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SPRINGS OF JUSTICE

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Springs of
Living Water

Daily Spiritual Reflections

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PRAYER INTENTION

FOR THE CARE OF WATER.

*Let us pray for a just and sustainable management
of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have
equal access to it.*

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Springs of Justice

Water is the elixir on which all life depends. It nourishes the field, cleanses the body, quenches the thirsty, and renews the earth. Yet, in our times, water has become a source of inequality and conflict. Some waste it without thought, while others walk miles to find it; some pollute it in the name of profit, while others drink what endangers their health. The prayer intention proposed by the Holy Father projects a moral vision: that water may be justly and sustainably managed, and that all people may have equal access to this vital resource.

There is something profoundly biblical about this concern. Sacred Scripture is full of the imagery of water: the Spirit hovers over the waters at creation, the Israelites pass through the Red Sea into freedom, Moses strikes the rock and water flows in the wilderness. Then, in the Gospel, Christ speaks to the Samaritan woman of “living water,” revealing that the deepest thirst of the human heart cannot be satisfied by earthly wells alone. It is rightly with that meaning of the term that our own magazine is named, “Springs of Living Water.” Water cleanses at baptism, thus marking the beginning of Christian life. It is through water that the believer is washed, reborn and brought into share in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Water is God’s gift, entrusted to the human family for the flourishing of all. It therefore, is not to be treated as though it belonged only to the powerful, the wealthy, or the fortunate. To use it wisely, to protect it carefully, and to distribute it justly is not only an environmental task but a moral obligation. When a river is poisoned, when a well runs dry, when a village must pay too much for too little, when a community drinks unsafe water, the issue is not only ecological; it is spiritual and social as well.

The situation of our world today speaks of this intention with urgency. Climate change has intensified droughts in some regions and devastating floods in others. Pollution from industry, mining and plastic waste continues to contaminate rivers, lakes, and groundwater. In rural areas, families still spend hours each day fetching water. In places marked by war, access to safe water is a risky affair. The cry of the thirsty is therefore one of the great cries of our age. The Church hears that cry because she

knows that the Creator's gifts are ordered to the common good. Catholic social teaching reminds us that the goods of the earth have a universal destination. In other words, creation is not a private ownership for a few, but a home meant for the whole human family. A society that allows some to waste abundance while others thirst is a society that has forgotten both justice and gratitude. The Christian response cannot be indifference. It must be responsibility and solidarity.

Caring for water can only be done when beginning with lawmakers, and reaching even to engineers, farmers, our own communities, and every household think differently to save and preserve water by using it responsibly. Farmers are to avoid wasteful practises; industries must take seriously their duty not to poison what others need to live. Cities and structures must make sure that there be fair access to water for all. Families, in their turn, should reduce waste, fix leaks, and teach children that water is never to be taken for granted.

Scripture also presents water as a source of hope: it speaks of the river that flows from God's throne, of springs in the desert, and of the day when the thirsty will be satisfied. The final vision of Revelation is not of a dry and divided world, but of the river of life, clear as crystal, flowing from God into a healed creation. That is the image towards which our attempt is to be pointed.

September's prayer intention invites us to ask a fundamental question: what does it mean to live as if creation were truly a gift? To care for water justly is to answer that question with humility and action. It is to recognize that every person has the right to drink, to wash, to farm, to live. It is to confess that the poor must not pay the highest price for what God has given freely. It is to believe that peace and justice begin, sometimes, with something as simple and as sacred as a glass of clean water.

Fr Jesvin Tom Benoy OCD

**1
TUE****The Power and Wisdom of the Spirit*****Ordinary Weekday***

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

St. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, draws a sharp contrast between human wisdom and the wisdom that comes from God. The human mind, by its own power, cannot grasp the mystery of divine truth. It is the Spirit who searches the depths of God and reveals them to those who are open. The spiritual person, Paul says, sees reality differently. It is not through the narrow lens of logic or success, but through the vision of faith that perceives God's presence and purpose in all things. This distinction between the natural and the spiritual person is crucial for understanding Christian discipleship. The natural mind measures worth by appearance, achievement, and control. The spiritual mind, however, lives in awareness of God's hidden action within ordinary life. Such perception is not acquired by study alone, but through inner conversion. This is what the mystics would call the purification of the heart.

In the Gospel, Jesus reveals the same divine wisdom through authority. But His authority is not that of argument, but of presence. His word has power because it flows from union with the Father. When He speaks in the synagogue, even the unclean spirit recognizes that power and yields. The people marvel not at His eloquence but at the authority with which He commands. This is the authority of truth lived, not merely spoken or claimed.

When the Word of God truly takes root in us, it carries that same quiet authority. A life rooted in the Spirit need not shout or prove itself; it radiates peace that unsettles evil and brings freedom. In every age, the Church is called to speak this living word by confronting the forces that dehumanize, by liberating minds held captive by fear, and by revealing God's presence where darkness reigns. In the Carmelite tradition, such authority is born of contemplative intimacy. To know God "in spirit" is to be transformed by the very mind of Christ. The more deeply we allow His Spirit to dwell within, the more our words, our silences, and our actions become instruments of divine power.

Response: The Lord is just in all his ways.

2
WED

Called to Heal and Serve

Ordinary Weekday

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

Today's readings remind us that the fruitfulness of our Christian life and ministry depends entirely on God's grace. In the first reading, St. Paul corrects the divisions in the Corinthian community. Some claimed that they belong to Paul, others to Apollos, forgetting that both were only servants. Every vocation and ministry in the Church is God's work before it is ours. As *Lumen Gentium* teaches, the Church is "the universal sacrament of salvation," through which Christ continues His saving mission.

The Gospel reveals Jesus as the compassionate healer. He heals Simon's mother-in-law of fever, and immediately she serves them. Healing always leads to mission. Christ restores us not merely for our own comfort but so that we may become instruments of His love. *Evangelii Gaudium* reminded us that the Church is "the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone." Like Jesus, we are called to bring hope, healing, and mercy to those who are burdened by suffering, loneliness, or sin.

A striking detail in the Gospel is that Jesus withdraws to a deserted place to pray before continuing His mission. His ministry flows from communion with the Father. St. Teresa of Avila says, "Prayer is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends." Without prayer, our mission becomes mere activity; with prayer, it becomes God's work through us. Likewise, St. John of the Cross would add, "Where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love." Every act of charity becomes fruitful when rooted in contemplative union with Christ. Here the meaning of the Psalm also comes alive. It says, "Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be His own." We are reminded that our hope rests not in our achievements but in God's faithful love, and encounter with that Love, the person Jesus, is the beginning of Christianity.

Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, let us humbly offer ourselves to God. We may plant and water through our prayer and service, but keeping in mind that it is always God who gives the growth. May we become faithful instruments of His healing presence and joyful witnesses of His Kingdom.

Response: Blessed the people the Lord has chosen for his heritage.



The Wisdom of Belonging to Christ

Gregory the Great

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

Today's first reading invites us to sit quietly with St. Paul. He speaks words that challenge the way we usually think: "Let no one deceive himself." How easily we measure life by the world's standards - success, influence, possessions, and recognition. Yet Paul gently reminds us that God's wisdom often appears as foolishness in the eyes of the world. St. Teresa of Jesus often reminded her sisters that everything passes and that God alone is enough. St. John of the Cross teaches us to let go of our attachments so that we may be filled with God. The wisdom of the Cross is not about winning arguments or gaining applause. It is about becoming little, trusting God, and allowing Him to transform us from within. When the world asked for signs and miracles Jesus chose to display the foolishness of God's love on the Cross. Paul goes even further: "All things belong to you... and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God." What a beautiful reversal! We spend so much energy trying to possess things, people, or achievements. But Paul says that when we belong to Christ, we already possess everything that truly matters. Life and death, the present and the future, all are held in God's loving hands.

Perhaps today the Lord invites us to ask ourselves: Where do I seek my security? Is it in my reputation, my talents, or my plans? Or is it in Christ alone? The more we cling to ourselves, the more anxious we become. The more we surrender to Christ, the freer and more joyful we become.

Let us then embrace the "holy foolishness" of the Gospel: the courage to forgive, to serve without expecting recognition, to pray in silence, and to love without counting the cost. This is the wisdom that the saints discovered. It is the wisdom that leads not to worldly success but to communion with God. May our prayerful reflection of the word of God and everything we do today teach us this hidden wisdom. May we live each day with the realisation that we belong to Christ, and in Him, we already have everything.

Response: The Lord's is the earth and its fullness.

4
FRI**Truth About Fasting****Ordinary Weekday**

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

The concept of fasting has significant value, not only in Catholicism, but in all the religions, though there are differences in its understanding. Old Testament understanding and the New Testament understanding itself are so diverse. That is what we see in the gospel passage of today. But truth that is clear both in the Old as well as in the New Testament is that fasting meant repentance and change of life and surely not just for the sake of law as the Pharisees and the Scribes comprehended it. It helps us to keep away from old ways of doing and living and facilitates the adoption of new ways, according to the teaching of Jesus.

In the gospel, the Pharisees and the Scribes ask Jesus why they and their disciples fast but the apostles do not? Jesus' answer to them reveals the right understanding of fasting. He gives an example of wedding feast where people rejoice with the groom. Surely it is not the time and opportunity for fasting rather for feasting and enjoyment. Jesus continues that a time will come when the groom is taken away, then is the time and opportunity for fasting. It presents Jesus as the groom in our lives, and we are invited to live in allegiance to him and his teachings, so as to experience freedom and joy of redemption. But when we fail, in this due to our sinfulness, then is the time for fasting: fasting from evil inclinations that take us away from God by disciplining body and mind

That's why Jesus clearly speaks to them on having new wine in new skins and old in old skins. Jesus' presence and His teaching always remains new and we need to have an open mind for continuous renewal and transformation. It requires of us to put aside self-will and personal intentions, but rather that we live for others, to lay down our personal choices for others. This is the new wine and the new cloth for the new patch, a new way to live. The gospel will always will be new and never become old.

Response: From the Lord comes the salvation of the just.

**5
SAT****Glory In Your Poverty****Ordinary Weekday**

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

Paul asks an interesting question today: “What do you possess that you have not received?” Everything is gift. Our talents, our virtues, even our faith – all are given to us by God. We have nothing of our own to boast about. This radical acknowledgment of our poverty before God is the starting point of authentic prayer. In the Ascent of Mount Carmel, St John of the Cross teaches that we must become nothing to possess everything. His famous maxim echoes Paul’s teaching: “To come to possess all, desire the possession of nothing.” In other words, clinging to anything – even spiritual gifts, even the consolations of prayer – prevents us from receiving the one thing necessary: union with God.

Paul describes the apostles as “the scum of the earth.” What does he mean? Those whom the world considers worthless are often the very ones God has chosen for his greatest work. Paul is not complaining but testifying to a mystery: weakness is the space where God’s power works most freely. St Thérèse of Lisieux wrote: “It is my very weakness that gives me boldness to offer myself.” She understood that her limitations were not obstacles to holiness but the very means by which God’s mercy could be displayed. Like Paul, she learned to glory not in her strengths but in her poverty.

Today, Paul challenges our addiction to security, status, and self-sufficiency. He invites us to ask: What am I clinging to? Do I seek my identity in what I possess, what I achieve, what others think of me? Or have I learned to find my identity solely in God’s love? True spiritual poverty is not about having nothing. It is about recognizing that we have nothing of our own, and discovering that this admission opens us to receive everything from the One who is everything. May we seek always the grace to embrace our poverty, and to allow God’s power to work through our acknowledged weakness.

Response: The Lord is close to all who call him.



Called to Watch, Called to Love

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

The Word of God this Sunday presents us with a challenging yet deeply beautiful truth: love is not merely a feeling; it is a responsibility. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the teaching of St. Paul, and the words of Jesus Himself, we are reminded that every Christian is called both to watch and to love; to remain attentive to God and to care for the spiritual well-being of one another. In the first reading, God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman for Israel. A watchman stands alert, scanning the horizon for danger. If he sees danger approaching and remains silent, he becomes accountable for the loss that follows. God therefore entrusts Ezekiel with a sacred duty: to speak His word faithfully, even when it may be unwelcome. At first glance, this responsibility seems to belong only to prophets. Yet through baptism, every Christian shares in Christ's prophetic mission. We too are called to be watchmen, but not over cities or kingdoms, but over our own hearts and, in a spirit of charity, over the communities to which we belong. We are called to notice when a brother or sister is struggling, drifting away from God, or burdened by sin. Love does not close its eyes to danger.

Yet there is a great difference between vigilance and judgment. This is where the second reading becomes essential. Love is the fulfilment of the law because genuine love always seeks the good of the other. Christian concern is never rooted in superiority or control. It springs from a heart that desires another person's growth in holiness and happiness. The saints of Carmel understood this deeply. St. Teresa of Avila often insisted that progress in the spiritual life depends upon humility and self-knowledge. Before we attempt to guide another, we must first allow God to reveal our own weaknesses. A soul that knows its need for mercy becomes gentle in offering correction. It speaks not as a judge but as a fellow pilgrim.

This wisdom sheds light on the Gospel. Jesus teaches a path of fraternal correction that begins quietly and personally. The goal is not to expose, embarrass, or defeat another person. The goal is reconciliation. Jesus desires that relationships wounded by

sin be healed through honest conversation and patient charity. How different this approach is from the spirit of our age. We live in a culture where criticism is often public and swift, while forgiveness can be slow and reluctant. Social media encourages exposure rather than encounter. Jesus proposes another way: the way of personal dialogue, discretion, and sincere concern for the other person's dignity.

For Carmelites, this Gospel carries an additional invitation. Before speaking to another, we must first enter the silence of prayer. Elijah encountered God not in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper. The Carmelite learns that every important word should emerge from a listening heart. If correction is not first purified by prayer, it can easily become harsh or self-righteous. But when it is born of prayer, it can become an instrument of healing. St. Thérèse of Lisieux understood that true charity often consists in small acts of patience, hidden sacrifices, and persistent prayer for others. She knew that souls are changed not merely by arguments but by grace. Her "little way" reminds us that love is often most powerful when it is humble.

The Gospel concludes with one of Christ's most consoling promises: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am amidst them." These words remind us that reconciliation is never merely a human achievement. Christ Himself is present among those who seek unity and peace. Whenever believers come together in prayer, forgiveness, and mutual support, the Lord stands among them. This promise lies at the heart of Carmelite spirituality as every community is sustained specifically by the presence of Christ. Whether in a monastery, an OCDS community, a parish, or a family, relationships flourish when Christ remains at the centre.

Today's readings invite us to examine our own lives. Do we watch over our hearts with vigilance? Do we care enough about others to speak the truth when necessary? Do we pray for those whom we find difficult? The watchman of Ezekiel, the charity of St. Paul, and the teaching of Jesus all point toward the same vocation. We are called to watch with loving concern. We are called to love with courage and commitment.

Response: O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.



Love or Law?
Ordinary Weekday

1 Cor 5: 1-8/ Ps 5: 5-6, 7, 12/ Lk 6: 6-11

We live in the 21st century, a world that prides in its progress and technological advancements. With the advent of artificial intelligence and algorithms, we seem to have moved forward much in our lifestyle and standards. Yet how often do we find ourselves clinging to outdated rituals, rigid regulations and legalistic attitudes that suppress the spirit of love and mercy? The external progress seems not to have spilled into our interior lives. Jesus our Master gave us one eternal commandment - love one another as I have love you, as the pattern to live our lives by, the golden rule of human living.

The 3rd commandment in the decalogue calls us to keep the sabbath holy. Which means to rest or cease. Over time, the Pharisees and Sadducees worsened it with a complex web of rules losing sight of the commandment's original intent: communion with God and compassion for others. It is here that Jesus challenges these traditions. In today's Gospel, Jesus heals a man suffering from paralysis of the right hand, even though it is the sabbath. Jesus acts with compassion. He teaches us a profound truth: love is never out of season. The sabbath, for Jesus is not merely a day of rest, it is a day of restoration, making space for goodness, mercy and human connection.

As Christians our Sunday, the Lord's Day is not just for attending mass and retreating into personal rest. The church teaches us that Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm and the elderly (CCC 2186). So, the question before us is not merely whether we observe the law but how we live love. Will we be people of cold rules or warm hearts? Do we choose to enter into our own personal cocoons on the day of the Lord, and hide human charity? Or are we willing to step out of our comforts and share – receive and give – the love for which we are created? Let us choose the way of Christ: the way of love.

Response: Lead me, Lord, in your justice.

**8
TUE****Mary Our Mother and Model*****NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY*****Mi 5: 1-4a or Rom 8: 28-30/ Ps 13: 6ab, 6c/ Mt 1: 1-16, 18-23**

Today we celebrate the birthday of our Blessed Mother. Heaven and earth rejoice at the birth of Mary as the salvation of the world comes closer. Jesus the Son of God, the Savior of the world will be born of Mary. Mary is our model in all aspects of daily living, but especially so when she shows us the manner of discerning and fulfilling the Lord's will in life. Her whole way of life is a perfect pattern for us to follow. Jesus therefore urges us to imitate her example, adopt her attitudes, form her mind and heart within ourselves.

Mary had a special relationship with the Holy Spirit, who enabled her to discern the will of God for her. This discernment and obedience was perfectly manifested in her fiat.

The Holy Spirit was active within Mary from the very moment of her conception. He sanctified her by applying to her, the fruits of redemption, in anticipation to her, thus preserving her immaculate soul free from every vestige or defect of original sin. From the first moment of her life Mary was a perfect temple of the Holy Spirit who was dynamic and operative in her sinless soul. Since Mary was immaculately conceived and preserved from all sin throughout her lifetime, the Holy Spirit could mold and transform her freely. Mary's recorded words in scripture are extremely few, but what we can see of her way of life speaks eloquently to us of this deep personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Throughout her entire earthly sojourn the Spirit inspired, guided, comforted, and supported, Mary in her unique mission.

Filled with the Spirit, Mary was always attentive to the various means through which the Lord communicated His plan to her and also invited her to accept the role He had envisioned for her. God was pleased to reveal His plan to Mary in many different ways both directly and indirectly, through the words of scripture especially the prophecies of old and through the Angel Gabriel. Mary's unflinching response to the Lord is a source of great inspiration for us.

Response: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.



Finding Joy in God's Kingdom

St Peter Claver

1 Cor 7: 25-31/ Ps 45: 11-12, 14-15, 16-17/ Lk 6: 20-26

The Beatitudes that are mentioned in today's gospel (Luke 6:20-26) reveal the heart of Jesus' teaching and present a revolutionary vision of God's Kingdom. While the world admires wealth, power, success, and popularity, Jesus declares that the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and those who are persecuted are truly blessed. He teaches that true happiness is found not in worldly achievements but in a deep relationship with God.

Jesus begins by saying, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Poverty in Luke is not merely the lack of material possessions but a spirit of complete dependence on God. Those who recognize their need for God experience the richness of His Kingdom. The second Beatitude, 'Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled,' speaks of those who long for God, justice, holiness, and peace. Material success alone cannot satisfy the deepest desires of the human heart. Only God can fill the spiritual hunger that every person experiences. The third Beatitude reads, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." Suffering, sorrow, and loss are part of human life, but they are never the end of the story. In Christ, every cross carries the promise of resurrection, and every tear can be transformed into joy through God's love. Finally, Jesus says, "Blessed are you when people hate you... because of the Son of Man." Following Christ may bring rejection or misunderstanding, but faithful disciples share in His mission and eternal reward.

The Beatitudes invite us to live by the values of God's Kingdom rather than the values of the world. They challenge us to trust God, seek holiness, remain hopeful in suffering, and stay faithful even when it is difficult. Through the gospel Jesus invites us to trust in Him rather than in wealth or possessions. We need to hunger for God's Word through prayer, Scripture and the Eucharist. The Beatitudes also invite us to show compassion to the poor, the lonely and the marginalized, reflecting the love of Christ in everyday life.

Response: Listen, O daughter; pay heed and give ear.

10
THUR**Living the truth with love*****Ordinary Weekday***

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

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you were right, yet later realized that your words or actions had hurt someone? Today's readings remind us that being right is not enough. As followers of Christ, we are called not only to know the truth but also to live it with love.

The first reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians tells us that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. In the reading some early Christians knew that idols were nothing and that eating food offered to idols was not sinful. They were correct in their understanding. Yet St. Paul asks them to think beyond themselves. If their actions confused or weakened other believers, then love required them to give up their own freedom. Christian freedom is never about doing whatever we want. It is a gift that must always be guided by charity. We are responsible not only for our own relationship with God but also for helping others to grow in faith.

In the Gospel, Jesus takes us even deeper. He says, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." These words are not easy to live. We naturally want to avoid those who hurt us. But Jesus invites us to love as God loves us. God does not stop loving us when we are away from Him because of our sins. But He loves us even we are sinners. His mercy is always greater than our weakness. As disciples of Christ, we are called to reflect that same mercy in our relationships with others.

This kind of love is not so easy to live by our own strength alone. But God gives us the strength to possess this kind of love. Through baptism, we become children of God and members of Christ's Body, the Church. Whenever we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, He gives us the strength to forgive, to be patient and to treat others with kindness. Thus, He makes us strong through the sacraments. So as we receive Christ's love, we are also called to share that same love with everyone we meet.

Response: Lead me, Lord, in the way everlasting.

11
FRI

Humility: Genuine and False

Ordinary Weekday

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

A concept of spiritual progress, according to the Carmelite St. John of the Cross, is summarized in his drawing of The Mount. It shows three paths going up a mountain, with only the central one reaching the pinnacle. This path is that of nothingness, detachment and purity of spirit. The path on the right side consists of possession, joys, knowledge, consolation and rest in the goods of earth, and obviously lead us astray. However, the path to be more watchful of is the one to the left which consists of possession, joys, knowledge, consolation and rest in the 'goods of heaven.' The danger is of substituting our attachment to earthly things with attachment to so called "heavenly things."

Jesus warns us of this kind of subtle attachments that arise in us along our spiritual journey. We begin to consider ourselves as God's favourites, worthier and more knowledgeable than others and, possessing a certain moral and spiritual authority to correct others. We fail to recognize our self-proclaimed holiness as a form of pride. This spiritual pride is the principle governing the behaviour of the self-righteous Pharisee (Lk 18: 9-14) and the elder brother (Lk 15). Jesus beckons a purification from this form of hypocrisy. Only the truly humble - one who is fully trained under the humiliations and sufferings of the Cross and resembles the Master - can become an authentic spiritual guide.

The first reading, throws light on one such humble teacher of the Church. Aware of his misdirected and indiscreet zeal for the law, his capacity for hatred and violence and, his unworthiness of preaching the Gospel, St. Paul openly admits that he cannot boast of his ministry. He sees it is not a reward for his faithfulness but a divine responsibility. Although a teacher, he does not demand honour and respect, but performs his duty as a servant of the people. He has no personal agenda, but only a keen interest of the salvation of the other to share the joy of redemption that he has realised. Holy works, do of their very nature cause humility, says St John of the Cross.

Response: How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

12
SAT

Only Those Rooted in Jesus will produce Rich Harvest

Holy Name of Mary

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

Idols are the man-made figurines to which divine powers are ascribed. They are offered to the devotees to believe and respond accordingly. More often than not these are very effective way of generation of financial resources for the cult priests. It has been part of the long story of mankind. It projects an extrinsic and superficial, religiosity not requiring any attitudinal change.

The Church's teachings, however vehemently object that man-made things can ever adequately stand for God; for God's mystery transcends and rebels from being encapsulated into these. Rudolph Otto, a famous theologian is known to have made this description, God or a divine experience is *mysterium, tremendum et fascinans*. He describes God-experience as a tremendous mystery that evokes fascination.

St. Paul was furious at the resistance of Corinthians to leave behind the former magical ways of their mystery religion bent on placating the innumerable idols and create syncretism with the Holy Eucharist. The resistance of the Corinthians, reveal how deeply their hearts and minds were overpowered by the human tendency of superficial religion. St Paul writes to the church in Corinth on the power and encounter of the Eucharist. In his text about the Eucharist Paul underscores the incomparable richness of the Eucharist: mystery of the self-giving love of Christ embodied himself really in the Body that is broken and blood that was shed for us; and invites them to shun the idols which are simply empty and irrelevant.

Life of a christian does not consist in placating idols or trying to win their good favour to ensure personal wealth, health, success and prestige. Christianity requires change of life based on change of attitudes. It requires renouncement of idols that appear in the form of greed, lust, anger, fame, power, false relationships and individualism. Above all a christian is characterized by the fruits he bears. Yes the good fruits that give beauty, good taste and joy for the life. Christianity worships God by being transformed into a strong house of solid foundation of virtues and graces.

Response: A thanksgiving sacrifice I make to you, O Lord.

13
SUN
The Debt We Carry, the Freedom We Choose
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sir 27: 30 - 28: 7/ Ps 103: 1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12 (8)/

Rom 14: 7-9/ Mt 18: 21-35

An elderly woman stood in the checkout line with a packed of sliced bread, milk, and a few fruits. When the cashier gave her bill, she searched her purse and froze, because her wallet was gone. Embarrassed, she began quietly returning the groceries. Before she could leave, the man behind her stepped forward and paid for everything. She thanked him through tears. He assured her, "Years ago, when I had nothing, someone showed me the same kindness. I never forgot their gesture of goodwill." A week later, that same man was overheard speaking bitterly about his brother. An old family wound had grown into years of silence. He remembered the kindness of a stranger but he could not forget the hurt caused by someone he loved. Is this not often our story? We remember mercy when it blesses us, but we remember hurt when it costs us.

The Book of Sirach begins with honesty: "Anger and fury are both of them abominable." Anger may arise naturally, but nursed long enough, it settles into our conversations, our memories, our judgments; until it becomes part of us. Sirach asks us to "remember thy last things." One day, every grudge will lose its weight before the face of God. This is not meant to frighten us, but to free us. The Carmelite saints often remind us to live our lives with the 'sight of eternity before our eyes' and when we do so, the burdens we cling to, begin to loosen.

Saint Paul offers another freeing truth: "Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." Our lives are not defined by those who hurt us. They are defined by the One who loves us. Boundaries may still be wise, justice still necessary but revenge no longer belongs in a heart that belongs to Christ.

Then there is Peter who asks the question every generation asks: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" He may have thought he was being generous. Jesus answered, "Not seven times, but seventy times seven." Jesus is not instructing Peter to keep a bigger ledger. He is actually asking him to throw the ledger away.

You may forgive someone in prayer, genuinely placing the hurt in God's hands. Days later, a photograph, a place, a stray memory reopens it and the anger returns as if nothing changed. Many people grow discouraged here, believing they never truly forgave. But perhaps this is exactly what Jesus means. Each time the memory returns, we are invited to forgive again. Not because the first forgiveness did not matter, but because healing takes time. The heart remembers long after the will has chosen mercy.

In the Gospel, Jesus then tells of the servant forgiven an enormous debt, who turns and seizes a fellow servant over a small debt. The tragedy is that he forgot he himself had received forgiveness. We do the same often, asking God to forgive our pride and failures while gripping tightly to one old wound. Forgiveness does not mean pretending evil never happened, or staying where there is abuse. It means refusing to let someone else's sin become the prison of our own heart. Prayer becomes that quiet place where God reveals what still holds us captive. In silence, buried resentments surface. Rather than resisting them, we can place them into Christ's wounded hands, again and again. St. John of the Cross says it simply: "Where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love."

For reflection today, bring to mind one face that surfaces when you think of forgiveness. Without forcing a feeling just offer that person to the Lord. If the memory returns tomorrow, forgive again. And if it returns a hundred times, offer it a hundred times because His mercy never tires. Ask yourself, "Have I remembered that I have been forgiven, or do I just focus on what I have suffered?" Every surrendered memory loosens one more chain in heaven. The heart becomes free but because it remembered something greater than the wound: The mercy of a Father who forgave us before we ever asked. As children of Carmel, we learn the deepest prayer is not only to receive that mercy, but to let it pass through us to others.

Response: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

14
MON**Embrace the Cross of Healing****EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**

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

The cross of Christ is the instrument of our redemption. The Old testament is sprinkled with many signs and prophecies about Jesus Christ being the Messiah who is to come. Some of these (like Ps 22, Is 53, Zech 12) point to the cross as an instrument of human redemption. But it is also a symbol of our healing. The story of Moses raising the bronze serpent in the desert as a source of healing for the Israelites (Num 21:4-9) is a foreshadowing symbol of the cross of Christ that brings healing to anyone who turns to it.

It is only common sight that people turn to God they need healing, but there is more to this. We recognize from the life and words of Jesus, that He is not just giving us a quick fix to our problems. He is actually inviting us into a brand new way of life. A life that places the cross at the center. A life that is lived leaning on and embracing the cross, like Christ himself. Only when we understand and believe that the cross is the instrument of our healing can we truly embrace it. If not, we spend our whole lives running away from it, blaming God for all that is part of our life, and never being able to see the hand of God at work in the challenges life throws at us.

God's love for us is shown in Him sending His Son to lead us and teach us this new way of life. If we run away from the cross, we indeed run away from Jesus. We are reminded of Jesus' own words: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). The death of Jesus bears fruit even today. The death of the apostles bears fruit even today. The death of the martyrs dear fruit even today. The invitation is open for us to embrace the cross knowing full well that our sufferings will bear fruit, because the cross brings healing and life and redemption.

Response: Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

15
TUE**Love In the Midst of Trial*****Our Lady of Sorrows***

Heb 5, 7-9 Ps 31:1-2ab 2cd, 3, 2-4, 14-15, 19 Optional Sequence Stabat
Mater/ Jn 19: 25-27 or Lk 2: 33-35

In the letter to the Hebrews, we see Jesus' ability to sympathize with us despite being sinless. Sin blinds us and traps us in our selfishness, pride, or violence. We are unable to see these realities clearly and we get too entangled in the situation. A person deeply involved with violence cannot clearly grasp its reality. In the case of Jesus, he never sinned. He could see selfishness, pride, and violence in its full extent. Jesus did experience temptation, suffering, rejection, and human weakness. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus "...has been tested as we are, yet is without sin." His sinlessness does not distance Him from us. Instead, he feels a deep compassion and desire to help us. He invites us to receive healing and transformation as we open our lives to the working of the Holy Spirit. Let us ask: which areas of my life would I like to surrender to the Holy Spirit today?

Sin clouds our judgment. A selfish person does not really grasp selfishness, but they are trapped inside it. Jesus, who was free from sin, understands selfishness, pride, and violence in its true nature. Jesus' freedom from sin, gave him sharper insight into sin's destructiveness. In his earthly life, he entered into the human condition of betrayal, injustice, cruelty, abandonment, and death. To put it succinctly, true understanding does not always come from committing an act. It comes from love. Jesus' perfect love gave Him a deeper grasp of our human brokenness that sin created. Let us reflect: Is there any person that I can think of today whom I can speak lovingly to or care for by my actions?

In John 19:25-27, Mary is standing by the Cross and receives the beloved disciple as her son. This shows us that in the midst of suffering, love creates a new family of faith and care. In the midst of my own trials, how can I let my trust in God, love for others and care for creation, guide my response to God?

Response: Save me, O Lord, in your merciful love.

16
WED**The Greatest Is Love*****Cornelius and Cyprian***

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

In his celebrated book, *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis (philosopher) observes that the safest way to avoid the pain of love is to lock one's heart away. Yet a heart shielded from love soon grows hard, cold, and incapable of joy. Is this not one of the greatest temptations of our age, to protect ourselves so much that we forget how to love? St. Paul offers the antidote. Writing to a divided and quarrelsome community, he invites them to rediscover the heart of Christian life. The Corinthians admired extraordinary gifts: prophecy, wisdom, and spiritual experiences. But Paul reminds them that the greatest gift is not what impresses others; it is love. For Paul, love is not merely an emotion or one virtue among many. It is the very life of God shared with His people. Every other gift belongs to time; love belongs to eternity. Prophecies will cease, knowledge will pass away, and earthly achievements will fade. But love endures because God Himself is love.

The absence of such love is evident in today's Gospel. Jesus speaks of a generation that rejected both John the Baptist and Himself. They criticized John for fasting and condemned Jesus for dining with sinners. Their hearts were closed to God's surprising ways. When love is absent, it becomes difficult to recognize God's presence, even when He stands before us. The third-century martyrs whom we celebrate today, Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, offer a powerful witness to this same love. During one of the fierce persecutions of Emperor Decius, many Christians denied their faith out of fear. When peace returned, some wanted these weak, fallen believers permanently excluded from the Church. Cornelius and Cyprian chose another path: the path of love, mercy and reconciliation. They understood that a Church without love ceases to reflect the heart of Christ.

The Carmelite St. John of the Cross, tells us : "In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone." May that love become the measure of every choice we make.

Response: Blessed the people the Lord has chosen as his heritage.

17
THUR**Love of the Forgiven Sinner*****Ordinary Weekday/ Robert Bellarmine*****1 Cor 15: 1-11/ Ps 118: 1b-2, 16ab-17, 28/ Lk 7: 36-50**

Love is understood in various forms and expressions. Human love always depends on give and take policy, whereas, spiritual love does not count the cost. The love of a sinner who has experienced forgiveness is a spiritual love, in which, we identify the following features:

Awareness of sinfulness: Rather than saying that we are all sinners, it is needed to realize that sin is within us; reflect and know its consequences, how it ruptures our relationship with God, with others, with oneself and nature. This truthful awareness of our sin leads to hating sin and embracing good.

Acceptance of sins: Even with a deeper awareness of sin, we may not take responsibility for our sins blaming others or situations for our sins. We need to consciously take responsibility for our personal sins. We should deeply feel that we have committed sin and we need to overcome our sinfulness.

True Repentance: Genuine awareness combined with truthful acceptance of sin takes us to true repentance. We do not see our sin in seclusion or in isolation; we see our sins in the context of God's merciful love and forgiveness. This brings about a deep sorrow for the sins, a stronger resolution to avoid sin, and the grace of repentance.

Experience of Divine Forgiveness: True repentance leads us to experience God's forgiveness. We realize that we do not merit forgiveness, but God out of His generosity and love forgives us. This is a positive experience of God's nearness to the sinners.

Love in Return: In experiencing forgiveness, we are transformed. We are able to return love in various ways. It begins with a deeper sense of gratitude to God and others. The forgiven sinner becomes a channel of God's love and grace through their prayer, words and deeds, understands others' struggles, and stops judging or condemning them.

All these nuances of forgiving love, when lived with conviction, will turn us into holy people.

Response: Give praise to the Lord, for he is good.

18
FRI
Hope: A Way of Life
Ordinary Weekday

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

Today's readings invite us to reflect on one life-changing truth: our faith is rooted not in an idea, but in the living Christ. St. Paul tells the Corinthians, *"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile."* The Resurrection is not simply the happy ending of the Gospel; it is the very foundation of our hope. Because Christ lives, our struggles, sacrifices, and even our suffering are never meaningless. We see this hope reflected beautifully in the Gospel. Jesus travels from town to town proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and alongside Him are women like Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna. They quietly support His mission with their resources. They may not have preached to crowds, but their hidden service became part of God's saving plan. It reminds us that every act of generosity done for Christ has eternal value.

We live in a world fascinated by instant success and social media recognition. A trending story may dominate headlines today and disappear tomorrow. Yet the quiet acts of kindness by ordinary people—a young volunteer helping flood victims, a family feeding the poor, or a nurse caring for patients with compassion—often leave a deeper and lasting impact. God's Kingdom grows not only through spectacular miracles but also through faithful, unnoticed service.

Pope Francis has reminded us, "Hope is bold; it knows how to look beyond personal comfort." Likewise, Pope St. John Paul II encouraged the Church with the words, "Do not be afraid." The Resurrection gives us the courage to live these words every day. Even Psalm 17 echoes this confidence: "I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God." Today, let us ask ourselves: Is my faith merely a tradition, or is it a living relationship with the risen Lord? Am I willing to serve Christ quietly without seeking appreciation? Let us carry the hope of the Resurrection into our homes, workplaces, and communities. The risen Jesus still walks with us, and through our simple acts of love, He continues to proclaim His Kingdom to the world.

Response: When I awake, O Lord, I shall be filled with the vision of your presence.

19
SAT**From Seed to Eternal Life****Ordinary Weekday/ Januarius**

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

If there is one truth that singles out Christianity to be unique and exclusive, it is the hope of the resurrection from the dead. It is a revelation and a gift God has given to the chosen ones. St Paul would make this truth emphatic, and make it the purpose of his life, ministry and death. This truth contradicts all human knowledge but reveals God in ultimate terms of who he really is.

This revelation continues in the Gospels and specially in the account of St John, Jesus is not just teaching about God's kingdom, but reveals God the Father. So, all the teaching and works of Jesus are manifestation of God and his glory. Jesus' mission then, is to lead all humanity to union with our Creator God who is our Father and whom we meet at resurrections. God's glory is seen in the words and works of Jesus, but above all, his full glory when the Father raised him from the dead (ref. Jn 17:20).

In today's gospel, the parable of the sower speaks about God's word producing fruit in individual lives. Jesus is the sower as well the seed, bearing fruit of holiness in proportion to his own grace and human cooperation with the grace received. It is worth noting that Jesus himself is the Eternal Word of God that falls to the ground like a grain of wheat and dies (ref Jn 17:24) and after the resurrection produces abundant fruit through the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus shows whole of humanity that the only pathway to glory is through death. Our being grounded in Jesus, and our daily dying with him, prepares the way to our glorious rising like him.

Christian life is primarily a spiritual journey. We work and toil in this world but our goal is to reveal Jesus to humanity through our presence, preaching and activities, and then to embrace him at resurrection. Our hope of resurrection is the fruit of our faith in Jesus. This hope is the assurance of our life of union with God in Christ.

May God's grace help us embrace this truth!

***Response: I will walk in the presence of God,
in the light of the living.***

**20
SUN****The Surprising Generosity of God**
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

One of the greatest spiritual challenges for human beings is to understand the way God thinks and acts. Our natural tendency is to measure everything according to human standards. Yet the Scriptures repeatedly remind us that God's ways are far greater than our calculations. Prophet Isaiah calls the people to seek the Lord. The context of this passage is a message of hope addressed to a people who had experienced exile and suffering. Isaiah announces that God is inviting His people back into a renewed relationship with Him. The call is urgent.

What stands out in this message is the boundless mercy of God. The prophet does not present God as reluctant to forgive or hesitant to welcome the sinner. Instead, he portrays God as one who is eager to show compassion. The initiative comes from God Himself. Even when human beings stray far from Him, God's heart remains open, waiting for their return. God's forgiveness seems so surprising. The reason lies in the difference between God's ways and human ways. We naturally believe that good people should be rewarded and bad people should be punished. God's justice, however, is deeply rooted in mercy. His perspective is broader, wiser and more compassionate than ours.

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, the landowner hires labourers at different times of the day but gives each one the same wage at the end. Those who worked longer feel that the plan is unfair. They compare their effort with that of others and conclude that they deserve more. Their reaction reflects a very human way of thinking. We often measure our lives by comparison. We compare our sacrifices, our efforts and even our faithfulness with those of others. When someone receives blessings that seem equal or greater than ours despite less effort, we feel uneasy. But the parable reveals something deeper about God. The landowner's generosity does not diminish justice; rather, it reveals a love that goes beyond human calculation. The same truth echoes the message of Isaiah: God's ways are not limited by our narrow understanding of fairness. His mercy extends further than we expect.

In the kingdom of God, grace is not distributed according to human competition. Instead, it flows from the generous heart of God. The workers who came late into the vineyard represent those who encounter God's mercy later in life, perhaps after years of wandering or failure. Yet when they respond to God's call, they too receive the fullness of His grace. This message carries a profound spiritual lesson. Sometimes those who have been faithful for many years may struggle to accept that God can show equal mercy to those who come later. Yet the Gospel reminds us that salvation is not a wage earned by human effort but a gift offered by divine love.

Throughout the history of the Church, many saints have recognized the mystery of God's generous love. St. Therese of Lisieux beautifully expressed this when she wrote that God's mercy is like an elevator that lifts the soul upward, even when it feels weak and incapable. She understood that holiness is not achieved through personal strength alone but through trusting surrender to God's loving mercy. Similarly, St. Augustine having experienced conversion after years of searching and wandering, he recognized that God's mercy can reach people at unexpected moments. His own life became a testimony that God never stops inviting the human heart back to Him.

In a world often governed by competition and comparison the readings encourage us to respond to God's invitation without delay. Every moment of grace is precious. God's invitation is always present, but our hearts must remain open to it. The readings challenge us to rejoice in God's generosity toward others. Instead of comparing ourselves with others, we are called to celebrate the fact that God's mercy reaches everyone.

The mystery of God will always surpass human understanding. His thoughts rise above our thoughts just as the heavens rise above the earth. Instead of trying to reduce God's generosity to our limited expectations, we are invited to trust in the vastness of His mercy. When we learn to see the world through this divine perspective, our hearts gradually change. We begin to rejoice not only in the blessings we receive but also in the blessings given to others. In doing so, we reflect the very heart of God, a heart rich in compassion, overflowing with generosity and always ready to welcome those who seek Him.

Response: The Lord is close to all who call him.

21
MON

The Merciful Gaze That Changes Everything

St MATTHEW

Eph 4: 1-7, 11-13/ Ps 19: 2-3, 4-5/ Mt 9: 9-13

After years of pursuing wealth, respect, and success, a young businessman was deeply moved when his daughter asked, “Dad, when will you have time for me?” He realised that he had gained many things but was losing what mattered most. From that day, he chose to place God and family at the centre of his life.

A similar turning point unfolds in the Gospel through the call of Matthew. Jesus passes by the tax collector's booth and sees a man whom society had already judged and dismissed. Tax collectors were considered public sinners, as symbols of greed and betrayal. Yet Jesus does not see Matthew through the eyes of condemnation. Looking upon him with love, He simply says, “Follow me.” Without hesitation, Matthew rises, leaves behind his tax booth, and follows Christ. The Fathers of the Church remind us that the encounter between Jesus and Matthew was far more than an ordinary meeting. They speak of the merciful gaze of Christ that penetrates beyond appearances and sees the core of every human heart. Jesus did not define Matthew by the reputation he carried. Instead, He saw the person Matthew could become through the transforming power of divine grace. God's mercy always sees a future where we often see only a past. St. John Chrysostom observes that Matthew responded immediately because the call of Christ always carries within it the grace necessary to answer. God's invitation is never given without also providing the strength to embrace it. Whenever the Lord calls, He also enables.

Every disciple has a personal “tax booth”—those attachments, habits, or attitudes that quietly prevent Christ from becoming the centre of life. For some, it may be pride or resentment; for others, an excessive attachment to comfort, wealth, technology, success, or the approval of others. The forms differ, but the invitation remains the same. Christ continues to pass through our lives each day, looking upon us with mercy and gently repeating the words He once addressed to Matthew: “Follow me.” Every day offers a fresh opportunity to rise, leave behind whatever enslaves the heart, and walk more closely with Him.

Response: Their sound goes forth through all the earth.

22
TUE**God sees the Heart not the Hands*****Ordinary Weekday***

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

Each one of us has a natural tendency toward self-justification. We like to evaluate ourselves by our outward, visible actions, especially our religious deeds. We at times keep a count of the Mass intentions we request, the prayers we recite, the rosaries we pray, or the donations we drop into the collection basket. When we do these things, we often feel a quiet sense of satisfaction. We pat ourselves on the back and think, "I am doing great; God must be very pleased with me." In the first reading today from the Book of Proverbs, we are met with a quiet, piercing truth. Proverbs tells us: "All the ways of a man may be right in his own eyes, but it is the Lord who weighs the heart."

Human beings look at the hands, but God inspects the heart. We measure religious performance, but God measures inner integrity. This is a reminder for anyone who tries to live a spiritual life. God is never impressed by showy religious rituals when they are used as a mask to cover up unfairness, greed, dishonesty, or a lack of love in our daily relationships. A lavish "sacrifice" offered on an altar means very little to God if the hands offering it were dishonest at work on Monday, or cold, angry, and unfeeling toward a family member on Tuesday. To God, genuine integrity in our daily living must always come before religious ceremony.

We are called to stop using our "religious duties" to excuse bad behaviour. It is remarkably easy to fall into the subtle trap of thinking: "I went to Mass on Sunday, I said my prayers, so it is okay if I gossip about my coworker, act dishonestly in business, or yell at my family." God does not take bribes. True worship on Sunday must translate into honesty, patience, and fairness on all weekdays. God does not ask us to abandon our sacrifices, our prayers, or our worship. He asks us to ensure that our worship flows from a heart that is clean, honest, and just.

Response: Guide me, Lord, in the path of your commands.

23
WED
Living by God's Word
St Pio of Pietrelcina

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

Today's liturgy invites us to reflect on the power of God's Word and the trust that every disciple is called to place in Him. They remind us that God never fails in His promises and that those who rely on Him will always find the strength they need, to carry out His mission.

In the first reading from the Book of Proverbs, we are reminded that the Word of God is true and trustworthy. Human words can sometimes disappoint us, but God's Word never deceives. It remains firm in every situation and gives protection to those who place their hope in Him. This reading at the end offers a humble prayer, asking not for riches or poverty but for a life that is honest, content, and close to God. This prayer teaches us that what matters most is not how much we possess but how faithfully we live. Too often, we ask God for more success, more comfort, or more security. Yet true peace comes when our hearts are satisfied with God's presence. A life rooted in His Word helps us avoid both pride and hopelessness and leads us to live with gratitude each day.

In the Gospel, Jesus sends His disciples on mission with very little. They are asked to depend on God's providence rather than on their own preparations. This beautifully reflects the message of the first reading. The disciples are able to preach, heal, and serve because they trust in the Lord who sends them. Their strength comes not from what they carry but from the One who walks with them. Jesus invites us to have the same confidence today. Whether we serve in our families, our parish, or our workplaces, He asks us to place our trust in Him before we place our trust in our own abilities.

Today, the Church commemorates the memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio). His life reminds us that holiness grows through complete trust in God, faithful prayer, and humble obedience even in times of suffering. As we reflect on these readings, let us ask the Lord for hearts that treasure His Word above everything else.

Response: You word is lamp for my feet, Lord.

24
THUR**Only Christ Gives Lasting Meaning*****Ordinary Weekday***

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

Today's readings invite us to reflect on a profound question: What gives true meaning to our lives? The Book of Ecclesiastes opens with the striking words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The sacred author is not saying that life is meaningless. Rather, he reminds us that everything in this world is temporary. Wealth, success, fame, and even human achievements are like a passing mist. Generations come and go, but nothing on earth can fully satisfy the deepest longing of the human heart. A life centered only on worldly pursuits eventually leaves us empty.

The Gospel presents Herod, a man who seemingly had everything: power, influence, and wealth. Yet he was deeply disturbed when he heard about Jesus. People had different opinions about Jesus: some believed He was John the Baptist raised from the dead, others Elijah, or one of the prophets. Herod's question, "Who then is this?" is one that every person must answer. The tragedy is that Herod's curiosity never became faith. His guilty conscience over the death of John the Baptist prevented him from opening his heart to Christ. He wanted to see Jesus, but not to change his life. Many of us are like Herod: we know about Jesus, admire His teachings, and even participate in religious practices, but hesitate to let Him transform their hearts.

The message of today's readings is clear: life finds its true meaning only in God. When Christ becomes the center of our lives, our daily work, sacrifices, and relationships gain eternal value. Without Him, even great achievements remain incomplete. Today, Jesus asks each one of us, "Who am I for you?" Is He simply a figure from history, or is He the Lord who guides our choices, our priorities, and our future? Our answer is given not merely by our words but by the way we live. As we reflect on these readings, let us ask the Lord for the grace to seek not the passing things of this world but the eternal treasures of His Kingdom. May our lives bear witness to the joy and peace, which Christ alone can give.

***Response: O Lord, you have been our refuge,
from generation to generation.***

25
FRI

Participation in Divine Identity

Ordinary Weekday

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

We humans grow gradually in time. There is nothing that can happen overnight in the historic realm. Our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth is but normal and a gradual happening in time. When one grows beyond nature's laws, we call it abnormality and such cases require medical or psychological treatment. The first reading of today speaks extensively about how everything in life happens in the realm of time. There is time for everything, and by chance if one goes to mutate things outside the usual time sequence of nature then one may end up ruin everything.

Having said that about the realm of time and history, something quite distinct happens when one enters into the realm of prayer and contemplation, where one is able to experience the bond of love between the divine heart and the human. Here the human person enters into the sphere of the spiritual or mystical and experiences things beyond time and season. This is what we call the transforming effect of prayer and contemplation.

The Gospel of today speaks of one such experience of St. Peter. To begin with, Jesus spends the entire night in prayer with deep intimacy with the Father where he experiences his divine identity and oneness with the Father being the Son of God. At the same time Jesus wanted to see whether his close disciples whom prepared for the same divine intimacy could understand his divine identity. Thus, he asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" It is heartening to see when Peter answers Jesus rightly, saying that He was the Christ Son of the living God. Jesus immediately declares that flesh and blood has not revealed this to him but His heavenly Father, because he too was able to enter into the realm of the spiritual. In other words, it is the grace of the Holy Spirit alone that can help us transcend time and history and make us understand who truly Jesus is on one hand and what our true identity is as the disciples of Jesus.

Response: Blest be the Lord, my rock.

26
SAT
Wisdom of heart
Sts Cosmas and Damian

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

The book of Ecclesiastes invites us to reflect deeply on the shortness and fragility of life. “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” is not merely advice for the young; it is a call for every person to live with a wise and discerning heart before the passing of time. Human life, with all its beauty, energy, and achievements, quickly fades like grass in the morning. The Psalmist highlights this truth: “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart.” Wisdom of heart is the ability to see life from God’s perspective — to recognize what truly lasts and what is temporary.

The Catholic Church teaches in the Catechism: “Wisdom is a breath of the power of God” (CCC 1831). True wisdom is not merely intelligence or knowledge; it is a gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us choose what leads us closer to God. The Catechism also reminds us that “man’s life has a limit” and that death gives urgency to our conversion (CCC 1007). Therefore, every moment becomes precious when lived in the light of eternity.

St Edith Stein, beautifully wrote, “The more deeply a person is drawn to God, the more he must go out of himself in love toward others.” Wisdom of heart leads us away from selfishness and toward loving surrender. Edith Stein understood that earthly success alone cannot satisfy the soul; only union with God gives lasting peace. Likewise, Teresa of Ávila reminds us, “Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you; all things are passing, God never changes.” These words perfectly reflect the message of Ecclesiastes: worldly pleasures fade, but God remains forever.

Jesus Himself teaches, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?” (Mark 8:36). Wisdom of heart helps us treasure what is eternal: faith, love, mercy, and communion with God. When we remember our Creator daily, our lives gain direction and meaning. May the Lord fill our hearts with true wisdom, so that amidst the passing realities of life, we may remain rooted in His eternal love and walk faithfully toward Him each day.

***Response: O Lord you have been our refuge,
from generation to generation.***

**27
SUN****When a Heart Turns Back to God*****TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME*****Ez 18: 25-28/ Ps 25: 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 / Phil 2: 1-11/ Mt 21: 28-32**

Many people believe that once a person has failed, there is no hope left. They think that one mistake defines a whole life. Sometimes we also judge others in the same way. We remember their past more than their present. But today's first reading from Ezekiel 18:25-28 gives us a different picture of God. God is not interested in condemning people. He is interested in changing hearts. He always gives a person another chance. The people of Israel complained that God was not fair. They thought God judged them harshly. But God answered them with a simple question. Is God unfair, or are people walking on the wrong path? God reminds them that every person is responsible for his or her own choices. A good person can choose to turn away from goodness. A sinner can also choose to leave sin behind and return to God. What matters is the direction of the heart today. This message is full of hope. Our past does not have to control our future. God never closes the door to repentance. He waits patiently for us. He rejoices when even one sinner comes back. This shows us the greatness of God's mercy.

The Gospel (Mt 21:28-32) gives us a practical example of this truth. Jesus tells the story of two sons. The first son refuses to work in the vineyard. Later he changes his mind and goes to work. The second son politely says yes, but he never goes. Jesus teaches that actions speak louder than words. God is pleased not by beautiful promises alone but by faithful obedience. The first son reminds us of many people who have made mistakes but later changed their lives. Tax collectors and sinners listened to John the Baptist. They accepted God's call. They repented. Their past did not stop them from becoming new people. The religious leaders, however, knew the right words. Yet many refused to change their hearts. They appeared holy, but they did not respond to God's invitation.

This Gospel also invites us to examine ourselves. How often do we promise God many things? We promise to pray every day. We promise to forgive someone. We promise to help those in need. But many a time, those promises remain only as words. God is

not looking for perfect people. He is looking for honest people. He wants people who are ready to change and to follow His will. St. Augustine once said that God who created us without us, will not save us without us. God gives grace freely. Yet He respects our freedom. We must respond. We must choose every day to walk with Him. Conversion is not only one moment. It is a daily decision. Our daily life gives us many opportunities to live this message. A husband who begins to care for his family after years of neglect is living this Gospel. A student who decides to stop cheating and study honestly is turning back to God. A young person who leaves harmful habits and begins to pray is choosing the right path. A Christian who forgives an old wound is saying “yes” to God through action. These small decisions please God more than empty words. Over its history, the Church has very many times reminded us that God never grows tired of forgiving us. It is we who grow tired of asking for forgiveness. This is an encouraging thought. No matter how far we have gone, God is always ready to welcome us back. We only need the courage to take the first step.

Today's readings invite us to look into our own hearts. Am I like the second son, saying the right things but failing to act? Or am I ready to become like the first son, who had the humility to change? True discipleship is not about appearing good before others. It is about allowing God to transform our hearts. Let us ask the Lord for the grace of a humble and faithful heart. May we never lose hope because of our failures or judge others by their past mistakes. Instead, let us trust completely in God's endless mercy and respond generously to His call through our daily actions. Then our “yes” will not remain only on our lips but will be clearly evident in the way we live.

Response: Remember your compassion, O Lord!

28
MON**Trusting God When We Do Not Understand****Ordinary Weekday**

Jb 1: 6-22/ Ps 17: 1bcd, 2-3, 6-7/ Lk 9: 46-50

Today's first reading presents the story of a faithful man whose life suddenly changed. In a single day, he lost his possessions, his servants, and even his beloved children. The pain was overwhelming. Yet, in the midst of such darkness, he did not turn away from God. Instead, he bowed down in worship and entrusted everything to the Lord, in whom he trusted.

This passage reminds us that faith is not tested when everything is going well. But the depth of our faith is tested when life becomes difficult and confusing. There are moments when we too face unexpected losses, disappointments, sickness, broken relationships, or unanswered prayers. During such times, we often ask, "Why is this happening to me?" Like the man in the reading, we may not receive immediate answers.

It is his humility before God that should touch our hearts. He recognized that everything he had was a gift. He came into the world with nothing and would leave with nothing. This awareness gave him the strength to surrender what he could not control. His trust did not depend on the blessings he received from God, but it rested on God Himself.

This reading challenges us to examine our own faith. Do we love God only when He grants our desires? Can we still praise Him when our plans fail? True faith remains steady not because life is easy, but because God remains faithful. Today let us pray for the grace to trust God more deeply. When we experience struggles, help us not to lose hope. When we do not understand Your ways, teach us to lean on Your wisdom rather than our own. Give us a heart that continues to pray, believe, and worship even in moments of sorrow. May we remember that God never abandons His children. Even when everything seems lost, His presence remains. In every trial, He walks beside us, strengthening us and leading us toward a greater good that we may not yet see. Lord, help us to trust You completely, in joy and in suffering alike. Amen.

Response: Lord, turn your ear to me; hear my words.

29
TUE

Angels of God

STS. MICHAEL, GABRIEL, RAPHAEL, ARCHANGELS

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

Today the church celebrates the feast of Archangels and this fest reminds us of three special angels mentioned by name in the Bible: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Angels are God's messengers and servants who help carry out His plan of salvation. The Church honours these three Archangels because of their important role in God's work.

Michael means "Who is like God?" This name reminds us that no one is equal to God. Michael is the leader of God's heavenly army who defeated Satan and the forces of evil. He is a symbol of courage, strength, and faithfulness. The Church looks to St. Michael as a protector against evil and prays for his help in times of temptation and spiritual struggle. He teaches us to remain faithful to God and to stand firm for what is right.

Gabriel means "Man of God" or "God is mighty." Gabriel is the messenger who brought God's greatest news. He announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and later appeared to Mary to announce that she would become the Mother of Jesus. Gabriel reminds us that God continues to speak to His people. Like Gabriel, we are called to share God's message with joy, hope, and courage. Every Christian is invited to be a messenger of God's love in daily life.

Raphael means "God heals." In the Book of Tobit, Raphael guided and protected Tobias on his journey and brought healing to Tobit's blindness. Because of this, he is known as the patron of travellers, the sick, doctors, nurses, and the blind. Raphael reminds us that God cares for those who suffer and brings healing in many ways. We too are called to bring comfort, kindness, and hope to those who are hurting. The Feast of the Three Archangels is more than remembering these heavenly messengers. It is also a reminder of our own mission. Like Michael, we must stand against evil. Like Gabriel, we must share the Good News. Like Raphael, we must bring healing and compassion to others. May these holy Archangels inspire us to live faithfully and become true messengers of God's love.

Response: In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.



No Hesitation in the Kingdom of God

St Jerome

Jb 9: 1-12, 14-16/ Ps 88: 10bc-11, 12-13, 14-15/ Lk 9: 57-62

In today's first reading we see that trusting in God instead of material possessions, is what allowed Job to respond with faith to the temptations that came his way, and the tests he was to endure, especially at the hands of his friends whose reasoning challenged his convictions. Job's real love was for God not for cattle, sheep and camels, family members or even health and Job responded considering everything else as rubbish compared to his relationship with God. Job trusted in God more than anything else and his eyes leaned on God rather than on what he has lost. Thus, he was able to respond constantly as God's dear servant.

The gospel tells us that Jesus wants a single-minded response to His invitation to follow Him: a life devoted exclusively to His mission, to live in simplicity and trust. A disciple of Jesus is to be free of all attachments; anything that ties one down must be left behind in order to focus fully on the mission. Following Jesus means giving up all attachments - familial, friends, desires, and choosing him and the time to do so is 'now.' Jesus turned his face towards Jerusalem and never looked back, even when it meant certain death; his followers are invited to do the same. Once a decision is made to follow Jesus, serve God, let there be no turning back.

While Jesus' demands might seem hard, what they really reveal is the urgency of the Kingdom. St. Jerome recognized an essential point, that to know Christ better, to fix our gaze on him, to follow him as he desires and deserves to be followed, we must know Sacred Scripture better. He is famous for his saying, quoted in the Catechism, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." To fix our eyes where Jesus has fixed his, we must treasure God's word. The same Jesus who called his disciples in the Gospel, called Saint Jerome and calls us anew today. Let us positively welcome his invitation, and be steadfast like Job and committed like St Jerome.

Response: Let my prayer come into your presence, O Lord.

96. SACRAMENTS

The word 'sacrament' is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum*. In its secular feature it was used as for engagement or ceremony that binds or imposes obligation, specifically "oath of obedience and fidelity taken by Roman soldiers on enlistment; sum which two parties to a suit first deposit," hence it is also, "a cause, a civil suit," thus either "a result of consecration" or "a means of consecration." By 3rd century it was used in Church Latin for "a mystery, a sacrament, something to be kept sacred; the gospel revelation; a Church sacrament." In theology, its usage limited particularly to "a solemn religious ceremony enjoined by Christ, or by the church, for the spiritual benefit of the church or of individual Christians, by which their special relation to him is created or recognized or their obligations to him are renewed and ratified."

Catholic Perspective

The sacraments are sacred rituals instituted by Jesus Christ that serve as visible signs of God's invisible grace present in the very act of the sacred mystery. The Catholic Church teaches that there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance (Reconciliation), Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. These sacraments are not just symbolic ceremonies, but powerful encounters with Christ Himself that actually bring about the grace they signify and realize the fruits of this mystery in the person receiving it. They are the primary means through which God pours out His grace upon His people, strengthening them for their journey of faith and helping them grow in their life of holiness.

The sacraments are rooted in the Incarnation - the truth that God became human in Jesus Christ. Just as Christ used physical signs (water, bread, wine, oil) to communicate His love and power, so the Church continues to use these same signs to make Christ present and active in our lives. The sacraments are celebrated within the community of the Church and are administered by ordained ministers (priests or bishops), though some sacraments can be administered by lay people in emergency situations. Each sacrament has specific effects and graces that help us in different aspects of our spiritual journey.

The Sacraments of Initiation

The first three sacraments - Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist - are called the sacraments of initiation because they bring us into full membership in the Catholic Church and initiate us into the Christian life. *Baptism* is the first sacrament and the gateway to all the others. Through Baptism, we are cleansed of original sin, become children of God, and are incorporated into the Church, the body of Christ. Baptism is necessary for salvation and can be administered to anyone, including infants, as it is a gift of God's grace that does not depend on our understanding or merit.

Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism and strengthens us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through Confirmation, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit and given the strength to live as witnesses to Christ in the world. Confirmation is typically received during adolescence or adulthood, though the exact age varies by diocese.

The *Eucharist* is the source and summit of the Christian life, as it makes present the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and nourishes us with His body and blood. Through the Eucharist, we are united with Christ and with one another, and we receive the grace to live as His disciples.

The Sacraments of Healing

The sacraments of *Penance* (Reconciliation) and *Anointing of the Sick* are called sacraments of healing because they bring God's healing grace to those who are suffering from sin or illness. Penance is the sacrament through which we receive forgiveness for sins committed after Baptism. Through this sacrament, we confess our sins to a priest, express our sorrow, and receive absolution. Penance not only forgives our sins but also helps us grow in virtue and avoid sin in the future. It is a powerful sacrament of God's mercy and love.

Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament for those who are seriously ill or facing surgery. Through this sacrament, the sick person is anointed with oil and receives the grace to face illness with faith and courage. The sacrament can bring physical healing if it is God's will, but it always brings spiritual healing and strength. It helps the sick person unite their suffering with

Christ's suffering and can bring peace and comfort in difficult times. The sacrament can be received multiple times and is not just for those who are dying.

The Sacraments of Service

The sacraments of *Holy Orders* and *Matrimony* are called sacraments of service because they are directed toward the salvation of others. *Holy Orders* is the sacrament through which men are ordained as deacons, priests, or bishops. Through this sacrament, they receive the grace and authority to serve the Church in various ways. Deacons assist in the liturgy and serve the poor and needy. Priests celebrate the sacraments, preach the Gospel, and shepherd the faithful. Bishops have the fullness of the priesthood and are responsible for teaching, governing, and sanctifying their dioceses.

Matrimony is the sacrament through which a man and woman enter into a lifelong covenant of love and fidelity. Through this sacrament, they receive the grace to love each other as Christ loves the Church and to raise their children in the faith. Marriage is not just a social contract but a sacred vocation that reflects the love between Christ and His Church. The sacrament helps couples grow in love and holiness and provides the grace they need to fulfill their responsibilities as spouses and parents.

The Effects and Graces of the Sacraments

Each sacrament brings specific graces and effects that help us in our spiritual journey. *Baptism* brings the grace of new life in Christ, making us children of God and members of the Church. *Confirmation* strengthens us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and gives us the courage to witness to our faith. The *Eucharist* nourishes us with Christ's body and blood and unites us more closely with Him and with the Church. *Penance* brings forgiveness of sins and the grace to avoid sin in the future.

Anointing of the Sick brings comfort and strength to those who are ill and can bring physical healing if it is God's will. *Holy Orders* gives men the grace and authority to serve the Church in various ministries. *Matrimony* gives couples the grace to love each other faithfully and to raise their children in the faith. All the sacraments help us grow in holiness and draw us closer to God, preparing us for eternal life with Him.

Preparation for the Sacraments

Proper preparation is important for receiving the sacraments fruitfully. For *Baptism*, preparation involves learning about the faith and making a commitment to live as a disciple of Christ. For *Confirmation*, preparation typically involves a period of study and reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the responsibilities of being a witness to Christ. For the *Eucharist*, preparation involves learning about the Real Presence of Christ and the importance of receiving the sacrament worthily.

For *Penance*, preparation involves examining one's conscience, being truly sorry for sins, and making a firm resolution to avoid sin in the future. For *Anointing of the Sick*, preparation involves recognizing one's need for God's healing grace and being open to receiving it. For *Holy Orders*, preparation involves years of study and formation to ensure that candidates are ready for the responsibilities of ordained ministry. For *Matrimony*, preparation involves learning about the meaning of marriage and developing the skills needed for a successful marriage.

The Sacraments and the Christian Life

The sacraments are not isolated events but part of an ongoing journey of faith and conversion. They help us grow in holiness and draw us closer to God throughout our lives. The sacraments of initiation bring us into the Christian life, the sacraments of healing help us overcome obstacles to holiness, and the sacraments of service help us serve others and build up the Church. Together, the sacraments provide the grace and strength we need to live as disciples of Christ.

The sacraments also help us understand the importance of the Church in our spiritual journey. They are celebrated within the community of the Church and remind us that we are not alone in our faith. The sacraments help us grow in love for God and for others, and they prepare us for eternal life with God. By participating in the sacraments regularly and with proper preparation, we can grow in holiness and become more like Christ.

Living the Sacramental Life

Living a sacramental life means making the sacraments a regular part of our spiritual journey and allowing them to transform

us. This involves participating in the sacraments regularly, preparing properly for them, and reflecting on their meaning and effects in our lives. It also involves living out the graces we receive through the sacraments in our daily lives.

Living a sacramental life also means recognizing the sacred in the ordinary and seeing God's presence in all aspects of life. The sacraments teach us that God works through physical signs and that the material world can be a means of encountering the divine. This understanding can help us see God's presence in creation, in other people, and in the events of our lives. By living a sacramental life, we can grow in holiness and become more effective witnesses to Christ in the world.

Through the Sacraments we become more like Christ in our daily life and prepare ourselves for the eternal and resurrected life. In fact, Sacraments are transformative in nature and help us live the life of the Resurrected Lord here on earth.

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Sacrament of Reconciliation **(A Brief History)**

Part III – Sin and Forgiveness in the New Testament

Introduction:

In the previous two articles on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we briefly examined the concepts of sin, its nature, its gradual spread throughout humanity, and its repercussions on our relationship with God and with one another. We also reflected on how God, through various corrective measures, continually seeks to heal these broken relationships. Throughout the Old Testament, God raises up prophets of hope who call His people to repentance, inviting them to turn back to Him, amend their ways, and undergo genuine transformation.

In this article, we shall explore how Jesus brings this revelation to its fullness by presenting God as a loving and merciful Father. Through His teachings, actions, and personal encounters with

sinners, Jesus unveils the true face of God - a Father who is always ready to forgive, reconcile, and restore His children. In Him, the message of divine mercy reaches its highest expression, offering hope, healing, and new life to all who seek forgiveness.

1. Jesus – Visible Face of the Invisible Father

One of the central truths of Christianity is that Jesus Christ reveals to humanity the true face of God. While God is invisible and transcendent, He makes Himself known through His Son. Jesus Himself says, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). In Jesus, the mystery of God becomes visible, tangible, and approachable. Everything that Jesus says and does, perfectly reveals the Father’s heart. His compassion for the sick, His forgiveness of sinners, His concern for the poor, and His welcome of the outcast all show us what God is like. Through His words and actions, Jesus demonstrates that God is not a distant ruler but a loving Father who desires a relationship with His children.

Furthermore, the parables of Jesus, especially the Parable of the Prodigal Son, portray God as merciful, patient, and eager to forgive. Jesus does not merely speak about God’s mercy; He embodies it. When He forgives the adulterous woman, eats with tax collectors, and prays for His executioners, He reveals the boundless love of the Father. The supreme revelation of the Father is found on the Cross. There, Jesus manifests a love that is willing to suffer and sacrifice itself for the salvation of humanity. His death and resurrection reveal that God’s love is stronger than sin and death.

Therefore, to know Jesus is to know the Father. To listen to Jesus is to hear the Father’s voice. To encounter Jesus is to experience the Father’s love, His forgiveness, His mercy and compassion. In Christ, the invisible God becomes visible, allowing humanity to see, understand, and encounter the God who is pure love.

2. Jesus’ Mission - Forgiving Sins

The root of the Sacrament of Reconciliation lies in the life and ministry of Jesus. Furthermore, the New Testament reveals that Jesus came not merely to teach some lessons of life but also to forgive sins. When the paralytic was brought before Him, Jesus said: “My son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5) to which the

Scribes strongly objected asking Jesus “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7). Jesus, in reply, demonstrated His divine authority to forgive sins. Jesus often made this truth clear that the purpose of His incarnation was to bring reconciliation between God and man which was first ruptured by the sin of our first parents and later, by the rest of humanity. Jesus clearly declared: “The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). He even associated himself with sinners and dined with them (Luke 15:2). Thus, the entire ministry of Jesus was centered on reconciliation and healing of relationships. He demonstrated that forgiveness was central to this mission.

Jesus already exercised this power during his historical life, while he moved about as Son of Man in the towns and roads of Palestine, and not merely at the eschatological judgment, after the glorification of his humanity. Already on earth Jesus is “God with us,” the God-Man who forgives sins. It is likewise to be noted that in all cases in which Jesus spoke of forgiveness of sins, those present manifested opposition and were scandalized. Since we are all in debt to God, Jesus included in the prayer taught to his disciples and passed on by them to all believers, that fundamental request to the Father, “Forgive us our debts” (Mt 6:12), which in Luke’s version reads, “Forgive us our sins” (Lk. 11:4). Once again he wished to teach us that only God can forgive sins (cf. Mk 2:7). At the same time, however, Jesus exercised this divine power in virtue of that other truth also taught by him, namely, that the Father has not only “given all judgment to the Son” (Jn 5:22), but has also conferred on him the power to forgive sins. Evidently it is not a case of a simple “ministry” entrusted to a mere man who carries it out by divine command. The significance of the words with which Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins - and in fact forgave them in so many cases narrated by the Gospels - is more forceful and more telling for the minds of Christ’s hearers. They charged him of claiming to be God, and accused him of blasphemy with such fury as to lead eventually to his death on the cross.

3. Jesus – Epitome of God’s Mercy

The ministry of Jesus was fundamentally a ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation. He came into the world to save humanity from sin and to restore the broken relationship

between God and His people. From the very beginning of His public ministry, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God and called people to repentance, inviting them to turn away from sin and return to the Father. His encounters with individuals such as Zacchaeus, the sinful woman, and the woman caught in adultery demonstrated that no one was beyond the reach of God's mercy. While He never minimized the seriousness of sin, He consistently offered forgiveness, healing, and a new beginning to those who approached Him with faith and repentance. Jesus welcomed sinners, ate with tax collectors, spoke with outcasts, and offered hope to those burdened by guilt and shame.

Jesus also taught the reality of God's mercy through His parables. In the stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and especially the Prodigal Son, He portrayed God as One who actively seeks the lost, rejoices over the repentant sinner, and eagerly welcomes His children home. He emphasized that heaven rejoices over every sinner who repents and taught His disciples to practice the same spirit of forgiveness in their relationships with others. Through His miracles, Jesus not only healed physical ailments but also restored people spiritually, often linking healing with the forgiveness of sins. In forgiving the paralytic, He openly demonstrated His divine authority to forgive sins, revealing His identity as the Son of God. Throughout His ministry, Jesus became the living bridge between God and humanity, bringing reconciliation wherever there was division, alienation, and brokenness.

The culmination of Jesus' ministry of reconciliation was His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. By offering Himself on the Cross, He took upon Himself the sins of the world and made perfect atonement for humanity. Even in the midst of His suffering, He prayed, "Father, forgive them," revealing the limitless depth of divine mercy. Through His Resurrection, He triumphed over sin and death, opening the way for renewed communion with God. After rising from the dead, He entrusted the ministry of forgiveness to His Apostles, breathing upon them the Holy Spirit and giving them the authority to forgive sins. This ministry continues in the Church through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Thus, the entire life of Jesus - from His preaching and healing to His death and resurrection - stands as God's

definitive act of forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation, restoring humanity to friendship with the Father.

4. Jesus shares with the Apostles the Authority to forgive Sins

Jesus entrusted the ministry of forgiving sins to the apostles (and their successors) when he appeared to them after the resurrection, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven" (Jn. 20:22 ff.). As Son of Man who is personally identified with the Son of God, Jesus forgave sins by his own power, communicated to him by the Father in the mystery of the Trinitarian communion and of the hypostatic union. As Son of Man who in his human nature suffered and died for our salvation, Jesus expiated our sins and obtained for us their remission from God One and Three. As Son of Man who in his messianic mission must prolong his saving action until the end of time, Jesus conferred on the apostles the power to forgive sins to help mankind to live in harmony of faith and action with that eternal will of the Father "who is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4).

Jesus desired that His saving work continues through the Church, and therefore He entrusted His authority to forgive sins to His Apostles. This solemn commissioning of forgiving sins was more than a symbolic gesture; it was the formal conferral of the authority to continue Jesus' ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles became instruments of God's mercy, empowered to reconcile sinners with God but in the name of Christ.

This authority did not remain limited to the Apostles alone but has been handed down through apostolic succession to the bishops and priests of the Church. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Christ continues to forgive sins and restore His people to grace. When a penitent confesses sincerely and receives absolution, it is ultimately Christ Himself who forgives through the ministry of the Church. Thus, the sacrament stands as a living sign of Jesus' enduring mercy and of the authority He entrusted to His Apostles for the salvation of souls.

Our entire hope of salvation rests on this infinite mercy of the Father, on the sacrifice of Christ, Son of God and Son of Man,

who died for us, and on the work of the Holy Spirit who, through the ministry of the Church, continually carries out in the world the “forgiveness of sins” (cf. Encyclical, Pope St. John Paul II - *Dominum et Vivificantem* – On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World – 18 May 1986).

Conclusion:

The New Testament presents sin primarily as a rejection of God’s love and a failure to live according to His will. While the Old Testament emphasized obedience to the Law, the New Testament deepens the understanding of sin by focusing on the human heart. Jesus teaches that sinful actions originate from within a person - from evil thoughts, pride, selfishness, and lack of love. Sin is not merely the violation of a commandment; it is a rupture in one’s relationship with God and with others. Yet the New Testament also reveals that God’s response to sin is not condemnation but mercy. Jesus begins His ministry with the call, “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15), inviting all people to conversion and a renewed relationship with God.

The climax of the New Testament message on sin and forgiveness is found in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. By offering Himself on the Cross, Jesus takes upon Himself the sins of the world and reconciles humanity with the Father. His sacrifice becomes the definitive act of atonement, opening the way to salvation for all. After His Resurrection, Jesus entrusts to His Apostles the ministry of forgiveness, empowering them through the Holy Spirit to forgive sins in His name. Thus, the New Testament presents forgiveness as a gift flowing from the redemptive work of Christ, continued in the life of the Church through faith, repentance, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

-- Rev. Dr Rathan Almeida OCD

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Dear Subscriber,

Greetings of peace and gratitude from the *'Springs of Living Water'* editorial team.

First and foremost, we want to sincerely thank you for your faithful support and encouragement over the years. Your commitment has kept *'Springs of Living Water'* flowing into homes and hearts, nourishing many with reflections and inspiration.

As you are aware, times have changed rapidly. With rising printing and distribution costs and a decline in subscriptions, continuing the magazine in its current printed form has become increasingly difficult. After much prayer, discussion, and discernment, our editorial team has decided that the **November 2026 issue will be the final printed edition** of *'Springs of Living Water'*.

From December 2026 onwards, with the new Liturgical year, we will continue to share *'Springs of Living Water'* digitally. This will allow us to reach more readers, reduce costs, and remain faithful to our mission of spreading reflections and inspiration in a sustainable way.

We are aware that some of you have subscribed for longer periods. Please be assured that your subscription will be honored in full through digital delivery. You will continue to receive every issue without interruption, and we are committed to making the digital format accessible and reader-friendly.

We deeply value your trust and companionship on this journey. While the medium changes, the message remains the same: to bring living water to thirsty souls. We hope you will continue to walk with us in this new chapter.

With heartfelt thanks and blessings,

The Editorial Team

'Springs of Living Water'

Echoes of Magisterium

“The Church believes that Christ, who died and was raised for the sake of all, can show man the way and strengthen him through the Spirit in order to be worthy of his destiny.”

GAUDIUM ET SPES 10



In *Gaudium et Spes* 10, the Church affirms that Jesus Christ is the key to understanding both the mystery of God and the mystery of the human person. Human beings constantly search for meaning, purpose, truth, and fulfillment, yet often struggle with weakness, suffering, and uncertainty. Through His death and resurrection, Christ reveals the dignity and destiny of every person: we are created for communion with God and called to eternal life. Moreover, Christ does not merely show the way; through the gift of the Holy Spirit, He strengthens and guides us to live according to our vocation. In a world marked by confusion and competing values, the Church proclaims that true human fulfillment is found in Christ, who illuminates the path of authentic freedom, love, and holiness. Thus, every person can confidently journey toward their ultimate destiny, supported by the grace and presence of the risen Lord.

THE CROSS HONoured

*Why did God will that His Son
Upon the Cross should die?
Of Adam's sins and those of Eve
To heaven reached the cry.*

*Those sins brought suffering on men
Despair and agony
Hatred for one another
Deeper than we can see.*

*But God in great compassion
Looked down upon the skies
And listened to the pleading
That through dark clouds arise.*

*God told the Word incarnate
To show His love for them.
So Jesus gave up Himself
Outside Jerusalem.*

*Today that Cross is honoured
On which our Saviour died
Target of human hatred
Yet hope of the baptized.*



- Rev. Fr Paul D'Souza, OCD
(for daily liturgical poems visit
<http://lyrics.carmelmedia.in>*)*

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