the greatest "publicist" when He said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6)?

Today, He affirms that "the one who comes to me and listens to my words and acts accordingly" is wise and "is like the builder who dug deep and laid the foundations of his house on rock" (Lk 6:47-48), for he now has a well built house, that

can face any kind of weather. On the contrary, if the builder is not so sensible, he will end up in the middle of a pile of rubble and, if he was in the house when the flood burst into it, he may lose not only the house but his own life, too. Therefore, it is not enough to get close to Jesus, but we have to listen, with the maximum attention, to his teachings and, most of all, to carry them out. For even the curious, the heretic or the history or philology scholar may approach him... So only by coming close to him, and basically, by practicing Jesus' doctrine, shall we be able to build a building of Christian saintliness, as a paradigm for the faithful pilgrims and glory of the celestial Church.

2014 Sep 14 SUN: EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS F

Nm 21: 4b-9/ Ps 78: 1bc-2. 34-35. 36-37. 38/ Phil 2: 6-11/ Jn 3: 13-17

The beauty of being a disciple of Jésus is to carry the cross, to rejoice even when everything is wrong knowing that God is there and turning everything for good.

Today we celebret the feast of the exaltation of thé cross. We celebrate this important feast for two reasons: (1) to recall the historic event that proved to be extremely important in the life of the Christian church, and (2) to underline the importance of the symbol and reality of the cross in the daily life of every Christian. The cross which was looked down and considered as the sign of shame, where the most grievous criminals were crucified, the death of Jesus, brought new value and meaning to it. What we called failure, turned to success, what we called shame, turned as glory and death in to life. The cross became the icon or symbol of Christian faith. The cross expresses the depths of God's love for humanity who sent his only son and who died on the cross. Today the cross is not just a piece of wood. It is a symbolic summary of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ by which we have been redeemed. It is a symbol of our faith in the crucified and risen one, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the readings of the day we heard, the Israelites were saved by looking at the bronze serpent. The serpent who was the cause of human fall in the Garden of Eden is the life giving symbol in today's 1st reading. Is it a paradox or metaphor? Similarly, we see in the New Testament, the cross of death

becoming the cross of life. The first reading of the day prefiguring Jesus' life, death and resurrection, who will be exalted for his humility and obedience. (Col: 2:5-11). As the grumbling, disobedient and violent Israelites were saved by looking at the bronze serpent so the new Israelites will be saved by looking at the exalted cross of Jesus Christ.

On this feast day our constitution also reminds us the important of cross as it is our only hope. Cross was very dear to Blessed Moreau. He was constantly in touch with cross. Cross was the strength in times of weakness, comfort in times of distress, symbol of love and acceptance in times of rejection. We as a family of Holy Cross do we put our hope in the cross? Do we pray to the redeeming cross? - The cross, the sign of victory, sign of redemption and life. Blessed Moreau never withdrew his eyes and his hope from the cross which strengthened him to found the congregation of Holy Cross. We speak about spirituality and charism of holy cross; we make many types and forms of prayer for various needs and intentions. Can we formulate a simple prayer to the cross which is our only hope? Can we make a prayer that will be prayed not only today but every day everywhere in the congregation as our spirituality?

Dear friends as we celebrate the feast of The Exaltation of The Cross and as we have chosen the theme Cross a Star Way to Heaven let our prayer be: O cross thou art the fountain of love and liberty. Shine down upon the people who search for the truth. Look down upon the needy and confirm them in strength and grace, thou art our true salvation in thee we place our hope. Be thou our sign of victory, redeem us from sin, renew in us thy passion and grant us eternal life. Amen

2014 Sep 15 Mon: Our Lady of Sorrows M (Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time)

*1 Cor 11: 17-26. 33/Ps 40: 7-8a. 8b-9. 10. 17/ Optional Sequence Stabat Mater/
Jn 19: 25-27 or Lk 2: 33-35*

Does suffering or sorrow weigh you down? The cross brings us face to face with Jesus' suffering. He was alone. All his disciples had deserted him except for his mother and three women along with John, the beloved disciple. The apostles had

fled in fear. But Mary, the mother of Jesus and three other women who loved him were present at the cross. They demonstrate the power of love for overcoming fear (1 John 4:18). At the beginning of Jesus' birth, when he was presented in the temple, Simeon had predicted that Mary would suffer greatly -- *a sword will pierce through your own soul* (uke 2:33-35). Many have called Mary a martyr in spirit. Bernard of Clairvaux said: Jesus "died in body through a love greater than anyone had known. She died in spirit through a love unlike any other since his." Mary did not despair in her sorrow and loss, since her faith and hope were sustained by her trust in God and the love she had for her Son. Jesus, in his grief and suffering, did not forget his mother. He entrusted her care to John, as well as John to her. No loss, no suffering can keep us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39). Paul the Apostle says that *love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things* (1 Cor. 13:3). We can find no greater proof of God's love for us than the willing sacrifice of his Son on the cross.

The feast of Our Lady of seven Sorrows is a very recent celebration in honor of Mary. In the Middle Ages, there was devotion to the five joys of Mary. This was later balanced by a commemoration of five sorrows. Later the sorrows were increased to seven. Whether we count five or seven or any other number is not to the point. The celebration honors Our Lady who gave herself to the Lord even when it meant suffering and hardship. The message is that we are called to be loyal and faithful, even when times are rough. Faith does not always mean good feeling. The cross is the center of our faith, and each of us must somehow carry his/her share of the cross.

2014 Sep 16 Tue: Cornelius, pp, mt, and Cyprian, bp, mt M

1 Cor 12: 12-14. 27-31a/ Ps 100: 1b-2. 3. 4. 5/ Lk 7: 11-17

How do you respond to the misfortunes of others? In a number of places the gospel records that Jesus was "moved to the depths of his heart" when he met with individuals and with groups of people. Why was Jesus so moved on this occasion when he met a widow and a crowded funeral procession on their way

to the cemetery? Jesus not only grieved the untimely death of a young man, but he showed the depth of his concern for the woman who lost not only her husband, but here only child as well. And He not only had heart-felt compassion for the widow who lost her only son, he also had extraordinary supernatural power -- the ability to restore life and to make whole again. Jesus, however, as a Jew incurred grave risk by approaching the bier, since the Jews understood that contact with a dead body made oneself ritually impure. His physical touch, however, not only restored life but brought freedom and wholeness to soul as well as body. Jesus claimed as his own one whom death had seized as its prey. By his word of power he restored life for a lad marked for death. Jesus is Lord not only of the living but of the dead as well. Jesus triumphed over the grave and he promises that because he lives (and will never die again), we also shall have abundant life with and in him both now and forever (John 14:19).

2014 Sep 17 Wed: Ordinary Weekday/ Robert Bellarmine, bp, r, dr

1 Cor 12: 31 – 13: 13/ Ps 33: 2-3. 4-5. 12 and 22/ Lk 7: 31-35

Today's first reading is the most beautiful chapter in the bible. Remember the context: Paul has been speaking about spiritual gifts. The Corinthians had been torn by dissension; various factions bragged that their gift was better than someone else's gift. Paul says that there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit, and all gifts are to be used to build up the one Body of Christ. Then he urges the Corinthians to strive after greater gifts: If they have the gift of prophecy or of tongues or any other gift and have not love, they are nothing! Love is always patient, kind, never rude, never self-seeking, and so on. This passage is used most frequently at weddings, but we should remember that love or charity is the most important of all virtues for everyone. It must be the basis and motivation of everything we are and do.

The gospel selection is a contrast to the first reading: Some people will find fault with everything. John the Baptist was austere, and they said he was possessed by a demon. Jesus went to parties and dinners, and they said he was a glutton and drunkard. We should not care what others think; our care should be for what God thinks. And in all things, our motivation must be love.

2014 Sep 18 Thu: Ordinary Weekday

1 Cor 15: 1-11/ Ps 118: 1b-2. 16ab-17. 28/ Lk 7: 36-50

The Corinthians, in the midst of a pagan world were concerned about matters that again relevant in our times, such as celibacy and marriage, about living together with those who do not share the Christian faith, about conducting the assemblies for both the celebration of the Eucharist and the use of spiritual gifts then about the resurrection of the dead.

Therefore, in this letter St. Paul wants to affirm and prove to the Corinthians that resurrection from the death is real and is a fact. Many Greeks thought that at death the immortal soul leaves the body and remains alone. Was it admitted to the paradise of souls? Did it come to the great reservoir of souls already gone or who were to return, forgetting all the past lived on earth? Others held as do a good number of Christians today that all ends with death. Paul will therefore remind the Corinthians that faith in the resurrection is at the heart of the Christian message.

Paul would use the word *I remind you of the gospel* to affirm the authority of the gospel and its message. Here certainly we may speak of good news, for death as something unknown is and always has been the great burden of human life. Paul begins with the resurrection of Jesus as a fact and from that he then draws consequences: our own resurrection.

In the gospel St. Luke shows that Jesus welcomes and show compassion to the sinners. What the world considers useless, it is useful to God. What the world despised and look down, it has a special place in God's kingdom. What the world reject because it is unholy, it is precious in God's sight. Therefore, God's ways and human ways are different.

2014 Sep 19 Fri: Ordinary Weekday/ Januarius, bp, mt

1 Cor 15: 12-20/ Ps 17: 1bcd. 6-7. 8b and 15/ Lk 8: 1-3

In the Jewish society, no spiritual master would have spoken to a woman in public: women were not even admitted to the synagogues. Nevertheless, Jesus did not pay the least attention to such universally accepted prejudices. Various

women took Jesus words and attitude as a call to freedom. They even joined the circle of his intimate friends while ignoring the gossip. Here we have a fundamental testimony about the freedom of the gospel.

Jesus was truly human, and as such he belonged to a race and a culture; he was a Jew of his time and his gospel was attuned to the culture that he shared. Yet Jesus did not adopt the inhuman traits of his culture; nor did he accept the prejudices of the Jews of his time with regard to women, to public sinners, to pagans and so on, nor did he share their views in regard to the Sabbath. His gospel is a leaven that changes cultures for better; in many respects his way of life goes against the mainstreams of cultures.

Luke wants to present the theology of universalism in the economy of salvation. The kingdom of heaven is inclusive irrespective of gender and caste differences. Jesus has come to break the barriers set by human being. The kingdom of heaven is wide open to the humanity. The curtain of disparity of cult and disparity of caste, gender, gentiles and Jews is torn down by Jesus. Therefore, now we become one people of God. As people of God it is our duty to proclaim the kingdom of God and to reach out the message of God's love and peace to our neighbors and the society at large.

Hence, the gospel of the day invites us to conform ourselves to the standard of the kingdom and not to the standard of this world. To go against the conventions and custom of the society, for we are people set apart for a special purpose of proclaiming the kingdom God in this world.

2014 Sep 20 Sat: Andrew Kim Taegon, p, mt, Paul Chong Hasang, ca, mt, & co., mts M

1 Cor 15: 35-37. 42-49/ Ps 56: 10c-12. 13-14/ Lk 8: 4-15

From the gospel of today St. Luke presents to us four theological themes: Universality, the word of God, kingdom of God, God's revelation and Community dimension. I would like to connect the theme of universality with the theme of the kingdom of God and the theme of the word of God to connect with the revelation and the community dimension.

The theme on universality is very much projected and visible in the Gospel of today. We see people from towns and country side came to listen to Jesus preaching and teaching. It does not mention the name of these places and the types of people who listen to Jesus also is silenced. This shows the inclusiveness of the kingdom of God. When we interpret in today's context these people could be you and me who listen to the sermon on every Sunday. The kingdom of God is always open to us; it is up to us to respond or to remain indifferent to the reality around us. As the saying goes: the door of faith is always open to us. Are we ready to enter?

The word of God is spread and sown in the hearts of believers and the community at large. And God reveals his word to all the people, but only simple people who trust in divine providence received it. The people who trust in themselves and in their wealth will fail to receive and to recognize God, because they lack nothing. Therefore, we see in the gospel people responded to it differently and receive the word of God differently. For some they even fail to recognize that it is the word of God. Some people respond to it with great enthusiasm but they fail to sustain till the end. The interest and pleasure of the world carries them away from the main stream. When we received the word of God and respond to the invitation of God to follow his path, it will not be an easy way. Trials and difficulty will surely come and chock our life unless we stand firm with God.

2014 Sep 21 SUN: TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Is 55: 6-9/ Ps 145: 2-3. 8-9. 17-18 (18a)/ Phil 1: 20c-24. 27a/ Mt 20: 1-16a

In the first reading from the book of prophet Isaiah, the prophet reminds his people that if they really look at the circumstances of their lives they will realize God's hand in them. Chapters 40-55 of Isaiah record prophecies spoken at the end of the Babylonian captivity of the people of Judah, when they were returning from enslavement to a devastated homeland. The words were meant to give them hope and to keep them from losing faith in God. The whole Chapter 55 promises both material and spiritual relief. Isaiah reminds the people

that their years of ignoring their covenant with God had brought the world crashing down around them: their cities destroyed, their temple razed, their wealth pillaged, their hopes dashed. But because of God's great love and mercy, His chosen people were to be forgiven. They would return home, their land was to be restored and their relationship with God would be reestablished.

Isaiah reminds us that the God of Moses and the prophets doesn't think in the same way that we do. God is more merciful than we, and more forgiving. He does not think like us. As Isaiah reminds us, **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord."** Perhaps we would have a better world if we were to adopt some of God's ways instead of asking questions like "why should the innocent suffer, why should cruel tyrants live and prosper, why should there be natural disasters like hurricane Katrina? Our faith teaches us that, as a loving Father, God acts for our good. God is always near to us in this life, and if we remain near to him while on this earth we can trust in His love and goodness to keep us near Him forever in heaven.

In the second reading St. Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians either from a prison cell in Rome (61-63 A.D.), or possibly from Ephesus (56 A.D.). Paul was a late comer in God's vineyard, preaching the Gospel. But he worked with zeal and interest for God's News of Redemption and Salvation for all. Philippi was a very privileged city of Macedonia and the site of the first Christian church in Europe. Although far from Rome, it was given the status of a Roman city. Its people didn't have to pay taxes to Rome and the people dressed themselves as Romans and spoke the language of Rome. But Paul had told them that once they became followers of Jesus, their citizenship was not in Rome, but in heaven. Their ways were not to be Roman ways, but the way of the Gospel. The

Philippians had received the gospel from Paul eagerly, and supported him on his further missionary travels. He is very grateful. This is mature Pauline thought for a mature community, expressed in unusually personal terms. Today's passage is most intimate indicating another difference between God's perspective and ours.

Paul is trying to decide whether to prefer death (he was in prison, possibly facing execution) or life. In this reading, Paul speaks as one who has put on the mind of Christ. He says that he does not know whether he prefers to live or die. The ordinary human point of view is one that greatly prefers life to death. But the perspective of God is different. Paul says that to die would be good because it would bring him into greater unity with Christ. On the other hand, to live would also be good because it would allow Paul to continue his work as an apostle. Having taken on the perspective of God, Paul is equally ready to live or die. Paul is an example of how grace operates. His own wishes are subordinated to the needs of the Philippians, and both Paul and the Philippians enjoy the privilege of believing in Christ and of suffering for him. Being a Christian means accepting God's word without explanation or justification. That is how *"we conduct ourselves worthy of the gospel of Christ."*

The parable described in today's gospel is known as *"the Parable of Workers in the Vineyard"* or *"the Parable of the Generous Landlord."* This remarkable and rather startling parable is found only in Matthew. Matthew introduces this parable into his gospel with his traditional "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." formula. There is Gospel or good news in this parable because it is the story of the landlord's love and generosity representing God's love and generosity. It is the story of how God looks at us, and He sees our needs and He meets those needs. The question in God's mind is not 'how

much do these people deserve? But rather, 'how can I help them? How can I save them before they perish? It is all about grace and blessings.

The kingdom of heaven, says Jesus, is like a landowner who goes out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. He rounds up a group at 6 a.m., agrees to pay them the usual daily wage and then puts them into action. At nine o'clock, he rounds up another group. At noon, he recruits a third team, and then at three o'clock, a fourth. Finally, at five o'clock, he finds still more laborers who are willing and able to work. He sends them into the vineyard to do what they can before sundown. As the day ends, the landowner instructs his manager to pay one denarius each, the living wage, to all the workers, beginning with those who started at five in the afternoon.

Follow God's example and show grace to our neighbour. When someone else is more successful than we are, let us assume he needs it. When someone who does wrong fails to get caught, let us remember the many times we did wrong and got off free. Don't wish pain on people for the sake of fairness. We become envious of others because of our lack of generosity of heart. Envy should have no place in our lives. We cannot control the way God blesses others.

Express your gratitude to God in your daily lives. God personally calls each of us to our own ministry and shows his care by giving us His grace and eternal salvation. To God, we are more than just numbers on a payroll. Our call to God's vineyard is a free gift by God for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. All our talents and blessings are freely given by God. Hence we should express our gratitude to God by avoiding sins, by rendering loving service to others,

by constant prayer, by listening and talking to God at all times.

2014 Sep 22 Mon: Ordinary Weekday

Prv 3: 27-34/Ps 15: 2-3a. 3bc-4ab. 5/Lk 8: 16-18

A Gospel as brief as this one, is all the same rich in themes appealing to our attention. In the first place, "to give light": everything is clear in God's eyes! Second great theme: Graces keep in line, if we are faithful to one we receive one blessing after another.

God's Light for those joining the Church! Christian mothers, whispering in their children's ear, have been teaching them for centuries, expressive words, but most of all, they have been doing it with the "light" of their good examples. They have also sown the typical popular and evangelic wisdom, compressed in many proverbs, as full of wisdom as of faith. One of these sayings is this: Throw some light on, not smoke.

Examining our conscience at dusk can be compared to the shopkeeper who cashes up to check the fruit of his work. He does not start by asking: -How much have I lost today? He rather wonders: -How much money did I make today? And immediately after, he may add: -How can I make more tomorrow, what can I do to improve? To finalize our working day we may end it up with a thanksgiving prayer and, in contrast, with an act of love and regret. -I regret not having loved more and hope with illusion, to start, tomorrow, a new day to please Our Lord, who always sees me, comes with me and loves me so much. -I want to give more light while diminishing the smoke of my love's fire.

In family evenings, parents and grandparents have forged - and still do- the personality and compassion of today's children and tomorrow's men. It is worth it! It is urgent! The Virgin Mary, Morning Star, Virgin of Dawn preceding the Light of the Sun-Jesus, guides us and gives us her hand.

2014 Sep 23 Tue: Pio of Pietrelcina, p M

Prv 21: 1-6. 10-13/ Ps 119: 1. 27. 30. 34. 35. 44/ Lk 8: 19-21

Today, we can read a beautiful passage of the Gospel. Jesus is not showing any disrespect for his mother, inasmuch as She has been the first one to hear the Word of God, and He, who is the Word of God, was born from Her. At the same time She is who, most perfectly, has fulfilled God's will: «Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word» (Lk 1:38), was Her answer to the Angel of Annunciation.

Jesus tells us what we need to do to also become his family: «those who hear...» (Lk 8:21) and to hear we must get close to him, as his own relatives did, when they went where He was, but could not get to him because of the crowd. But, then, they tried to get closer. It might be convenient for us to ask ourselves if, to get closer to the Word of God, we do fight and try to overcome the obstacles we keep finding on the way. Do I devote, every day, a few minutes to read, listen to or mull over the Holy Scriptures? St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us «we must continuously meditate the Word of God (...); this meditation is a powerful help in our fight against sin».

And, finally, to abide by the Word. It is not enough to hear the Word; we must carry it out if we want to become God's relatives. We must put into practice what we are told! This is why it would perhaps be good to ask ourselves whether we only behave obediently when what we are asked just suits us well or is rather easy to do, or if, on the contrary, when it means giving up our comfort, our own prestige, our material things or whatever leisure time we may have at our disposal..., we use to place the Word between parenthesis, until some better time may come. Let us pray to the Virgin Mary that, as She did once, we may hear and abide by the Word of God, so that we shall, thus, be able to follow the path leading to eternal happiness.

2014 Sep 24 Wed: Ordinary Weekday

Prv 30: 5-9/Ps 119: 29. 72. 89. 101. 104. 163/Lk 9: 1-6

Today, we are given to live in times when new mental diseases are reaching unsuspected levels never ever known before. At present, our rhythm of life is impelling us towards a stressing race to consume and misrepresent more than our neighbor next door, the whole dragnet being seasoned with a strong dosage of individualism, that is customizing persons isolated from the rest of the world. This loneliness, that many of us are forced to put up with because of social conveniences, job pressure or enslaving practices, is responsible for quite a few of us buckling under depression, neurosis, hysterics, schizophrenia, or some other mental disorders, that may severely endanger a person's future.

«Jesus called his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to drive out all evil spirits and to heal diseases» (*Lk 9:1*). Diseases we can identify in the same Gospel as mental diseases.

Meeting Christ, a person completed and realized, carries a state of equilibrium and peace that soothes our mood and allows us to rediscover ourselves while providing with light and lucidity our lives and our approach to future. The Gospels are criteria to clarify any doubts; they are good to teach and mentor, to educate both young and older, and to lead persons through the path of life, that path that never has to shrivel.

«So they set out and went through the villages, proclaiming the good news» (*Lk 9:6*). This is our mission too: to live and ponder over the Gospel, the very word of Jesus, so that it can be imbued into us. Thus, by and by, we shall be able to find the path to follow and the freedom to accomplish. As John Paul II has written, «peace has to be accomplished through truth (...); it has to be built in freedom».

Let Jesus Christ —who called us to faith an eternal joy— overfills us with his hope and love, He who has given us a new life and an inexhaustible future.

2014 Sep 25 Thu: Ordinary Weekday

Eccl 1: 2-11/Ps 90: 3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17bc/Lk 9: 7-9

Imagine that you are King Herod. You killed John the Baptist some time ago and now you are hearing stories of a certain man who is a wonder-worker. You hear rumors that John the Baptist has come back from the dead. How would you feel? I am sure you would feel very uncomfortable but at the same time eager to meet the person. This is what really happened to Herod. He had John the Baptist killed because John had told him the truth and he was not willing to accept it.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to live our lives according to Gospel values. If we were to really follow Jesus' teaching in our lives, it would make some people uncomfortable. Our very lives can challenge them and remind them of what they should or should not be doing. This is one way of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The challenge for you today is to ask yourself: What do you do when you are asked to change your behavior by your business partners in matters like cutting corners in business deals or having recourse to underhand dealings?

Very often, we do not realize how our example can influence or challenge the lives of others especially when our lives prick the conscience of those with whom we come in contact. It is not that you go out of your way to prick their conscience but by living your life according to the values of the Gospel, you can be doing that to some people and help them gradually to change for the better.

Are you just acting as a Christian or are you really living your life as a Christian. The Gospel reading today challenges us to make the values of the Gospel part of our life so that we will not seem just to be acting like a Christian in our daily lives but really living it.

2014 Sep 26 Fri: Ordinary Weekday/ Cosmas and Damian, mts

Eccl 3: 1-11/Ps 144: 1b and 2abc. 3-4/Lk 9: 18-22

Who is Jesus for you? Many in Israel recognized Jesus as a mighty man of God, even comparing him with the greatest of the prophets. Peter, always quick to respond, professed that Jesus is truly the Christ. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter, but only God. Through the eyes of faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to publicly recognize Jesus as the Anointed One (also translated Messiah or Christ). Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word, Messiah. Peter's faith, however, was sorely tested when Jesus explained that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die in order that God's work of redemption might be accomplished. How startled the disciples were when they heard this word! How different are God's thoughts and ways from our thoughts and ways! Through humiliation, suffering, and death on the cross Jesus broke the powers of sin and death and won for us our salvation. If we want to share in Christ's victory, then we must also take up our cross and follow him where he leads us. What is the "cross" that I must take up? When my will crosses with God's will, then his will must be done. To know Jesus Christ is to know the power of his death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of faith to know Jesus personally, power to live the gospel faithfully, and courage to witness to others the joy and truth of the gospel. Who do you say that Jesus is?

"Lord, I believe and I profess that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Take my will, my life, and all that I have, that I may be wholly yours now and forever."

2014 Sep 27 Sat: Vincent de Paul, p, rf M

Eccl 11: 9 – 12: 8/Ps 90: 3-4. 5-6. 12-13. 14 and 17/Lk 9: 43b-45

Do you know the majesty of God? When we ascribe majesty to someone, we acknowledge greatness in that person, and voice our respect for it. The miracles of Jesus revealed the majesty of God and displayed his grace and favor, especially towards the lowly. But with the miracles Jesus also gave a prophetic warning: There can be no share in God's glory without the cross. Jesus prophesied his own betrayal and

crucifixion. But it did not make any sense to the disciples because it did not fit their understanding of the Messiah. And they were afraid to ask further questions. Like a person who might receive a bad verdict from the doctor and then refuse to ask further questions, they, too, didn't want to know any more. How often do we reject what we do not wish to see? We have heard God's word and we know the consequences of accepting it or rejecting it. But do we give it our full allegiance and mold our lives according to it?

A"Lord, by your cross you have redeemed the world and revealed your glory and triumph over sin and death. May I never fail to see your glory and victory in the cross. Help me to conform my life to your will and to follow in your way of holiness."

2014 Sep 28 SUN: TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ez 18: 25-28/ Ps 25: 4-5. 6-7. 8-9 (6a)/ Phil 2: 1-11/ Mt 21: 28-32

The first reading speaks about how one should conduct oneself in the sight of God. We are called to live in a righteous manner for God is righteous to us. If we conduct ourselves as God wishes then we will be saved and enjoy the privilege of being the children of God forever. To recognise the truth and recover from our old ways of committing sins against God is what we are called to do. By this we are saved and will receive the salvation of God. In the second reading we see St. Paul saying that we receive all the grace and strength from the Holy Spirit. We are called to have the mind of Christ who loved the humanity and showed love, compassion, mercy, joy and peace. He became man so that we will share in the divine nature of God. We are called to have the nature of Christ that is the value of humility and doing the will of God. By this we will glorify God by our life and deeds.

In the gospel reading we see Jesus illustrate a story so as to tell his audience how we should be and become persons who do the will of God and live accordingly. The first son who

accepts to work and goes without doing what he was told to do. Sometimes we are like the first son. We say yes to God yet fail to do. We neglect the purpose, value and the seriousness of the task that is given to us. The second son who refuses to work and yet goes and does it because he realised the importance of the work later. Are we like the first son or the second son in the gospel? God gives us grace and opportunities to execute the task that he gives us. It is up to us whether to refuse or to accept. As God's people our responsibility is to do the will of God even if it is against our own wishes or desires because we belong to God and we need to do his will in our lives. We pray for the grace that we become people of responsibility and be receptive to the Spirit of God in doing his will in our lives.

2014 Sep 29 Mon: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, archangels F

Dn 7: 9-10. 13-14 or Rv 12: 7-12a/ Ps 138: 1-2ab. 2cde-3. 4-5/ Jn 1: 47-51

The Church venerates today the holy service of the three archangels. They stand out for their honest love for God's most holy will. With such fidelity, St. Gabriel faithfully delivered the most important messages of human history to Zacharias and Mary. St. Michael wrestled with Lucifer and cast him out of heaven. St. Raphael came to the aid of Tobias in the Old Testament. In these angels there isn't any duplicity of heart. God asks them a favor and they truly fulfill it. Wouldn't it be wonderful to implement our talents and gifts toward a service of this nature? Wouldn't it be great to be honest instruments of God's infinite love like these three archangels?

Jesus looks into the heart and doesn't judge by the appearances. Christ's gaze penetrated Nathanael on this occasion. Jesus penetrates the motives of my heart even though they are kept hidden from the others. Jesus is the first one to know if I am true to the faith I have received. If I am faithful to the dictates of my conscience and obey God's lead, in private or in public, then I have nothing to hide and nothing to lose. If on the other hand, I am dwindling in my

surrender to Christ by boredom and monotony, then it is about time I sought renewal. Christ needs me! How many are dying and fading away because they lack Christ and his love? I, in turn, have been graced by many special spiritual favors! Jesus gazes into my eyes and counts on my fidelity and love.

We all have a God-given purpose in life. Each and every one of us was created by God in accordance with his eternal plan. He has loved us and given us a role to play in this world, one that will lead to eternal life, eternal happiness. He has entrusted us with the gift of existence. Although we will die and be laid to rest, we will never cease to be. When we die, our immortal soul will be separated from the body. We will go before God to be judged. The Judgment will boil down to evaluating whether we lovingly fulfilled God's will in our lives or not.

If we believe in the call that Christ makes to our souls, if we believe that we are in his hands, then we shall truly see great things. We shall see God's work in the world. We will begin to understand how he does extraordinary things with ordinary people. Christ does not force his love on us. He wants us to cooperate. He wants us to make use of our freedom to serve him in love so as to receive the blessings of faith that one day will burst forth into the magnificent splendor of eternal happiness.

2014 Sep 30 Tue: Jerome, p, dr M

Jb 3: 1-3. 11-17. 20-23/ Ps 88: 2-3. 4-5. 6. 7-8/ Lk 9: 51-56

Jesus "resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem." In other words, he was dead set on laying down his life for each of us in his passion crucifixion, and death, and then rising for us in the Resurrection. So great was his love for us that nothing would deter him. Jesus shows us what this determination implies. "They would not welcome him because his destination was Jerusalem." On a literal level, they did not accept him since they were Samaritans and he was a Jew. It was a religious squabble. However, we could also say that Jerusalem represents the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, and not everyone wants to go there. The Catholic faith teaches us to embrace the cross. True charity and faithfulness is costly, and our fallen nature tends to shy away from sacrifice.

Rather than embrace the cross with humility, our passions of pride can flare up and force others to follow our way of thinking. This is the temptation that St. John falls into when he asks Jesus for the green light to call down fire upon those Samaritans. This is not Christ's way, and Jesus rebukes his disciples for thinking like this. Rather, the Lord teaches the way of the cross; humble patience and charity will win souls over to his cause.

There are lots of people in this world with smiley faces, wishing us to "have a nice day." Indeed, our culture seems determined to have us smile, and not just when the camera is about to do its deed. We have to wonder what's going on behind all the smiles. How many lives of quiet despair lie hidden there? How many soft voices are whispering Job's prayer? "Perish the day I was born, the night when they said, 'The child is a boy'".

That prayer can find resonance in most hearts from time to time, especially when, as it was for Job, the burdens of life are successively compounding and there seems no end to the troubles. Where do we go then, when all the little "happy thoughts" and all the surface strategies for bringing back smiles are obviously "out-gunned" by a factor of a thousand? There is only one place to go, and that's where we should have gone in the good times so we'd get to know the way. Turn inward to the Spirit who has dwelt within each of us from the moment of our birth, the Spirit who is our Counselor and Guide, our Consoler and our Wisdom. Rest with the Spirit awhile every day, and know you are not alone.