



# IN OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

April 2016

You need the fullness of the Spirit of God in our state, for you should live and be guided only according to the spirit and the light of faith. It is only the Spirit of God who can give you this disposition. You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts, but you cannot do this except by the Spirit of God. Pray to him to give you today the same grace he gave the holy apostles, and ask him that, after filling you with his Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves, he also communicates himself to you in order to procure the salvation of others.

**St. John Baptist de la Salle**

***Published by:***

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

Daily Reflections now available on the internet

Visit [crlmain.org](http://crlmain.org) or [crlmain.com](http://crlmain.com)

Read the daily reflection from anywhere in the world

# **On Our Knees In His Hands**

*April 2016*

## **Editors:**

**Lalith Perera**

**Louis Benedict**

## **Co-ordinator:**

**Felicia Adhietty**

## **Contributors to this Issue:**

Ashika Fernando

Kamala Fernando

Ayomi Jansz

Kauchi Gunasinghe

Charmaine Peiris

Lalith Perera

Christy Akkarawatta

Louis Benedict

Darshi Egodawatte De Silva

Marie Navamani

Duthika Perera

Mercia Perera

Gerard Victoria

Muriel Obiris

Geetha Fernando

Natasha Adhietty

Himaya Perera

Rushika Pieris

Inuk Jayasuriya

Sajee Jayasuriya

Jeevaka Perera

Sheika Abeykoon

Jayanath Perera

Scalina Ratwatte

Jeya Chelliah

Sunimalee Fernando

Juliana Francis

Vinette Perera

## **Subscriptions:**

To subscribe for “On Our Knees” please  
fill in the form included in the back of this book.

**'The merciful Lord comes in search of us,  
even if we leave Him or hide from Him'**

Acts 4:1-12

Psalms 118:1-2, 4,  
22-27a

John 21:1-14

St. Peter is the main character in today's first reading and Gospel. When we look at the life of St. Peter we find three faces of St. Peter. 1) The Peter who was shown to the world 2) The Peter whom he thought he was 3) The real Peter

The people of Galilee saw St. Peter as a man with a strong personality. He had a good knowledge of his job and possessed leadership abilities. This

was Peter's nature that was shown to the world.

Internally, St Peter thought he knew who he was and that he could do anything. He thought he was stable and had strength and power. It is with this strength that St. Peter loved the Lord Jesus. He loved the Lord Jesus to the extent that from Gethsemane, hidden from view, he followed his Master to his trial, while the others ran away.

Yet the real Peter came out when he denied the Lord Jesus three times. The Peter who was shown to the world and the Peter whom he thought he was, did not have the strength to go beyond that point. It is at this point that Peter realised who he really was. But the Lord Jesus loved this real weak Peter. When he realised the truth about himself, after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, he left everything, came back to Galilee and went back to his old job. Thus it was when Peter tried to hide himself that the Risen Lord came to the sea of Tiberias in search of him.

We also have these three characters in our lives. Many of us show one face to the world and are really somebody else inside. We conceal the truth and remain not awakened to the truth. Many of us do not like to deal with the bitter truth that is inside us. Therefore we live by our strength, our power, our knowledge and have unknowingly abandoned and hidden ourselves from God. The good news is He comes in search of us even when we are in hiding. This is the heart of the merciful Lord.

In the book of Acts we see St. Peter alive once again after receiving the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus. Peter was no longer the one who was shown to the world or the one who trusted his abilities. Now St. Peter was doing amazing things by the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. We are also heirs to this blessed life. Today the Lord Jesus is saying to us, "I am coming in search of you and if you permit me, if you surrender your life to me, I will make you another St. Peter.

***Prayer: Abba Father, Give me the strength and power to believe in the love and mercy stored for us in Your heart. Amen.***

“The Lord is my strength and my defense”

Psalm 118:14

Acts 4:13–21

Psalm 118:1,  
14–21

Mark 16:9–15

The strength and power with which St. Peter, St. John and Mary Magdalene carried out their mission throughout the first reading and the Holy Gospel today can be related to what the Psalmist prayed many hundreds of years before them. “The Lord is my strength and my defense”

A beautiful testimony was shared a month ago at a Night Vigil held for the Year of Mercy. There was a successful businessman who lived an arrogant life style and with the egoistic notion that the company he worked for could not run without him. One day, in his arrogance he had a disagreement with his Superior and full of pride said that he would quit his job, fully expecting the superior to beg him to stay. To his surprise the Superior asked him to leave. His pride did not permit him to ask for mercy and so he left the company. Before that everyday on his way to work he used to pass a retreat center. As a non-Christian, he scoffed at the Christians and was annoyed at the traffic block the retreat center created.

Once he left work, he did not find another job and became penniless. In this desperate situation a friend took him to the same retreat center, where he had a supernatural encounter with the Risen Lord. Being a convert, he was threatened not to speak of the Lord Jesus or he would be killed. He refused to do that. One day he was brutally beaten and maimed. Once out of hospital this man, full of mercy in His heart went in search of the man who maimed him and forgave his attacker.

How did St. Peter and St. John defy the Sanhedrin to boldly perform miracles in the mighty name of the Lord Jesus? Where did Mary Magdalene get the strength and the courage to give the good news to the disciples who were hiding in fear. It was a time in Jewish tradition when women had little or no place in society. The Risen Lord Jesus is asking us to do the same today. The Gospel reading explains the number of times the Lord Jesus appeared to his disciples and others at different times after His resurrection. In the same way the Lord appeared to the nonbeliever in the testimony.

Therefore, let us believe that the Lord Jesus is risen and alive and that our strength and defense comes only from Him.

***Prayer: Abba Father, when the pressures of the world get me down, help me remember that there is power and strength in the name of Your Son. Amen.***

**“...Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and by believing you may have life in His Name”.**

Acts 5:12–16  
Psalm 118:2–4,  
22–27  
Revelation 1:9–13,  
17–19  
John 20:19–31

Today is Divine Mercy Sunday. The Church, in today's liturgy, presents us with the unfathomable Mercy of our God. This mercy knows no bounds chasing after us who do not deserve it. We are experiencing various facets of God's mercy throughout this Jubilee Year of Mercy and it is reaffirmed in today's liturgy.

The First Reading reveals a New World order, just born through the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Who were these apostles it speaks about? They were the same ones, who deserted their Master, ran away and hid in the upper room. Their leader, St Peter was the same person who vehemently denied that he knew the Lord Jesus and in a cowardly way escaped to Galilee to return to fishing, his old way of life. All who now stood apart from the rest of society in the post Resurrection period had one thing in common. They had encountered the Risen Lord and received His love and mercy instead of judgment and scorn. They had been baptised in the Holy Spirit and had their past life erased. The world became new, like it had never been before. The theologically illiterate people were performing miracles simply because the Risen Lord was living in them. God's Mercy was in action!

Who was St John? He and his brother St James wanted to be chieftains in the New Kingdom, to be established by their Master. Where was judgment for being power hungry? Instead, Here was the beloved apostle, been flooded by the loving mercy of His Master. He, who wanted to sit next to the Master in the new kingdom, was now a prisoner in exile. Here, he received a tangible experience of Heaven itself and saw the glory of the Son of Man, now living forever. God's Mercy was in action again!

The Gospel beautifully describes how the Master, brutally taken away from His friends, was returning to them, now hidden behind locked doors. Didn't the triumphant Lord Jesus, have any better words to make His apostles feel regret for their behaviour? Yet, the words that came from His heart were, "Peace be with you!" Showing His wounds to prove that He was the same Master whom they deserted, the Lord breathed upon them His Holy Spirit, who was now ready to be released upon the whole of Creation.

The Lord tells us today that we too, can have the same experience as the early Church. There is no need to go on living a defeated life, being controlled by our own circumstances and the actions of others.

There is no need to be victims of our own broken nature. Further, this new world is not outside us, but is experienced in the depths of our being. The Almighty God is empowering us to live in total freedom and victory of the Resurrection of His Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. When we renew the Baptism of the Holy Spirit through the Four Steps Retreat, we too are added to the number of His followers who stood apart from the rest of the world by their way of life. When we continue to journey on a daily basis, submitted to the guidance of the Church, signs and miracles become a daily experience in our lives, not just for us but for all around us.

God's mercy is not logical, making it hard for most people to fathom and accept until they themselves experience failure. Those who are helpless and have run out of their own options are in a good position to enjoy Divine Mercy. All of us at one point or another have been recipients of the merciful gaze of our Lord Jesus, which St Peter and St John received. We have had the Lord pursuing us offering His love and forgiveness even when we did not have the strength or capacity to trust in His love. We had been playing the role of St Thomas many a time, faltering in our faith, demanding signs to prove God's faithfulness. Into that confusion and unbelief, we have had the Risen Lord coming with His Mercy and Grace.

Have you denied or betrayed the Lord in the face of receiving worldly status, wealth or power? Have we deserted Him because our prayers were unanswered? Have we lost faith because of a crisis in life and feel disappointed? If so, this is our moment of grace. Let us gaze at the Lord Jesus, whose mercy assures us of no condemnation but a constant outpouring of love, peace, joy and freedom.

What would the result be, when we experience God's Mercy? We who have been accepted as we are, forgiven, healed, and filled with Power from on High, will receive the inner freedom to show mercy to those who are broken and fallen in life. Thus the whole world will experience the saving grace of the Messiah.

On Divine Mercy Sunday we shift the gaze from ourselves to the millions of souls who have gone ahead and are suffering in purgatory with no one to pray for them. We pray for people who are living and are yet to be touched by the love of the Lord. We pray for those struggling with sin and the resultant guilt. Those who are trying to find strength within themselves to overcome their sinfulness. We pray for priests and nuns to be faithful to their calling. We pray for an outpouring of the blood and water which flowed from the Lord Jesus' side to cleanse the world.

***Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for opening the inexhaustible treasury of Your Mercy, through the supreme sacrifice of Your Beloved Son. May the whole of Creation receive Your grace to bathe in the fountain of Your mercy. Amen.***

“Here I am, I have come to do your will.”

**Hebrews 4:9**

Isaiah 7:10–14,

8:10

Psalms 40:7–11

Hebrews 10:4–10

Luke 1:26–38

He was young, inexperienced and had a king size ego. He had access to the best of the best; military experts, political experts, economists, sociologists... after all, he was the king. Yet, the “reality” of the circumstances made him and his leadership “tremble as trees in the forest tremble with the wind”. They were in desperate times, and desperate times calls for desperate measures.

Two kingdoms were rallying against the kingdom of Ahaz; he had no time for the Man of God or what he had to say. “Take care and be calm...?” This was no time to be calm; it was time for action to save the Kingdom.

Frustrated about the king’s course of action, Prophet Isaiah challenged him; “Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven”. It was clear, the actions Ahaz was taking were against the leading of God. Prophet Isaiah knew without a trace of doubt if King Ahaz stopped and discerned the will of God, he would have received direction. Even if he asked for the most ridiculous sign; a sign that is “deep as the underworld or high as heaven”. Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!”

At a glance, Ahaz seems more righteous than Prophet Isaiah. How dare the prophet ask him to test God? He is the high and mighty one, no one tests God! But below the surface of Ahaz’s righteousness was a different reason; Ahaz already had a solution. He had decided to get help from the king of Assyria. Instead of giving the truth of his heart, he spiritualised and justified his actions.

We too find ourselves in situations, similar to that of King Ahaz. When our hearts are closed to the voice of God, our circumstances make us tremble like trees in the forest... Yet, we remain proud, unteachable with a king size ego! Just like Ahaz, we too avoid dealing with the truth of our hearts; we justify and spiritualize our actions. We stubbornly hold on to our own solutions and perceptions because we fear losing out. Instead of seeing the crisis as an opportunity to completely surrender to God, we see them as evil attacks or people persecuting us. Our stubbornness separates us from God and makes us vulnerable to our circumstances.

Often when I am faced with a problem people tell me “Don’t worry, God is with you”. At least for a moment it works; it reminds me that I am not alone and it gives me comfort. Yet, when the Angel Gabriel greeted the Blessed Mother with similar words, she was troubled!

Call it a woman's intuition; she knew there was more to the angel's greeting. The angel continued; "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus".

Sometimes I wonder who had the toughest job that day; Angel Gabriel who had to convey the message or the Blessed Mother who received it. What transpired between them was interesting.

He tells her the importance of the child; "He will be great, will be called the Son of the Most High; God will give to him the throne of his father David, he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end."

If an angel came and told me that I would have a child who would eventually be a world leader, I would have had many questions... How? When? Where? Not the Blessed mother, her only question was; "How can this be, since I have no husband?"

The angel explains; The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God".

That was all she needed to know. She surrendered her life, then and there; "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word".

What a contrast to the young Ahaz? What a challenge for us who have become an obstacle to the move of God because we are too caught up in ourselves. Through her complete submission to God's plan, the Blessed Mother discovered a secret; "For with God nothing will be impossible".

Today we celebrate the feast of the annunciation. The Lord's earthly mission is made clear in the second reading; He came to do the will of God through complete surrender to the will of God.

First it was the Blessed Mother, then it was the Lord Jesus... they had only one desire; to do the will of God. Yet, here I am, just like King Ahaz struggling every day to submit to God, to let go of my solutions, afraid to trust God with my life... The Lord is inviting me today to give Him the truth of my heart and allow the power of the Most High to overshadow me. For nothing is impossible with God. And all things are possible for those who believe.

Even the Lord himself always worked with a leading from the Father. He said, "I do nothing on my own." He relied on the Father's direction and we are called to find this oneness with God and to be led by Him.

***Prayer: Abba Father, deliver me from what I am caught up with and save me from my broken nature. May your steadfast love and faithfulness carry me from where I am to where you want me to be. Amen.***

**“The wind blows where it wills.....so it is with everyone  
who is born of the Spirit.”**

**John 3:8**

Acts 4:32–37

Psalm 93:1–2, 5

John 3:7–15

The Acts of the Apostles gives St. Luke's account of the events after the resurrection of Jesus. The disciples were confused and lost. But when the Lord Jesus reveals himself they are overjoyed and remember what He had told them. Then as promised the anointing of the Holy Spirit rests on them, the tremendous infilling of His mighty power changes them. They are filled with the Love Peace, Joy and the righteousness of the Holy

Spirit- they become a new creation. Material things of the world no longer contain them. There is a tremendous sense of love and concern for each other. They surrender their material belongings so that no one is excluded from being cared for and left in need. The early church was growing at a fast pace. From the small gathering grew the huge oak tree of the Church we know of today. It was true then and it is true today that 'the Lord added to their number day by day'

There is something truly beautiful and striking about the early church the way in which it was faithful to the Lord's vision of a vibrant, coherent, life-giving community. St. Luke paints an incredible picture of unity, love and service. It highlights how attractive Christian fellowship can be. 'they were of one heart and one mind' Few are able to live like this today, but we are called to live in a similar way. We know when we look into our hearts that selfishness, individualism and the attraction of possessions prevent us from living in a generous way. Our Parishes are places where we worship God and receive the Eucharist, but our commitment is limited to our state of life and our other commitments. Was the witness of the early church for a bygone age and never to be repeated? Are we destined to be overwhelmed by consumerism and selfishness?

In the Gospel reading, St John speaks of the Holy Spirit. The power that can change us to do things beyond ourselves. 'The wind blows where it wills. You can hear the sound it makes but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone in the Spirit'. Thank God daily for His merciful love and repent for selfishness that breaks down the body of Christ. Unity and love are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can soften our hearts to be more generous with our time, money and our resources. St Paul says 'where there is the Holy Spirit there is freedom'. Freedom to love unconditionally, and with hearts enlightened to receive the revelations of God.

**Prayer: Abba Father, may the power of your Spirit move in my heart and transform me to be the person you want me to be. Amen**

**Go tell the people the whole message about this life****Act 5:20**

Acts 5:17-26

Psalm 34:2-9

John 3:16-21

The dynamic dimension of the Holy Spirit is amply demonstrated in the first reading. The amazing audacity of the two Apostles rebelling against the powerful authorities would have sent shock waves not only to their accusers but to the crowds who flocked to see the miracle. It would have been a stirring moment when the angels released them and gave them the commission to do exactly what

was forbidden. People saw their magnetic and powerful way of life which they lived out joyously what they preached - loving & accepting each other, sharing with the less fortunate. The apostles offered the greatest gift of all the Lord had promised - abundant life. There is a hunger in every human heart, though unrecognised, to live a life of fulfillment and joy. This was the gift the apostles offered. They were not concerned with intellectual arguments but simply preached the unconditional love of God and the saving power of the cross. The Holy Spirit did the rest. They were models of a joyous life - lived to the fullest even in the most adverse circumstances. Jerusalem would have been shaken to its foundations. The religious leaders filled with envy and fear of the crowd's response, attempted to stifle them. But the word they obeyed was not to be thwarted. Barred doors had opened and to their amazement Peter & John had walked into the most dangerous territory. God saw the people's need for the Good News and commissioned the Apostles to communicate it.

Sometimes familiarity with the Good News and constant repetition can diminish our power and vitality. Should not the staggering first line of the Gospel galvanize us into a fitting response? The world includes the unlovable, the weak, the sinful, the marginalised, even those who reject Him. St. John's Gospel spells out the Jesus characteristics. He is the Bread of life, the way, truth and life, the Resurrection and life. We too should live out His life that demands an explanation - as the Apostles did. Christ must become our own experience, so that filled with His life, we reflect him. It is how we live under pressure and persecution that will make others wonder what hidden resources enable us to respond joyfully knowing Him intimately by constant fellowship and prayer. He will mould us into His likeness. The Holy Spirit will be released by obedience to the law of love and by dying to self.

We too are called to fulfill a mission. He will reveal it to us when we come sincerely to Him in prayer.

**Prayer: Abba Father, awaken my spirit that I may fulfill the mission you have called me to. Amen**

**A day of gratitude to God**

Acts 5:27–33

Psalms 34:2, 9,  
17–20

John 3:31–36

Thousands of Sri Lankans, past pupils of Christian Brother schools today hold some of the highest and noblest positions in society. High is their aim in life's onward view. For Christ and church united they stand. Doing the duty that has to be done and bearing the Cross with the crown in view. They will join the church today in celebrating the feast of St. John Baptist de la Salle the patron saint of teachers. If teaching is vital to mould

human beings who are true to God and true to all people—serving selflessly, sincerely and sacrificially—then we thank God today for one of the greatest teachers in history.

St. John Baptist de La Salle (April 30, 1651 – April 7, 1719) was a French priest, educational reformer, and founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. St Benedict's College is its premier institution and celebrated its 150th jubilee last year.

De La Salle dedicated much of his life to the education of poor children in France; in doing so, he started many lasting educational practices. He is considered the founder of the first Catholic schools.

In the first reading today we could reflect on the teaching power of the Holy Spirit. Before Pentecost, St. Peter and the other Apostles lacked faith and were often fearful. Even after hearing the messages and seeing the miracles of the Lord Jesus St. Peter denied him, one apostle betrayed him and most of the others deserted Him. One striking incident takes place when the Lord Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest to be tried. A maid at the residence of the high priest asks St. Peter whether he also was a follower of Jesus. Peter vehemently denies his association with profanities.

But after the Pentecost anointing—filled with the powerful gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit—We see St. Peter before the Jewish supreme Court, the Sanhedrin. He told them that nothing and no one could stop him from witnessing to Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of all people. He declared that the Lord is the way, truth and the life and that no one could go to the Father except through the Lord Jesus. Some may be called to be preachers but all Christians are called to be teachers. The lessons are less from books and blackboards but more from the way we live. We need to preach constantly but use words only when necessary.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, teach me how to learn from the Holy Spirit and have an open mind to accommodate a growing spiritual understanding. Amen.*

I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Psalm 27 : 3

Acts 5:34–42

Psalm 27:1, 4,  
13–14

John 6:1–15

Gamaliel did not only teach the law or practice rituals, but led a life in union with God. Therefore, he had the wisdom to address the Sanhedrin by giving them previous examples to draw upon and to lead them to a spiritual way of dealing with the situation instead of forcing his opinion on them. The result was that many people came to know the Lord through the disciples' teachings. In our daily life we encounter many people who want

to teach and lead others to do the right thing, but they do that by imposing their will on them, instead of allowing the other person to choose the path they should take. Often in my life too, in a bid to get the job done I do what 'I' think is the best method. Yet later the Lord challenges me that I should have done it 'in the spirit' and not by self-effort.

According to verse 41, the apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering for the Name. If we examine our hearts, can we find even one moment where we rejoiced because we were persecuted? Most often if we are wrongly accused, found fault with or publicly put to shame, we try to prove our good name. We even ask God to help us to prove that we are right. If people ridicule us because we follow God, and according to them shout, clap and are emotional (praise and worship) we pity them and feel sorry for them. Yet that was not the disciples' response when they were flogged and put through much hardship, because they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel reading we see how the Lord Jesus fed the five thousand. He too did this with the power of Holy Spirit. Because it was in the spirit, the impossible was made possible; a miracle took place, the people received their fill and there was an overflow. The psalmist too, was filled with the Holy Spirit – because of this, the Lord was His light and salvation. If we examine our hearts, we will discover that our spouses, children, grand-children and jobs are the light and joy of our life. Unlike the psalmist, we fear many things in our life – the loss of a loved one, if we will be able to prove ourselves at our work place, if we are good enough when compared to others.

Being in the spirit is not a privilege that only the disciples enjoyed. Through the four steps, we too can enter into the spirit and experience the goodness of the Lord in our life.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, help me enter and remain in the Holy Spirit and experience your goodness in every moment of my life. Amen*

“Brothers select from among you those filled with the spirit and his wisdom ”

Acts 6:3

Acts 6:1-7

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

John 6:16-21

There was a hostile division among the Jerusalem Christians. One group was called the Hellenists who were Jews but spoke Greek. They were linked to the Greco – Roman civilization. The other was called Hebrews, who spoke Aramaic or Hebrew. There were also theological differences.

There seems to be some discrimination taking place. In this we see the unique role of the twelve apostles. They preserve the Koinonia by their solution. The minority Hellenists continue to remain as fully recognized brothers and sisters in Christ. They could have demanded the Hellenists either to conform or leave. Prompted by the Spirit, a divine response is given.

Most people carry out religious activities and services holding tight to their egoistic tendencies, human impulses or natural drives. This defeats the purpose of spirituality. One needs to confess this to God and be cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus. A decision needs to be made to operate through one’s spirit which gets its guidance, power and revelations from the Holy Spirit. St. Paul tells the Galatian church in chapter five, not to operate in the flesh, according to its passions and drives motivated by the ego. He calls them not to be conceited, provoking one another to hatred and being envious of one another.

Today’s readings call us into the supernatural from the natural. Let’s pray and ask the Lord to awaken our spirits as we surrender to him. Then we will be able to obey and do what the Spirit wants done. In surrender we belong to Christ who crucified our flesh with its passions and drives.

In the Gospel reading we see the contrast of living in the natural vs the supernatural. The disciples are vulnerable to the storms and darkness of life which overwhelm them. The Lord in the spirit operates in another realm. In total control of the situation he faces, as he walks on the sea, denoting his power over evil. The disciples in the crisis allow their limited rational mind to take control; the result is fear. The Lord directs them not to be afraid. They want to take him into the boat, but he declines as his spirit brings them ashore. The Lord reveals to us the ultimate reality of being fully in the spirit. It calls for a paradigm shift. When we undergo such a shift we will be able to share the good news with the world.

**Prayer: Abba Father, moment by moment may my spirit be awakened to live in internal peace. Amen**

Acts 5:27–32,  
40–41

Psalm 30:2,  
4–6, 11–13

Rev 5:11–14

John 21:1–19

If you were to summarise the three readings for today, they would refer to the Peter after, the Peter before and the Peter where he longed to be.

When we look at the person of Peter before his encounter with the resurrected Lord, we are forced to spend a lot of time with him. Here was a directionless man mired in doubt, confusion, and self-pity. As we have been taught, his subconscious self had taken over and he decided to go back to a life of fishing after failing the Lord. He preferred to lose himself in a world of toiling and earning.

We picture a Peter, stripped to his working clothes, once again at the helm of affairs, directing the boat and leading the crew but towards emptiness. Sometimes we are in the thick of life and so involved with a worldly activity but inside our nets are empty. People may envy those who seemed to have made it, but at the heart of the lives of people who have achieved, there may be an emptiness that cannot seem to be filled or fathomed.

Peter was in the dark and depth of this life he had returned to. And while he was there lost in it, the Lord Jesus chooses to reveal himself to Peter. What did Peter do? The word says he threw himself into the water. So much rushed through his mind. He felt the urge to get lost in the water, wash himself and yet there was a revelation that there was nowhere else to go.

We have nowhere else to go like what the Psalmist says in Psalm 139... Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

After all that we have tasted of the Lord, sometimes we have the urge to dump it all and flee. But where do we go? And what does the Lord say when we have this urge. He says, 'Come and have breakfast with me.' Breakfast is a meal after a long fast through the night. After this night of a long struggle, the Lord Jesus offered no condemnation but a serving of love. In between, the Lord assures Peter of some fish and fills the net with a load of fish that they struggled to bring in. Peter was retiring from a life of fishing and his last score was well above the

average. His self confidence was restored as he walked off the pitch of his earthly trade and began his ministry. The St. Peter declaring his obedience to God is a short and clear cut reading, whereas the Peter undergoing the change from the lapsed believer to a renewed convert is a longer struggle. In our struggles, before we experience the love of the Lord Jesus, we can be very complicated people, immersed in the darkness of the ocean, struggling with waves of self-pity and emptiness. When we encounter such people, to them their struggle is so real and heavy and we are called to spend time with them and draw them out into the love of the Lord's presence and healing.

The Lord Jesus spent time with Peter asking him if he loved this re-discovered fishing life more than his calling. Often we can be reluctant believers or love our ministry more than the Lord himself. The Lord has called us out, but in the depth of our hearts we envy those who appear to be successful in the world. We fail to see the value, depth and beauty of our vocation. The Lord Jesus is asking us, 'Do you love all of that more than this experience of knowing me and living for me?' It is a struggle not unknown to the Lord and yet we may be unaware that such a struggle exists within us.

The Lord Jesus fed St. Peter a freshly cooked meal and then lovingly persuaded him to feed His sheep. We must be fed by the Lord, through His word and ministering and then we will be able to feed and minister to people. We may be ministering in hunger, lack and like the people of Israel convinced that the life in Egypt was way better than this new life we have chosen in the Lord. We have this struggle more so when we go through periods of spiritual dryness. Then we want to throw ourselves into the water and wash off the sin that is clinging to us and yet want the world and the Lord Jesus.

In our struggle, a vision of Heaven will help us. In the Book of Revelations St. John gives us a glimpse of thousands upon thousands who have overcome this struggle and are enjoying being in the presence of the Father, Holy Spirit and the Lamb, the Lord Jesus himself who went through the same experience of abandonment. Let us turn our gaze from the winds and worries of life to the Lamb of God and spend time worshiping Him as we sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!' Let us choose to sit at the foot of the cross, give him our unbelief, spiritual dryness and secret struggles and allow him to minister to the trials of our souls. Only He can cease the onslaught of thoughts and assumptions we face and replace them with a vision of Heaven. Only the Lord can take us from confusion to clarity and a life surrendered to self pity and loathing to self renewal and a resurrected life.

***Prayer: Abba Father, to you who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever! Amen***

**“Do not work for food that perishes but for the food  
that endures to eternal life”**

**John 6:27**

Acts 6:8–15

Psalms 119:23–24,  
26–27, 29–30

John 6:22–29

St. Stephen had eaten the bread that came down from heaven and was satisfied to the fullest in life. We could say that he was a contented man because in the midst of false accusations he was at peace. The only other person who was at peace in the middle of turmoil was our Lord Jesus Christ; the true bread who came down from heaven.

As believers we are called to be witnesses to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Stephen was speaking of the resurrected Lord. He spoke the truth boldly and was granted grace and power from above which is the result of eating the bread that came down from heaven. When we taste this bread from heaven we realise that there is no substitute nor replacement for it.

We hardly face a life threatening situation like St. Stephen faced. But in our little challenges we tend to compromise. We lose sight of God and we act in our own ways to protect ourselves from challenges. St. Stephen was accused falsely because he wasn't a Jew from Jerusalem and he was a Hellenized Jew. Jews from Jerusalem will never tolerate anything said against the Jerusalem Temple or the Law of Moses. St. Stephen's false witnesses knew the gap and crept through it. That is the wisdom of the world. The wisdom of heaven causes us not to give in to the threats of this world and never to fear.

Are we challenged by the statement the Lord Jesus made in the Gospel? Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled" (Jn 6:26). Are we taking advantage of God's faithfulness? We are called to live resurrected lives and move from victory to victory. When we eat the imperishable bread and taste the Lord Jesus, we are prevented from being victims to the lies of this world.

Saint Stanislaus, Bishop of Krakow in Poland, said no to worldly riches and fame. He encountered the Risen Lord and committed his life to the Lord. He offered himself as a living sacrifice to glorify the Lord Jesus. Refusing his doctorate in humility, he donated his inheritance to the church in generosity, stood against the evil of the king and was martyred. We become martyrs when we eat the living bread of heaven.

**Prayer: Abba Father, save me from ways of deceit and teach me to be loyal to you. Amen.**

**“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”**

**John 6:35**

Acts 7:51–8:1

Psalms 31:3c–4, 6–8, 17, 21

John 6:30–35

In the first reading Saint Stephen’s love for God kept him from yielding to the ferocious mob. His love for his neighbour made him pray for those who were stoning him. Love inspired him to reprove those who erred, to make them change. Love led him to pray for those who stoned him, to save them from punishment.

In the Gospel reading we are reminded of the Bread of Life. The Jews had regarded the Manna in the desert as the Bread of God. They strongly believed that when the Messiah came He would give Manna from Heaven. This was the supreme work of Moses. Now the Jewish leaders were demanding that the Lord Jesus produce Manna from Heaven as proof to His claim to be the Messiah. The Lord responded by telling them it was not Moses who gave them the Manna, but God. And the Manna given to Moses and the people was not the real Bread from heaven, but only the symbol of the Bread to come.

The Lord makes the claim which only God can make, “I am the Bread of Life”. The Bread that Jesus offers is none other than the very Life of God. This is the true Bread which can satisfy the hunger in our hearts. “I AM” strongly identifies Jesus with God and this is the first of seven “I AM” statements that appear in St. John’s Gospel.

The Manna from Heaven, is the Eucharist which the Lord Jesus gave His disciples on the eve of His sacrifice. The Manna in the desert sustained the Israelites on their journey to the Promised land, but could not produce Eternal Life for the Israelites. The Bread which our Lord offers His disciples not only sustains us on our journey to the heavenly paradise, but it gives the abundant supernatural life of God. It sustains us both now and for all eternity.

When we receive from the Lord’s table we unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, who makes us share in His body and blood and be partakers of His divine love. This food makes us live forever in Jesus Christ. This Supernatural food is healing for both body and soul and provides strength for our journey. Do you hunger for God and the food which produces everlasting life?

**Prayer: Abba Father, your Son our Lord Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, who alone can satisfy the hunger of our hearts. May we find in You the true Bread from heaven. Amen.**

“...whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”

*John 6: 37*

Acts 8:1–8

Psalms 66:1–7a

John 6:35–40

Many think we can experience love, acceptance, security and happiness in life through acquiring material things or through relationships. Thus our peace within depends on the behavior of others who are around us and the circumstances we face in life. Hence when someone fails us or when we face a crisis or struggle in our lives, our world collapses. This way of living according to our understanding and by our own selves ends up in emptiness, loneliness, depression and addictive behavioral patterns. It leads to untold misery within us and to those around us. We run from place to place trying to find answers to our life. Then we approach God and ask Him to solve our problems and fulfill our worldly desires which are temporary.

In today's Gospel the Lord Jesus says, the Father's will for everyone is to look at the Son, believe in Him and inherit eternal life. God wants all of us to have eternal life, a life in the spirit, experiencing the love and acceptance of God in our depths. The result is, even if the worst happens, we will experience the love, peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus says that whoever comes to Him, He will never drive away. In John 6: 35, He declares, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." He alone can fill our hunger and quench our thirst. He alone can lead us to a life in the spirit, because He is the One who obeyed the will of the Father, who came into this world for us, suffered, died on a cross and rose from the dead and poured out His Holy Spirit on us. Today let us stop looking for worldly solutions which are temporary. Instead let us turn to the Lord Jesus who can lead us to eternal life.

The first reading tells us about the great persecution that broke out against the Church at Jerusalem when all the members except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea & Samaria. Yet wherever they went they preached the good news with miraculous signs and it is said that there was great joy in that city. Despite suffering and persecution they were able to experience freedom and joy. The secret was they were internally filled with the Holy Spirit. Let us pray today for this anointing that we too may live our life for a higher purpose.

**Prayer: Abba Father as we trust you lead us this day to believe in you and live according to your ways. Amen.**

“I am the bread of Life”

John 6:48

Acts 8:26–40

Psalm 66:8–9,  
16–17, 20

John 6:44–51

The book of Acts from Chapter 6 – 8 is the universal mission of St. Paul. In this context, today’s first reading can be read using the gift of imagination that God has bestowed upon us. It is a beautiful account of St. Phillip meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch.

To our rational mind, which is often filled with the information of the world, and in today’s context, the land of Ethiopia represents, utter poverty where many thousands die in hunger. It is a marginalized country with not enough support from the world system. A eunuch in the same way belongs to a marginalised community for social reasons. St. Phillip listened to the voice of the angel of God and set out in obedience to the call of God. The Ethiopian eunuch accepted Jesus Christ as the Saviour as he explained the scripture passage and its meaning. The saving grace for the eunuch was what followed. He was baptized with the Holy Spirit. That same Holy Spirit also took St. Phillip away from that place and the word says that the eunuch did not see him and went his way rejoicing. He was not scared or bothered nor was he analyzing what happened to St. Phillip. The eunuch did not look for St. Philip to thank him or appreciate him.

This speaks to our heart today, showing us how we are called to serve as we stand in the gap for many whom the Lord Jesus leads us to. As in the reading it maybe to the poor and the marginalized in our societies, or our own family members whom we may have considered outcasts. We are called to obey the leading and share the Good News and lead the person to be baptized in the Holy Spirit so that he or she lives and bears fruit. We are also called not to look for personal appreciation or glory. Was this not the life of Saints?

In the Gospel reading today, the Lord Jesus reminds us that He is the bread of Life. (John 6:48). The living bread that came down from heaven. The Lord says that no one can draw near to Him unless the Father in Heaven draws them so. We are also called to be like St. Phillip, to be attuned to the voice of God. We can do this through the four steps by which we connect to the Spirit of God every morning and re-connect when we fail during the day and through confession.

**Prayer: Abba Father, let me not lose your Holy presence. May I constantly hear Your voice and obey Your will. Amen**

## The Saul to Paul phenomenon

Acts 9:1–20

Psalm 117

John 6:52–59

In the afterglow of the National New Year the first reading tells us one of the most important stories in Christian history. The dramatic conversion of St. Paul on the road to Damascus. St. Paul originally known as Saul of Tarsus is regarded as one of the greatest apostles, though not one of the original twelve. He taught the Gospel of Christ to the first-century world. In the mid-30s to the mid-50s, he founded several churches in Asia Minor and Europe. St Paul took advantage of his status as both a Jew and a Roman citizen to minister to both Jewish and Roman people.

Earlier, Saul's mission was the brutal persecution of the early church. While on such a mission the Risen Lord appeared to him in a great light. He was struck blind, but after three days his sight was restored by Ananias of Damascus. St. Paul began to preach that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and the Son of God. About half of the book of Acts deal with St Paul's life and works. Fourteen of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament have traditionally been attributed to St. Paul. Seven of the epistles are undisputed by scholars as being authentic, with varying degrees of argument about the remainder. The other six are believed by some scholars to have come from followers writing in his name, using material from St. Paul's surviving letters and letters written by him that no longer survive.

Today, St. Paul's epistles continue to be vital roots of the theology, worship, and pastoral life in the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox traditions. Among that of many other apostles and missionaries involved in the spread of the Christian faith, St Paul's influence on Christian thought and practice has been characterized as being as "profound as it is pervasive". St Augustine developed St. Paul's idea that salvation is based on faith and not "works of the law".

St. Paul became a Christian when he met the Risen Lord. We also need to remember that a baptism certificate and attending religious services do not make us a real Christian. Like St. Paul we need to meet the Lord and have a deep, personal relationship with Him.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father you turned the greatest persecutor of Christians into the greatest propagator of the faith. May what happened to St. Paul, happen to us . Amen*

**“Do you also want to leave?”****John 6: 67**

Acts 9:31–42

Psalm 116:12–17

John 6:60–69

The peace of the Risen Lord had come into the hearts of new believers. The scripture says there was a sense of tranquility in the newly formed church of God. Saints Peter, Paul and others had done the hard work while many others became martyrs. The fruit of their hard work was the peace that swept across the church.

The two miracles are remarkable. True to His word, the Lord Jesus worked wonders and miracles among the disciples and the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles are also the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit is at work in an unfathomable way.

I am truly touched by the humility of St. Peter. He did his rounds to visit the newly baptized faithful. We need to be with our sisters and brothers, especially those who have newly come to believe in Jesus Christ. Our support and our accompaniment will strengthen them. St. Peter moved from one place to the other with this responsibility in mind and the Lord Jesus worked wonders in difficult situations, healing a man paralyzed for a long time and raising a dead person.

This is a promise we also can hold on to. The Lord Jesus said that we should go and preach the Word and that He would work miracles among us. We do experience the miracles around us and that is obviously the result of God's presence among us. We need more miracles. What should we do? The answer is in the Gospel. The Lord Jesus spoke truthfully and uncompromisingly that He is the living bread of heaven. That is the truth. But there were disciples who could not believe in this truth. Are we like them too?

We receive the Holy Eucharist, but do we believe in it? Do we believe that we are actually receiving the Lord Jesus? Do we experience it? How would we feel if the Lord questioned our belief in Him and if we left him and went away? When we reject the Holy Eucharist are we not rejecting the Lord Jesus? We need to follow the Lord Jesus with a sincere heart. There is no Christianity or Catholicism without the Body of Christ, because the Lord Jesus' body was sacrificed on Golgotha. At every Holy Mass, this sacrifice is re-enacted.

***Prayer: Abba Father, may I receive the grace to accept the words of our Lord Jesus. Amen.***

Acts 13:14, 43–52

Psalms 100:2-3, 5

Revelation 7:9,  
14–17

Historians date the book of Revelation to somewhere between AD 60 and AD 96. This timeline coincides with the reign of Nero and Domitian, an era during which Christians faced severe persecution. This was also the time when the Romans destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem. The events that followed saw the name Israel being wiped off the map and in its place, a new country emerged namely Palestine. The Romans were attempting to sever the links the Jews had with the promised land so that there would be no regeneration of the Jewish nation. Surely the people of God must have faced one of the gravest crises of faith they had ever experienced. On the one hand a time of great pain, uncertainty, and sadness. On the other, a time of great revelation, where secrets of the heart of Heaven were revealed; the dual nature of the mercy of God.

The Lord is reminding me that if I am going through a troubled time, it is also an invitation into His heart, where He is waiting to reveal deeper secrets and re-orient my purpose for living.

The Jews were the nation that belonged to God. Other nations worshiped pagan Gods. In the second reading, when St. John says that he saw a multitude of people from every nation, he is telling the believers in crisis that many who would not typically discover God are going to discover Him. The Elder in the vision reveals how this came to be. They are those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

If I am struggling to see the hand of God in my life, if all I see is only suffering and bad luck, if my thoughts, imagination, and dreams have become Godless, the first thing I must do is to be washed in the precious blood of Our Lord Jesus, which is also receiving the sacrament of reconciliation. The nations –places, people and circumstances that had no chance of seeing the hand of God, will discover Him.

St. John continues “For this reason they stand before God’s throne, and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them.” They who discover God, worship Him. When they worship him, even as they face hardships, they discover that He has not stepped down from the throne. He who is on the throne has authority over all men and all circumstances. He will shelter them. “For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne, will shepherd them

and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” There is consolation waiting for them in the throne room, a consolation that far exceeds their plight.

In the Gospel, St. John reiterates ““My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” The sheep live in a relationship with the Shepherd. Not by following a set of rules or formulas. We see the difference between the two ways of living in the first reading. The Jews react angrily and abusively towards St. Paul and St. Barnabas. They thought they were protecting or standing by the interests of their God, but they were acting against the very work of God. St. Luke uses the words “devout” and “God fearing” to describe these people. The Lord speaks to me. If my actions are congruent with the fruit of the flesh, even though it may seem that I am serving God, chances are that I am working against God.

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” While living in the world, they that hear His voice get the grace of living in the dimension of the Spirit. In the first reading, St. Paul and St. Barnabas are chased from Antioch. Yet the disciples are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. Something beyond the world of humanity is taking place. Sadness, disappointment and failure on one side, joy and the Holy Spirit on the other. They are living in the dimension of the Spirit, which is overshadowing the dimension of the world.

As I look into my heart I find that I alternate between the personas of the Jews and the personas of St. Paul and St. Barnabas. What do I do?

“All who were destined for eternal life came to believe”. It is as though St. Luke is saying that there was no contribution on the part of those who believed, their belief was an act of God. So if I notice the persona of St. Paul and St. Barnabas in me, it is not because of anything I have done, it is God’s grace upon my life. As I come to him to hear His voice, I hear the words: “No one can take them out of my hand.” Not harsh circumstances, not sickness, not powerful men or women, not the powers of darkness. “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand.” There is a powerful supernatural element at work protecting the persona of St. Paul and St. Barnabas inside my heart. As I come to Him to have a personal relationship with the Shepherd and hear his voice, the persona of St. Paul and St. Barnabas will overcome the persona of the Jews.

***Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to keep coming back; to be washed in the blood of the lamb, to know him and hear his voice. Amen***

**“Turn to our Lord Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit”**

Acts 11:1-18

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

John 10:1-10

The Jews believed that they were the chosen people of God and that they were special to God. They did not believe in salvation for others who were not Jewish, the Gentiles. In the First reading today, we see a Roman Centurion and his family. They were not Jewish and had no Jewish background. They were Gentiles. All Cornelius had was a heart that was open to God. The Holy Spirit came on him and the presence of the living God entered his family. This is the mercy of God. God is not interested in our background, race, social class or financial status. It does not matter what our past is, what our sins are. God is looking for a heart that is tuned to him. When we turn to God and open ourselves to Him, He promises to envelope us with His presence. We do not need to live alone. In the Gospel reading, the Lord Jesus gives us another promise. He promises to be our shepherd. He will guide us and show us the way. If we have messed up our lives and lost our way, let us turn to the Lord as He promises to lead us. The Lord will become our good shepherd. When we turn to God we are not only inviting God into our lives but also to our families. God promises to set free not only us but our families as well. Alleluia!

There was a young man who came to a Four Steps Retreat last year. He had lost his way in life and was used to a life of alcohol and partying. He was suffering from severe headaches for more than ten years. The headaches were so severe that he had to be hospitalized often. It affected his job as he had to go on leave often. At the retreat the power of the Holy Spirit came on him. Suddenly God became a living experience to him. His life was touched and transformed. He began to experience a progressive healing, his severe headaches were healed. It has been eight months now and he has not visited a hospital since then, neither has he taken a single day off from work. It was not just the physical healing but he met the “Good Shepherd” our Lord Jesus. He surrendered his entire life to God. Today God leads him and shows him the way. He can now say “ I was once lost but now I’m found”. God is not looking at our background or our past, He is only looking for those who will open their hearts and lives to Him.

***Prayer: Lord Jesus I messed up my life, I am lost. Today I turn to you and open my heart to you. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, be my “Good Shepherd” and show me the way. Amen***

“My sheep hear my voice and they follow me”.

John 10:27

Acts 11:19–26

Psalm 87:1b–7

John 10:22–30

The Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) was taking place in Jerusalem. It celebrated the dedication of the altar and reconstruction of the temple by the Maccabees (164 BC) after years of desecration under the Syrian rulers. The Lord Jesus walked into this temple during the celebration. He claimed to be the one the Father had sent and that the Father and He are one.

The statement baffled them. They questioned the Lord's divinity and role as Messiah. The Lord many a time affirmed it but they could not believe. The ones who believed were those the Father gave him. They are the sheep who hear his voice and seek him. He knows them: their compulsions, drives and weaknesses. He assures them of his protection and care. They would not follow a stranger or one who was unconcerned about their well-being. How marvelous indeed it is to belong to God's own. Remaining in this new temple with awakened spirits, we experience fellowship with Him.

In the first reading, we encounter some Cypriots and Cyrenians who had such a fellowship. Though they were fleeing the persecution, it did not stop them from preaching the Gospel. They did so in Antioch in Syria, a pagan territory. It was in this pagan territory that the believers were first called Christians. The anointing was so strong that many Gentiles turned to the Lord. Antioch became the second greatest Christian center. Here were unknown and unnamed men and women who proclaimed the word and a great number became Christians.

This startling news reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem. They assumed that the Jews were the only privileged nation. Did not the law of Moses even forbid living with the uncircumcised? So they sent Barnabas to check on them. While he was shocked he also rejoiced.

The first Christians though they had differences were a unified people. We are called not to dwell on the differences but rather on what binds us. The early church reached out boldly to interact and dialogue through the differences. It is all about hearing His voice and following Him. Not hearing our's and making people follow us.

**Prayer: Abba Father, teach me your ways: Your Son did not resort to management techniques, popularity ratings or trying to outdo the other. but just trusting the Father. Amen**

**I and the Father are One.****John 10: 30**

Acts 12:24–13:5a

Psalm 67:2–6, 8

John 12:44–50

Total oneness. That was how the Lord Jesus worked, in tandem with the Father. In the 40 days prayer time we learnt that the Lord Jesus had an external relationship. It meant that He did not rely on himself, on his assumptions or his way of understanding in responding to people and situations. In everything He relied on the Father.

It is as though at every moment the Lord Jesus was taking a pause, and asking the Father, 'Abba, what do I do now?' or 'Abba, what do I say now? When faced with a tricky situation it would be, 'Abba, what would you do? In this way, he was slow to respond, sometimes silent or armed with a stirring, full bodied, answer that left people amazed.

The Lord was clear about His mission. I have come into the world as light but whoever believes in me, believes in the one who sent me. Ultimately all glory is to be directed towards my Father in Heaven. He considered himself as part of a team and family.

In our experience, when we gain confidence and become aware of the Lord working through us, we tend to start assuming that we do not need to ask him and that since we already have a connection, we can make decisions and do as we please. But if the Lord Jesus himself paused and sought out the Father in every move He made, we are bound to behave in the same manner.

We find a good example in the early church when the Holy Spirit spoke to the leadership and asked them to set apart Barnabus and Paul to the work of the Lord and to travel to Cyprus, it was done. The direction came through times of worship and fasting. If we want to hear the voice of God, we need to have times of worship and fasting and we need to seek the face and voice of God. He will listen and answer us and give us a leading.

We need to seek the Lord's direction in all matters of our lives. Our money belongs to Him and we better seek his direction. Our relationships belong to him and we better allow Him to make them or break them. If we go beyond His direction we will have to face the damage and repercussions. The Lord says that His commands mean eternal life.

**Prayer: Abba Father, may your kingdom come and Your will be done in my life.**

**Amen**

**“Truly, I say to you whoever welcomes the one I send, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me. Welcomes the One who sent me.”***John 13:20*

Acts 13:13–25

Psalms 89:2–3,  
21–22, 25, 27

John 13:16–20

Catholic saints are ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives of holiness. Each saint the Church honors responded to God's invitation to use his or her unique gift for the glory of God. God calls each one of us to be a saint. Today we celebrate the feast of St Anselm. Though as a young man, Anselm was indifferent to the faith, he became one of the Church's greatest theologians and leaders. He received the title “Father of Scholasticism” for his attempt to analyze and illumine the truths of faith through the aid of reason. Anselm, like every true follower of Christ, had to carry his cross, especially in the form of opposition and conflict with those in political control. Though personally a mild and gentle man and a lover of peace, he would not back off from conflict and persecution when principles were at stake.

Today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles talks of St Paul's own Mission, He being a proclaimer. He was the herald of the Gospel message. He preaches his first ever recorded sermon on his first missionary journey. At the heart of St Paul's work was the proclamation of God's great work of Salvation. It was this powerful message that compelled him and gave him that fire in his heart to share it, witness to it, and proclaim it from the rooftops. When the opportunity was given to him to preach by the synagogue leaders, he seized it. We too need to be alert to such opportunities to share and proclaim God's word. These moments arise more often than we realize. The Holy Spirit can make us sensitive to what we call God given opportunities to share our faith and uplift and encourage our brothers and sisters. We need God's wisdom to do so in the most sincere and genuine way. St Paul was focused on Jesus, his teachings, the power of his name, his works and his saving death and resurrection.

The Gospel reaffirms the fact that the servant is not greater than the master nor is the messenger greater than he who sent him. Understand this and you will be blessed. This is what the Lord Jesus himself said after the washing of His feet just before he was arrested to be crucified. We are invited to open our hearts and minds to the powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit, humble ourselves and serve the Lord.

***Prayer: Abba Father I pray, that I will always focus on your Son and with the powerful anointing of your spirit, share my faith with joy with all whom you send to me. Amen***

**“I am the way, the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6**

Acts 13:26–33

Psalm 2:6–11

John 14:1–6

Today’s Gospel reminds me of many families that emigrate. In many of them, the father migrates first to the new country, prepares the home for the family and then returns to bring the rest of the family to the new home. The children of those families enjoy the certainty that their dad has already made their home as comfortable as possible for them to settle in an unknown land.

This is exactly what our Saviour has done for us. The Lord Jesus left the Father’s home and came to this world as a simple carpenter for us, the estranged and lost children of the Father. He gave up His life, for our salvation. The absolute obedience shown by the Son to the Father till the end was too much for the Father’s heart, that the Father sent the Holy Spirit into the dead body that lay in the tomb and raised the Son back to life with a glorified resurrected body. This Risen Christ who reigns in heaven has come back in the Sacraments to live inside us in the Holy Spirit who is the promised advocate and counsellor. Through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Risen Lord draws us from a with-Christ existence to an in-Christ experience. The Four Steps Retreat is the most familiar tool for most of us to receive this experience.

The invitation of the Lord Jesus to us today is not to simply wait till we die to go to heaven. We are called to a daily experience of intimacy and union that the Lord. He is inviting all His children to such a life. This is our ‘journey’ to the Heart of our God. The Lord does not give us complex theories to master, to have this heavenly experience on earth. The Lord Himself is the Way, the Truth and Life. Having the Lord Jesus in our life is living in heaven even on earth.

The Father’s heart’s desire was fulfilled in His Son’s sacrifice which regained our inheritance as sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to open our spirit to hear the Father’s voice saying, “You are My son (daughter), today I have become your Father.” (cf Psalm 2:7). Let us appreciate the treasure we have received through the death and resurrection of our Saviour. Let us choose to live this inheritance and claim this heaven invading the earth.

***Prayer: Abba Father, we thank You for Your Son, our Lord Jesus, who is our sure and sole way to You. Amen.***

**“I have made you a light for the Gentiles,  
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth” Acts 13:47**

Acts 13:44–52

Psalms 98:1–4

John 14:7–14

What is salvation? What is eternal life? The Lord Jesus answers this question in John 17:3 “Now this is eternal life, That they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”.

For eternal life is to know God. It is not just to know in your head about God but to know him and have a relationship with God. That is why Jesus

Christ asks Philip “Don’t you know me Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time ”John 14:9. Having a relationship with the Lord Jesus is to have eternal life. Therefore eternal life is not only when we die but it begins the moment we have an encounter with Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour. This encounter takes place the moment we believe. And we believe because we were appointed for eternal life (Acts 13:48) chosen by God before the foundations of the earth were laid. Not only for our salvation but to be a light to the world for salvation, to the ends of the earth.

When we come to the Lord Jesus and have a relationship with him the Lord reveals to us the Father. Jesus Christ is the full revelation of the Father. St. Paul says in Colossians 1:15 “The son is the image of the invisible God”. So in knowing Jesus Christ, He makes the revelation of the Father real and alive in our hearts. As a result of this we find love, peace and joy in our hearts even in the most difficult of times, just as the disciples were filled with joy even when they were rejected by the Jews (Acts 13:52). So joy and inner freedom in the midst of crisis come by having a relationship with the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

To be saved is to be free from the darkness within us and the darkness outside in the world because the light of God’s salvation “Jesus” Is living in us and that light is shining through us in the darkest of circumstances to show the world the path of life. Our crisis and problems can be opportunities that God uses to show his light shining in the midst of darkness so that we will come to know his salvation.

***Prayer: Abba Father, we thank your Son for coming to this world and dying on the cross so that you can come and live in our hearts. Grant us the grace to face every trial and crisis in our spirit so that they will become opportunities for your light of salvation to shine through us. Amen***

**“A new command I give you: Love one another.  
As I have loved you,**

**John 13:34**

Acts 14:21-27

Psalm 145:8-13

Revelation 21:1-5

John 13:31-35

Today we celebrate the National Laity Sunday. It is given to us by the church to call our attention to the fact that the laity are an important part of the church. Who are the laity? They are the lay members of the church. We are considered disciples of God and we as lay people have an important role to play in spreading the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ. We could say that the believing church, the church that desires to live by God's heavenly will is the true laity, and this day is dedicated to them. A church cannot function or survive if the clergy are the only workers.

In the first reading St. Paul and St. Barnabas give us a true illustration of discipleship. First St. Paul and St. Barnabas had an encounter with the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. With an encounter with the Lord Jesus, they became true followers who were filled with the Holy Spirit. Now their sole desire was to do God's Will. In the same way if we are to become true disciples of God we must first have an encounter with the Risen Lord and become filled with the Holy Spirit. With this we receive new life and the desire to do God's will and please Him at all times. After an amazing encounter with the Lord, St. Paul and St. Barnabas proclaimed the Good News and made disciples in many regions. We too are called to proclaim the Good News wherever we are and wherever we go. We don't necessarily have to be preachers to proclaim the Good News. We can do it in our homes and in our work places. The Good News doesn't always have to be preached or talked about. The greatest proclamation of the Good News is the way we live. Our actions and reactions in life are the ultimate Good News. When we do this we automatically build more disciples.

When we live as true followers of the Lord Jesus, we too will add to the number of disciples in the Church. However by our own nature this is impossible. That is why living the four steps, is an essential part of our lives. We must remain in the Holy Spirit for our actions to reflect the Lord Jesus and be true witnesses. The Gospel makes this clear to us. In today's Gospel the Lord Jesus tells us "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Matthew 13:34-35)

How did the Lord Jesus love us? God demonstrates his own love for

us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8) The Lord Jesus died for our redemption and salvation from sin while we were still in sin, when we were still far away. Despite our sinfulness and weakness the Lord Jesus still loves us. He calls us to come to Him just the way we are and tells us that nothing in this world or out of this world can separate us from His Love. Today's Psalm also talks about this love. The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and rich in mercy. (Psalm 145:8-9) This is the kind of love the Lord Jesus asks us to demonstrate. As Christians called to proclaim the Good News we have to love everyone without condition or reason. We must be willing to forgive and be merciful. As in the Lord's prayer, our sins will be forgiven as we forgive those who trespass against us. Forgiveness is the greatest act of love.

I experienced something similar, a few days ago. A majority of my work colleagues are Non-Christian. One of them was facing a personal crisis and kept sharing her problems with me. Suddenly another co-worker began adding to her trouble. She was filled with anger and no matter how much she was advised, could not forgive the co-worker.. She cut all ties with the co-worker. At this time, the same co-worker made false accusations against me. When I heard these accusations, the first thing I did was to bless her in prayer and the next day I went up to my co-worker and said 'though you made these false accusations against me I just want you to know that I forgive you and I have nothing against you and I prayed to my God to bless you hundred fold.' We hugged and reconciled. My friend with a crisis and who was angry with the same co-worker witnessed this. She came to me and asked 'how could you possibly do this?' And I replied saying love is the greatest commandment that the Lord Jesus has taught us and I explained to her that this is the Year of Mercy and I chose to be merciful towards my co-worker. The next day she came to me and said that she had been contemplating baptism but was not sure, however what I did really moved her and she wanted to be baptized as a Catholic right away along with her two children. I couldn't believe my ears but this is a true example of discipleship.

However, if we try to achieve this forgiveness by our strength we will surely fail. It is only possible through God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, living the four steps will surely take us to the fulfillment of this commandment of love. We will become disciples of the Lord Jesus who will bring many more to this experience of love through the inner response we give by His strength.

***Prayer: Abba Father, take us deeper into Your love, fill us with Your Holy Spirit and empower us to love one another as You have loved us. Amen***

1 Peter 5:5b-14

Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7,  
16-17

Mark 16:15-20

In the first reading we are called to live a life of humility, self-control and to live an anxiety free life. We are also invited to resist Satan and to stand firm in faith. This can be done only by the grace of God. That is the new life that the Lord Jesus is promising us in the Gospel.

Though the Lord Jesus redeemed us through His death and resurrection and empowered us with the Holy Spirit to live a supernatural life, many are not experiencing it. People still live in sin and darkness. The result of this sin is pain, anxiety, sickness and a powerless life. So the Lord Jesus wants His disciples to share the good news with all creation.

Every person who is called by the Lord to preach the good news should have a personal conversion experience. The Lord Jesus said whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. First the one who preaches should believe. Believe in what? He or she should believe that the Lord Jesus loves him or her anyway. They need to also believe that in and through the death of the Lord Jesus our sins are forgiven and through His resurrection we have received a new life. They need to go a step further and believe that the Lord Jesus is their Lord and King. Finally they need to believe that the Lord has baptized them with the Holy Spirit. Thereafter they should start a relationship with the Lord and the Holy Spirit.

This conversion was completed in the life of the disciples on the day of Pentecost. On that day, the Risen Lord became alive in their lives. They were led by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. When we look at the lives of the saints they too had a moment of conversion. While traveling in a train, Mother Theresa of Calcutta encountered the Lord Jesus. St. Theresa of Avila experienced the Lord when she was praying and St. Francis when he was in a cave. Before we preach, let us examine our hearts. Have I had this encounter, have I fallen in love with the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit? Then our mission will be Spirit filled. Our way of life should preach. St. Francis said to preach the Gospel and use words only if necessary. Then the Lord will confirm the words through signs and wonders and people will encounter the Lord and the Holy Spirit through us.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father prevent me from carrying bad news to the world. Instead let me carry the good news of the Gospel. Amen.*

**We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”**

**Acts 14: 22**

Acts 14:19–28

Psalms 145:10–13b,  
21

John 14:27–31

We do not like to suffer. Therefore we try to avoid difficult situations. One day a girl said, “ My parents had a lot of problems. I was their strength in all those situations. I was there to support them through prayer and deed. Now they live in harmony. Yet, recently over a few incidents that occurred, my father troubled me a lot. My mother also took a stand against me. Now I want to leave home. If I can find a boarding house, I can go to work from there.”

Many of us think similarly. In a family, in an institution or even in a religious organization, when opinions clash and when others are against us we like to run away from that place. ‘I want to have my peace’ we say. Therefore children move away from their parents. Husbands and wives separate themselves from each other.

Seeking peace within your heart, you move out from where you are placed. This is the way of the world. There is another way that the Lord Jesus shows. That is the way of the Kingdom of God. That is to forgive our persecutors, love and bless them, intercede for them and accept them from the hands of God the Father. We will experience an amazing peace in our hearts. Secondly we will see miracles and transformation in the lives around us. Everything will begin to turn around.

Today St. Paul is telling us that we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. He said this, encouraging others when they tried to stone him to death. He strengthened them to remain true to the faith. Finally the disciples were able to capture the whole world. In today’s Gospel reading the Lord Jesus is speaking to us. “My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” The Lord Jesus says this before He faces death. He accepts all things from the hands of God and instead of cursing those who condemn Him to death, He forgives and loves them.

We helped that girl to find the will of God in her family situation. She decided to go home, forgive and love her parents, and from that moment we could see peace and freedom coming over her face.

**Prayer: Abba Father, my mouth will speak in praise of You. Let every creature praise your holy name forever and ever. Amen.**

**“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit,  
showing yourselves to be my disciples”**

**John 15:8**

Acts 15:1-6

Psalm 122:1-5

John 15:1-8

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:15)

What kind of fruit are we bearing in our lives today? Will non-believers recognize us as followers of Christ by the fruit that our lives produce? Will our own family members and friends think of us as authentic believers of the Gospel? Are we inwardly ‘ferocious wolves’ although we try to project a “sheep” image to those around us?

We yearn to live out the Gospel and follow the teachings of our Lord. We have tried to do the things we know we should be doing and have failed at it repeatedly. The “ferocious wolves” within us namely rage, jealousy, lust, selfishness, hatred, emerge frequently. Our efforts to try and keep them in check fail miserably. Through today’s Gospel reading our Lord reveals to us the secret to produce good fruit.

“No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” (John 15:4). A branch cannot bear fruit if it is separated from the vine no matter how hard it struggles or strains. It only needs to stay connected to the vine. Then the process of bearing fruit becomes automatic. When we stay connected to the Lord Jesus, His life flows through us and producing good fruit becomes ‘effortless’ because the only thing His life produced constantly, was good fruit.

Galatians 5:22-23, tell us the kind of fruit a believer’s life should produce. “.the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. No matter how hard we try to be kind or patient or loving or self controlled, it is nearly impossible because somewhere along the way we have lost our connection with our life source, the Lord Jesus. How do we get connected to the Lord? We simply go from ‘with Christ’ to ‘in Christ’. And what better way to do that than through the ‘4 Steps’. Each time we sense we are losing the fruit of the Spirit, no matter how often it happens, we come as we are to our Lord and experience His love and power in our weakness.

***Prayer: Abba Father, we pray that you will prune us wherever necessary so that we will bear even more fruit for Your glory. Amen.***

"Love never fails!"

1 Corinthians 13:8

Acts 15:7-21

Psalm 96:1-3, 10

John 15:9-11

It is the Lord Jesus' desire that we remain in His Love (John 15:9). No matter how weak and sinful our own natures maybe the Lord desires that we remain in His Love. To remain in His love the Lord has given us the commandment to love each other as He has loved us (John 15:12). The love of the Lord Jesus is flowing and moving out instead of stagnating within us. The love of the

Father flows to the Lord Jesus; the love of the Lord Jesus flows into of; and now He invites us to allow His love to flow into others.

As we open ourselves to this flow of divine Love, let us bring the truth of our hearts and the barriers which prevent His love from flowing through us. The Lord Jesus invites us to love each other as He has loved us and to lay down our lives (John 15: 12 -13). The Word of God reveals that "God is Love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them" (1 John 4:16). So each time I give into fear, gossiping, criticizing, indifference and jealousy, I begin to lose the presence of the Lord Jesus in my life.

The truth is, by my own strength I cannot think of giving this response of love to my family members, colleagues at work and those who act unfairly against me. I begin the day with the good intention of sharing love, however I end up helplessly failing and keep falling back into the old way of living. The good news today is that I do not need to try to do it by myself but simply allow the love of the Lord to flow through me. I choose to lay down my own will that chooses to empower the flesh in my life and open my heart for the Lord to love me and create a flow of love through me. The love of the Lord Jesus will make a way to flow through me and there is nothing that can prevent Him from moving. So I rest in the faithfulness of His great love today.

Today's First reading confirms to us that when our hearts are open to this love of the Lord Jesus and He creates a flow of His love through us, God begins to directly intervene and move in every situation and circumstance of our lives. Then it is no longer my crisis which I am facing alone, but instead an opening for the great move of God to happen and invade my surroundings.

**Prayer: Abba Father, make me a vessel overflowing with Your great love today! Amen.**

Love each other as I have loved you

John 15:12

Acts 15:22-31

Psalm 57:8-12

John 15:12-17

The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 22:36-40 that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbour as yourself. The Lord speaks of this commandment in today's Gospel reading. The Lord is asking us to love one another as Christ loved us. How has Christ loved us? He loves us unconditionally. St. Paul says in Romans 8:39 that He loves us beyond anything that happens to us.

He loves us through the best and worst days of our lives. The greatest example of this love is Christ's sacrifice of His life for the world. Therefore, we are called to follow Christ's example and love others by making the greatest sacrifice- laying down our life for someone else. Christ is asking us to sacrifice for another. When we give an inner response and sacrifice for another we are following Christ's example of love. When we follow our Saviour in this manner, He does not call us His servants but His friends. This means that when we follow the example of Christ we are invited to join His family. We are called His friends because we know and believe that the Lord's sacrifice redeemed us and gives us a new life.

The Gospel reading tells us in verse 16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you." We do not choose God, but He chooses us." He calls us to do more with our lives than just live for ourselves. He wants to give our lives a greater purpose. When we accept this purpose from His hands He promises to give us all we need and also hear our prayers for others. He will first provide for our every need when we give Him the first place. Secondly, He will make us mediators between Himself and others. We will be able to intercede for others and God promises to hear our prayers. The first step to this abundant life with Christ is to love others as Christ loves us. The Lord has given us this year of mercy so that we will be able to extend His love in our hearts to others. We are asked to be merciful to others as the Father is merciful.

The First reading from the Book of Acts is an example of the early church living the command to love one another as Christ loves us. The apostles loved their brothers and sisters in Antioch and did not allow them to go astray. They sent St. Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas to help, bring them closer to God. We must do the same.

**Prayer: Abba Father, in this year of mercy You call us to show love and mercy to one another. With your strength, we will have the strength to love others as You love them. Amen.**

**You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world****John 15:19**

Acts 16:1–10

Psalm 100:1b–3, 5

John 15:18–21

The Gospel reading tells us that we were sent to this world by God. Each of us were formed in our mother's womb by God to fulfill a mission. The Lord Jesus explains that because we were chosen by God we are not from the world but from God. To live in this world is to reject the commandments of God and not place Him above everything else in our lives. The Lord Jesus explains that the people in the world did not know Him, therefore we cannot expect them to know us. If the Lord Jesus, the Son of God was persecuted and hung on the cross what can we expect? God is asking us to expect hardships and persecution; rejection and death. Through it all, the Lord wants us to remember that we belong to Him and therefore we will always have victory, whatever the persecution is.

In the First reading, St. Paul and Timothy travel from place to place preaching the good news. It is the Lord who leads them to go to certain places and avoid other places. St. Paul follows God's leading. He is not of the world but chosen and called out by God. St. Paul is an example of what the Lord Jesus explains in the Gospel reading. The world did not know the Lord Jesus and therefore they crucified Him. St. Paul followed in the footsteps of Christ, preaching the good news to people and accepted his fate. He knew he was not part of the world and expected God to lead him. Therefore, when it was time to give up His life, St. Paul was more than willing because he knew God was in control of everything.

In the same way, we too are called to place our trust in God and not in this world. The Psalmist tells us to rejoice because we belong to the Lord. We are the sheep of His pastures and therefore He will lead us according to His will. Let us begin our day with our Creator and ask Him to lead us and guide us just as He led St. Paul to different places. The Book of Revelations tell us "Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (3:20). When we open ourselves to God, He will lead us to places and take us away from other places that we do not need to visit. All He asks is that we open ourselves to Him through a personal relationship with Him.

**Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for the grace to grow in my relationship with You. Lord, guide me and lead me in Your everlasting ways. Amen.**

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**  
**“ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS”**  
(To be filled in block capital letters)

Name: .....

Address: .....

City: .....

Postal Code/ZIP Code: .....

Country: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

Annual Subscription(12 ISSUES): Sri Lanka – Rs.500/- Overseas – USD 20.

Payment by: Direct Deposit to Bank  Cheque (within Sri Lanka only)

**Method of Payment:**

1. For Subscribers from Sri Lanka and overseas - Directly deposit the subscription fees being a full one year’s subscription (12 issues) to the account below:

**Account Details:**

Account Name: The Community of The Risen Lord  
Bank: Commercial Bank  
Branch: Wellawatte  
Account No: 1100087435  
Swift Code: CCEYLK LX

**NB:** Please ensure you post us your Bank Deposit Slip as proof of payment together with the above **subscription form duly (mandatory) filled** to the address below. **or**

2. Draw a cheque in favour of “The Community of The Risen Lord” for the subscription fee of Rs.500/- and post the cheque along with the **duly filled above subscription form (mandatory)** to the address given below (within Sri Lanka only):

**The Community of The Risen Lord,**  
**38 Iswari Road, Colombo 06 (Sri Lanka). Telephone:2366264**

## **The 40 days of Lent**

Once again the time of Lent with the Community of the Risen Lord has been the most enriching spiritual experience for every person who was able to join the morning meetings from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday at St. Lawrence Church, Wellawatte. Morning by morning people from all walks of life gathered, while most joined the morning mass amidst their busy daily schedules. There was the deep thirst to worship the Lord, hear the Word of God and then to continue the divine experience by sitting at the feet of the Lord, at the Blessed Sacrament in silent commune.

The deep anointing of the Holy Spirit was evident when you spoke to anyone who was faithfully attending or watching the meeting on the internet. Many days we were left speechless as the Word read and explained would directly speak to each and every person in an area that the Lord wanted to touch, bless or heal. Every word spoken was chewed and stored-in and reflected through the day only to be strengthened more by the teachings of the next day. Apart from the Scripture we were nourished through the writings of the Magnificat which were additional treasures to strengthen our spiritual life.

The leading of the people through the Four Steps every morning was perhaps the greatest gift that every person who attended the meetings received by God's grace. There was deep reflection and the truth of our hearts bared to the Lord of the sinfulness of our Spirit, memory, dreams and visions, rational mind, emotions, sub-conscious, unconscious, drives and addictions. This deep cleansing was LIFE to a lifeless body and a hopeless mind. Once our whole being was deeply cleansed and we surrendered our lives to the Lord and we received the power of the Holy Spirit, each day was made new and gave us the much needed peace of mind to face the many challenges and temptations of each day.

As in every year, after the 40 days, we look forward to the next year as we know from experience that something way beyond our understanding and thinking is happening through the power of the Holy Spirit and we are called back deeply into repentance and to the Love of God. Until then, what would sustain us to walk in this renewed Spirit experience is the daily cleansing of our being through the Four Steps, reading the word of God, Going to the feet of the Lord at the Blessed Sacrament and receiving the Sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist if not daily, then as often as we can.