



IN OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

January 2016

“The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on
you and be gracious to you; the
Lord turn his face toward you and
give you peace.”

Numbers 6:24-26

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 or crlmain.com

Read the daily reflection from anywhere in the world

On our Knees In His Hands

January 2016

Editors:

Lalith Perera

Louis Benedict

Co-ordinator:

Felicia Adhietty

Contributors to this Issue:

Ashika Fernando

Kamala Fernando

Ayomi Jansz

Rushika Pieris

Charmaine Peiris

Kauchi Gunasinghe

Christy Akkarawatta

Lalith Perera

Darshi Egodawatte De Silva

Louis Benedict

Duthika Perera

Marie Navamani

Gerard Victoria

Mercia Perera

Geetha Fernando

Muriel Obiris

Himaya Perera

Natasha Adhietty

Inuk Jayasuriya

Vinette Perera

Jayanath Perera

Sajee Jayasuriya

Jeevaka Perera

Sheika Abeykoon

Jeya Perera

Scalina Ratwatte

Juliana Francis

Sunimalee Fernando

Subscriptions:

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

The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace

Numbers 6:26

Numbers 6:22-27

Psalms 67:2-8

Gal 4:4-7

Luke 2:16-21

Happy New Year! As we wish our family members, loved ones, colleagues and friends across the world, what should we be saying. Can we go beyond the Happy New Year phrase? If we look to the first reading from today we will have an answer. It says that Yahweh asked Moses for Aaron and his sons, to bless the people with these words, "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

What a beautiful blessing! The Lord bless you and keep you - Not only should the Lord bless you but keep you in the shadow of His presence, protection and love as in Psalm 91. As you remain in His presence, His face has to shine on you. When the Father's face shines on us darkness is dispelled and the lightness and light of God begin to fill our being. When His face shines on us, we receive a clarity we would have been otherwise searching for. When the Lord's face shines on us, we are filled with His love and we are delivered of our darkness. To be gracious is to be kind and courteous especially to someone of a lower status. We know that we are nobody's but God's graciousness and love make us feel like sons and daughters of the Most High.

Finally all we want is the peace of God. Peace in the midst of storms, and peace when we have to face illnesses and conflicts. If we have God's peace, we have everything. Let us give this blessing to others and we will be blessed. In giving this blessing, we give the Lord Jesus. He is the blessing. When we give the blessing that God gives, people shift from slaves of sin to sons and daughters of God, wherein they can cry "Abba Father".

In the plan of salvation, Mother Mary, who took on the role of becoming the Mother of God, and bringing the Lord Jesus into the world, who is the best gift we can possess Believers in some Christian denominations have questions about the Catholic church's reference to Mary as the Mother of God. They claim it has no scriptural basis, but in Luke 1:41-43 Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit exclaims 'But why am I so favoured, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?' Let us like Mother Mary choose to treasure our experiences of God's grace and His word, ponder them in our heart and then glorify and praise God for all that He has done, is doing and will do. Let us choose to bless people with this blessing and we will be blest in abundance.

Prayer: Abba Father, I choose to bless people with your word. Amen

Saturday 2nd January

SS. Basil the Great &
Gregory Nazianzen

And this is what he has promised us, eternal life.

1 John 2:25

1 John 2:22–28

Psalms 98:1–4

John 1:19–28

Both the first reading and the Gospel today share the same truth. A truth which over 2000 years ago, and today is the same that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the prince of Salvation. Just as it was in the time of the Lord Jesus, even today, the world rejects our Lord and it rejects those who correct and show others the pathway to the Lord Jesus.

This truth is clear as we see in the testimony of St. John the Baptist in the Holy Gospel. The Pharisees and the like did not accept the warnings and pleading of St. John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness to repent. Neither could they accept the symbolic baptism by him given to those who did repent. He declared new life into those who were immersed in the water, washed clean, and raised up as new.

St. John the Baptist tells those whom were sent by the Pharisees that he was not the Lord and that He was not worthy to untie the sandals of the one to come. We can believe their confusion just as it is today with many of our family and friends.

We generally associate antichrist with a person who will come to destroy the world. The reading is clear. All those who experience the Father's love and then deny the Father and Son are liars can be compared to antichrists.

For those who believe, there is a promise given today, and this is what he has promised us, eternal life. (1 John 2:25) The Lord Jesus is challenging us to be a John the Baptist in our families, work places and everywhere else. By doing this we will be conduits for others to become believers who live this life on earth walking in the right path and enter into an eternal life with the Father and the Son one day.

Today is the feast of St. Basil the Great. He was the Greek bishop of Caesarea. In addition to his work as a theologian, he was well known for establishing guidelines for monastic life which focus on community life and liturgical prayer. He is considered a saint by the traditions of both Eastern and Western Christianity. This shows us how this Bishop lived the same calling of St. John the Baptist which we too are called to emulate today.

Prayer: Abba Father, let me not fear the many antichrists around me today but let your promise of eternal life be the only focus in my life that I may draw more to your side. Amen

“Out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel”.

Isaiah 60:2

Ish 60:1-6

Ps 72:1-2, 7-8,
10-13

Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

Mat 2:1-12

Israel was the nation chosen by God to save the world. Despite the promises of God about a land overflowing with milk and honey, they often ended up in foreign lands, under the rule of foreign kings, and forced to do the unthinkable. What really happened? Did God lie to them?

In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah speaks about a darkness that covers the earth and its people. The Jews saw this and were careful to stay away from the darkness “out there”. They faithfully conducted rituals and followed the Law of Moses. They dealt severely with those who did not. Yet, they failed to see the darkness that covered their own hearts. This happens to most of us today. We see the darkness “out there”, darkness in other people, yet we do not recognise the darkness in our own hearts.

The Jews waited for the Messiah year after year, generation after generation. Yet, their spiritual arrogance made them unteachable, and they could not learn the ways of God. It was different with the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. She loved God more than her own life; he trusted God more than what he understood. They had learnt the value of protecting their hearts from the darkness that covered the people around them. Therefore, they were able to hear the voice of God, learn His ways and respond to His leading. This response created a pathway for the Messiah to enter the world, on a dark and cold night.

Today's first reading links up with the Gospel perfectly.

“Darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the peoples”; The darkness in their hearts prevented the Chosen People of God from recognizing the Lord. When He came to their door-step they sent Him away to the stables.

“But the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you”. The Glory of God appeared in the stable, upon the two people who had protected their hearts from the darkness around them. Their response to God brought angels from heaven down to earth.

“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn”. The solar system itself responded in a manner that led three wise men from the east to worship the Lord.

Today's Gospel reading brings us good news and bad news. The

good news is, God is waiting to speak to us, reveal Himself to us, teach us His ways, and give us His leadings. He is standing at the door knocking. The bad news is, unless we have learnt His ways, we may not recognise Him and send him away to the stables. We may be the chosen people, but if our hearts have grown cold and dark, God will choose those who are teachable, to reveal Himself and teach His ways.

The Lord is inviting us to recognise the darkness that covers our own hearts. Do I have spiritual arrogance and pride in my heart? Have I become unteachable to God? Have my selfish motives and ego become the driving force of my life? Have I lost my way? Am I doing the right thing for the wrong reasons? Do I have ulterior motives when I serve Him? When we acknowledge and give the truth of our hearts to Him, we begin to hear His voice, which summons us out of the darkness we have lived in; “arise, shine, your light has come”. Just like the glory of God dispelled the darkness in the shepherds’ field, He dispels the darkness within me. When I wait upon Him I begin to hear His voice.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord by remembering the visit of the Magi. The Magi did not know the God of Israel the way the Jews did. They did not know of the prophecies about the Messiah the way the Jews did. They certainly did not wait generation after generation for His advent... yet God chose to reveal His Son to them in a way they understood. He spoke to them through a star, and they travelled a great distance to worship Him.

St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians says; “through the Gospel, Gentiles have become heirs together with Israel, and members of one body”. Technically, a Gentile is a non-Jew; someone who has no chance of knowing God, who has no idea who He is. With the birth of Christ it all changed. Out-casts and gentiles were given access to God who could only be approached by a chosen race, with rituals and animal sacrifices. The rituals and the Law of Moses have been replaced by the mercy and love of God for people who are broken and lost. The God of second chances and new beginnings has come looking for the lost, the messed up, to restore and lift them up to be His heirs together with Israel, members of one body.

This has special significance for us Catholics, this being the Year of Mercy as declared by our beloved Pope Francis. The Holy Year is a response to the world’s need for a “revolution of tenderness” from which “justice and all the rest derives.” “We are used to bad news, cruel news, and to even bigger atrocities, which offend the name and life of God,” Ending those tragedies requires a spirit of mercy.

Prayer: Abba Father, cleanse us by the blood of your Son and dispel the darkness that has entered our hearts. Give us the grace to live connected to You, so that we may draw down your glory into the world we live in. Amen.

**And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son...
and to love one another.**

1 John 3:22-4:6

Psalms 2:7-8, 10

Matthew 4:12-17,
23-25

Today the Lord is commanding us to believe in His name and He assures that He will come to live in us when we do so. In the Gospel reading it says that wherever the Lord Jesus went He confirmed His divine mission through miracles which were signs of healing by the power of His Word and the influence of the Holy Spirit which accompanied it. Even today we see miracles through His healing power in our bodies and our spirits. He amazes

the doctors which is evident from the many testimonies we hear at the Prayer Meetings. He heals every sickness and disease and we must believe that Nothing is impossible for GOD and everything is possible for Him according to His Word.

I stand today to give witness of the miracle healing He has done for me. I was in an accident and at that moment I thought I had a heart attack. I saw this huge light in front of me and I was finding it hard to breathe. Hearing my daughter's voice amidst the pain I managed to tell her 'I can't breathe' and then realised I was in tremendous pain, I was moved to a hospital and an ECG was clear but the x-ray showed that I had crushed my twelfth vertebra. The doctor asked me in amazement how I had walked, that it is a miracle. From there on I was on bed lying on my back with all the doctors checking and tests being carried out and making sure that I was not paralyzed. But I was sure that my God had saved me. As I was being prepared for a surgery I was frightened, going into the theatre I hung on to God's Word that nothing is impossible for God and even told the Doctor that God is in control and that He would operate me through the doctors hands. My twelfth vertebra was reconstructed by a modern surgery and I was out of the hospital the following day. I give praise to my God who made everything possible; all I did was to hang on to His word amidst all the pain.

The surgery was a complete success and I am back to my normal life, I was able to come back to the prayer meeting two months later and there were two words of knowledge's confirming complete healing for a spine injury and I claimed it to myself and give thanks and praise to my Lord.

As in the days Jesus walked on earth He is still the living God healing the sick and walking among us and in us.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to sing of your amazing love, how can it be that you my King would die for me, amazing love, I know it's true and it's my joy to honour you in all I do. Amen.

Everyone who loves is begotten by and knows God**1 John 4:7**

1 John 4:7-10

Psalm 72:1-2,
3-4, 7-8

Mark 6:34-44

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that we might not perish but have eternal life. The world refers to forces hostile to His love and our inclination to hate and dispute. Yet He gave His Son; the Word. The Word that we take into our hearts has latent energy. It is what created all that exists out of nothing. If we could only believe what is in scripture and believe it has the ability to transform us, according to His Word,

then surely we will be able to accept ourselves and love on another. What a wonderful world this will be.

God proves His love for us, in that while we were still terrible sinners, Christ died for us. We can be convinced that neither death, principalities, present things or future nor anguish, distress or anything that come against us from the dark world cannot separate us from God's love. If we could only believe God's word spoken into our hearts, we will be able to accept ourselves as we truly are and accept others as they truly are. However diabolical we may appear yet love has the power to change everything and everyone. As the popular song goes... Love will keep us together and we can add together in peace and harmony in Christ Jesus.

It was this divine power of love that was put to service to meet the needs of a hungry multitude. When the Lord saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity and He fed the five thousand people. What potent power lies within a compassionate heart!

In today's Gospel reading the Lord teaches us many things. The vital energy of His word had first to be fed into the people's hearts to satisfy their spiritual hunger and prepare them to be fed with food to satisfy their natural hunger. The Lord has to work this miracle in cooperation with His disciples. The natural cannot be privy to doing the impossible. Only the spiritual realm could. The miracle carries a parabolic teaching. The power of divine love was emphasised. It was a lonely place where food was unavailable. The Lord puts divine responsibility upon His disciples to feed the hungry. We find it so daunting and impossible to respond to the needs of our families and society. We do not seem to have enough for our own needs let alone giving others. Yet loving and being concerned is a divine gift. Accepting it guarantees enough for all. Using it makes our eyes open to see the Lord in operation.

Prayer: *Abba Father, may your word pulsate with power enabling us to give of ourselves as your Son gave of Himself to us. Amen*

After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

Mark 6:46

1 John 4:11-18

Psalms 72:1-2, 10,
12-13

Mark 6:45-52

Today's Gospel reading demonstrates the power of the Lord Jesus. Even nature responds to Him. However, what really moved my heart was the fact that the Lord Jesus went alone to pray. After performing such an incredible miracle the Lord Jesus sits at the feet of God. He does not spend time talking to the disciples about it. Nor does he spend time talking to the crowd.

I believe the prayer of the Lord Jesus may have been that of surrender. Where He surrendered His joy and appreciation He received from the people, back to God. As I reflected on this I realised how much I get caught up in the miracles that I witness. I love to talk about them over and over again, but as I read this passage I questioned myself, how often do I sit at the feet of God and share the joy of a miracle with Him? How often do I surrender back to the Lord? Of course I thank God for the miracle but hardly sit at His feet and share the joy of it like the Lord Jesus would have done. And as a result of this I realised that most often I take the ownership of the miracle and become self-centred forgetting that it is God who did it. I get carried away by the recognition and appreciation I receive from it.

We should not get caught up with signs and wonders, the most important is our personal relationship with the Lord. We see this in the life of the Lord Jesus, He did not allow anything to come between His Relationship with God the Father, not even a miracle. Today the Lord is reminding us that the most important thing is our relationship with God and everything else is secondary; even miracles. The 4 steps retreat is a great tool we can use to have this relationship with the Lord 24 hours of the day.

In the first reading St. Paul reveals to us how we ought to love. We are called to love just as the Lord Jesus loves us, that is, without boundaries, conditions or limitations. This kind of love seems so impossible to us, especially to those who hurt us. It is possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as the reading tells us that it is the Holy Spirit that fills us as a sign that we are in God and God in us. Therefore through the Four steps, let us strive to have a personal relationship with God and be filled with the Holy Spirit every hour and minute of the day.

Prayer: *Abba Father, we desire a personal relationship with you and we desire to be filled by Your Holy Spirit every day of our lives. Let Your name be glorified in and through our lives. Amen.*

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world;**1 John 5:4**

1 John 4:19–5:4

Psalm 72:1–2, 14,
15bc, 17

Luke 4:14–22

The word of God today says that a report concerning the Lord Jesus went around all the surrounding country. The Lord Jesus had returned to Galilee right after the Baptism at the river Jordan and thereafter defeating the devil's temptations in the wilderness. The word says that the Lord was full of the Holy Spirit.

We as members of the Community of the Risen Lord have a mission to take the experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit into the church. The church consists of our family, neighbours, communities, colleagues and society at large. Our mission in short is a life in the Spirit and by that very life in the Spirit we should draw others to the same experience.

In this context, the Gospel teaching today is significant as it shows us a sure way to be full of the Holy Spirit. Do not succumb to the temptations of your life and the Holy Spirit will dwell fully in you. Is that easy to follow? It is not, but the word of God is true and will never fail the one who believes. The word says, for whatever is born of God overcomes the world; (1 John 5:4) What is born of God? Love, faith, joy, wisdom, holiness and all that is Godly. These births take place in our lives when we are baptised by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit lives inside us we are able to defeat temptation. The people who heard the Lord Jesus were amazed and wondered "Is this not Joseph's son" The human son of Joseph they knew had no ability to amaze people but the very people who rejected the Lord Jesus were powerless in the presence of God the Holy Spirit within Him. The power of the Holy Spirit resting upon the Lord Jesus saved Him from temptations and prepared Him for His ministry in fulfillment of the scripture.

Today, we are prepared by the Holy Spirit in the same way to walk in simple faith that the power of the Holy Spirit that rested upon the Lord Jesus will also rest upon us. St. Raymond of Pennafort, Patron Saint of Canonists stood against the immoral living of King James his friend and was planning to leave the Island he lived on but the king declared his wrath on any ship captain who would take the saint across. St. Raymond, in faith, made the sign of the cross and laid his cloak on the water and with a stick as a sail crossed the Island in 6 hours. The miracle moved the King and his life was changed. The saint lived a faith filled hundred years.

Prayer: Abba Father, let Your Holy Spirit never leave me so that I may always do your will and be Your witness. Amen

“Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the son of God”

1 John 5:5–13

Psalms 147:12–15,
19–20

Luke 5:12–16

Today, the world we live in seems to have overtaken us. We are consumed with the newest technology and the extreme luxury it has to offer. Selfish ambitions blind us to the real thing. We ultimately get caught up in distorted versions of love. Those striving to get to the top in the eyes of the world are caught up in a vicious mesh of lies and deceit. They lose the real meaning to their lives. They are restless because the deep emptiness that haunts them leaves them dissatisfied while they pretend to be enjoying life. When a crisis hits them, they feel helpless and shattered. All they have achieved seems meaningless and of no purpose.

Today's readings speak powerfully to us. The first letter of St. John tells us who can overcome the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. The victory that overcomes the world is faith- faith in the love of God. Our walk with God in deep communion brings out an authentic love which cannot be compared to the world sentimental love which is blind and fickle. Rather it is effective both in the sense that it liberates others and it transforms us in Christ. Three beautiful aspects of the Christian experience which are seen in Jesus himself are characterized by St. John in three words. Water, Blood and Spirit.

Water is the symbol of cleanliness and of new life. Blood of the sacrifice -the painful atonement of sin. The Spirit is the uncontainable power that animates Christ's witnesses. We experience the power of these three aspects in the Sacraments of Baptism, the Holy Eucharist and Confirmation through which we can encounter the Lord. The Holy Mass embraces these three aspects and we can be renewed every time we partake of it. The Gospel of Luke shows us the Lord Jesus' love for the sinner and His willingness to heal us. In the Sacraments this healing takes place. We are liberated and transformed. The psalmist confirms 'He strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within.' You will surely overcome this world. Pope Francis in his homily addressing the people in Central Africa says 'each of us in his or her heart, can ask the crucial question of where we stand with Jesus, asking what we have already accepted – or refused to accept-in responding to his call to follow him more closely.

Prayer: Abba Father grant me, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother the grace to follow You and Your Son in faith, that I may overcome the world. Amen

The whole world is under the power of the evil one.

1 John 5:19

1 John 5:14–21

Psalms 149:1–5,
6a, 9b

John 3:22–30

As today's word cautions, the whole world is under the power of the evil one. No wonder we see so much of injustice, chaos and suffering around. The Lord seeing our miserable predicament comes into our midst to save us from completely destroying ourselves. Though sin destroys yet when we pray for His mercy and forgiveness, we do not experience death. There is however such

a thing as deadly sin.

It seems that St. John is addressing an issue in his community. Some were leaving the community, probably losing faith in the forgiving power of the Lord Jesus. They were opting to go back into the world which is under the power of evil. Refusing the free gift of mercy and forgiveness is voluntarily choosing death. The only thing God cannot do is to save us if we do not want to be saved. Hell is what we create out of our own free will.

We are called to not make idols of what the world offers, thinking they could provide the happiness we seek. Instead we need to pursue a relationship with God, made possible through Jesus Christ. He alone needs to be our idol. Our hearts will forever be restless with the other idols and golden calves we worship. Steve Jobs the Chairman of Apple Inc said, "Nonstop pursuing of wealth will only turn a person into a twisted being, just like me." We are called by the Lord to love Him more than our spouse, children and parents.

In the Gospel reading we see St. John the Baptist whom all were looking up to as the great prophet. Some even thought that he was the Messiah. However he disclaimed it. An issue arose where all were leaving the Baptist and going to the Lord Jesus. St. John encouraged them to do so and called himself the Bestman and the Lord the 'Bridegroom' who had come to take His chosen people as His bride. St. John rejoices as the Best Man. We too should be overjoyed to bring people into a relationship with the Lord or are we unwittingly wanting to be idolised by others.

It is so wonderful to know that we are loved so much by the Lord who has chosen us as His bride. Surely He then becomes our first love. When we give Him the first place, He satisfies us and meets the needs of our hearts.

Prayer: Abba Father, I want to make Your Son my only idol, to satisfy every longing to please thee. Amen

**“Lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid;..
“Here is your God!”**

Isaiah 40:9

Ish 40:1-5, 9-11

Ps 104:1b-4, 24-25,
27-30

Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Today the Church presents to us the Baptism of the Lord Jesus. This was the moment of transition for the Lord, from a human reality to the state of an awakened spirit, hearing the voice of the Father, experiencing the love of the Father and being led by the Holy Spirit. Today's Feast is the Feast of all the faithful, who have received the Sacrament of Baptism. We too are invited to acknowledge

the same transition that has happened in our lives yet we may not have experienced it so far.

Are we still living in the realities of this world, living powerless tired lives, striving by our own strength? If so, the Lord invites us to take a step in faith to make a paradigm shift in our lives and move to the Kingdom reality of being a son or a daughter of the most loving, most powerful and the richest Father in the whole Universe, claiming His abundant love, forgiveness, mercy and manifold gifts.

The First Reading speaks of the Father's mercy and compassion. In the days of Prophet Isaiah, the people of God were downtrodden, living in a defeated, hopeless state, well aware of their sinful nature which was the root cause for all their suffering. Isn't the state of your life and mine more or less the same as theirs? Let's rejoice, for the Merciful Father is comforting us with the knowledge that the price for our sin has been paid in full and His mercy is being poured into our hearts in double portion. God is going to make a highway for us to walk with ease. The mountains of sinful habits, addictions and ego are being flattened and the valleys of self-pity and weakness being raised up. We can relax, for God Himself is doing this.

In the Gospel reading, St John the Baptist tells us about what we have already received in Baptism. We have been baptised with the Holy Spirit and Fire. We came into this world with the original sin, being separated from the union with God the Father. Yet, that wall was broken down at our Baptism, making us die to the world and be born to a life in the Spirit. The voice that spoke to the Lord Jesus, spoke the same words to us too, "You are My child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased". When the Lord Jesus heard these words, all His priorities changed and the Lord entered into a continuous dialogue with the Father. Pleasing and obeying the Father in all things at all times became the purpose of His life.

Yet, what has happened in our lives? Baptism should have created the same paradigm shift in us too. Then, why do we continue to struggle, living on our own, without being in union with the Father, learning what His will is and doing the same? The gentle Spirit, who came to live in us, still respects our free will. This journey of life is a series of choices that we need to make each moment. Though the soft whisper of the Father is heard in our spirit, it is often very dormant, taking a back seat, allowing our mind and heart to rule us. God never takes away our freedom of choice.

Today is a good day for us to pause and take stock of our own faith journey. We have been baptised with the Holy Spirit and Fire.

*Have we allowed the Holy Spirit to take over our spirit totally, so that in all things, He can lead us and guide us? Where is the Fire in us? Is it still burning bright and strong, burning away our ego and self love on a daily basis, while the Heavenly Goldsmith looks on tenderly, waiting patiently for that exact split second when He sees His image in us?

*Do we seek to hear the voice of God through the Scriptures, telling us what to do and what not to do in every decision we make?

*Do we experience the love of God filling us and overflowing to others, so that we do not need to cry for the love and appreciation of others? Our Saviour was not interested in pleasing people but God. Are we following Him or the world?

In the Second Reading St Titus reiterates these points and challenges us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives. Only the Holy Spirit, who has been poured into us generously at our Baptism, can give us the strength to live this way.

Now then, let us do what the Prophet Isaiah is asking us to do. Let us live our lives in the boldness and the freedom of the Holy Spirit, thus allowing our lives to shout out to those who live with us and around us, "Here is our God"! The time of dwelling in our failures and weaknesses is over!

Let us dare to love those who hate us, bless those who curse us and pray for those who try to destroy us. Let us allow the Holy Spirit who lives in us, to occupy our whole being and make us true witnesses of God's love and mercy. This is the evangelisation the world needs today.

Prayer: Father, send Your Spirit anew to us today so that we will renew the face of the earth. Amen.

The Lord's call

1 Samuel 1:1–8

Psalm 116:12–19

Mark 1:14–20

In the first reading, Elkanah's love for his wife reminds me of the Lord's love for us. Even if we have a flaw or weakness and seem worthless to the world or ourselves, still the Lord loves us unconditionally. Hannah reminds me of many of us. We long for what we do not have and feel sorry for ourselves, instead of thanking God for the many blessings He has given us. We forget that we have the greatest treasure on earth – God's love and salvation. We are sons and daughters of the greatest King in the universe, and heirs to this Kingdom, but we live like paupers and beggars, longing for worldly satisfaction.

The Gospel says that when the Lord Jesus called them, the disciples left everything and followed Him. Scripture does not say that the disciples asked the Lord what He called them for. Neither does it say where He called them to, for what purpose or duration, or even whether they had met the Lord before that moment. Yet at His call, they left their family and friends, the trade of many generations, the way of life they were used to and followed Him into the unknown.

I am amazed that the disciples just followed the Lord, without knowing anything about Him. It makes me ask myself if God calls me now to a different way of life, can I just leave everything – my husband, family, source of income, everything I am familiar with, my comfort zone and go to where He ask me ? Also, I know that His way is not easy and filled with difficulties.

But actually the Lord does not call me to go to a faraway place; instead, while having those things, He is calling me to let go the attachment I have to them. He calls me to be in the world and let go of the world and its comforts at the same time, which in a way seems a more difficult thing to do. To be focused on His reality and His kingdom in the spirit, while physically being in the world.

He reminds me that I am an heir to a heavenly kingdom. When I live in this reality, filled with the Spirit, then I can afford to let go of worldly possessions, status and comfort zones. Also, even though I may fall, fail and have many short-comings, even more than Elkanah loved Hannah, the Lord will continue to love me and never leave me.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to live in your reality in the Spirit. Amen

Experiencing and sharing the mercy of God

1 Samuel 1:9–20

Ps. 1 Samuel 2:1,
4–8

Mark 1:21–28

In the Gospel reading today we are told about what happened when the Lord Jesus taught the people on a Sabbath day in a synagogue at Capernaum. While the prophets and the writers of other books in the Old and New Testaments wrote what God told them to write, the Lord Jesus in this and other instances says, “truly truly I tell you,”. He is not just teaching in the name of God but He Himself is God. That is why the people were amazed because the Rabbis taught what God told them to teach.

In later instances also the Lord Jesus taught that He is God the Son, the third Person in the Holy Trinity, along with God the Father and the God the Holy Spirit. One day when the Apostle Philip asked the Lord Jesus to show them the Father, the Lord Jesus said when you see me you see the Father. That is why Pope Francis in his Bull of Indiction for the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy says that in Jesus of Nazareth we see the face of God’s mercy.

As we experience the mercy of God through the Lord Jesus, we need to be merciful to others. We need to be merciful towards those in the family, the church or community and friends. Going even deeper, by the power of the Holy Spirit we need to be merciful even to strangers and enemies. In his main sermon the Lord Jesus tells us, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, help those who hurt you and pray for those who persecute you. When we do this though it is not easy and seems to be foolish by the standard of a selfish world, God gets involved in the situation and it works out beyond our understanding, imagination or expectation.

Mercy is twice blessed. It is a blessing to those who give mercy and to those who receive mercy. To err is human, to be merciful is divine. Every time we give mercy we become more divine, We grow more into the image and likeness of God. That is why the Lord Jesus told us we need to forgive and be merciful not just seven times but seventy times seven. That means if we are merciful seven times a day we become seven times more like God. That is why the Lord Jesus has told us in the beatitudes, “Blessed are the merciful, for mercy they will find”.

Prayer: Abba Father thank you for your grace and mercy that never end. May we freely give it to others and be channels of your mercy. Amen.

“To do your will is my delight; my God, your law is in my heart”

Psalm 40:9

1 Samuel 3:1–10,
19–20

Psalm 40:2, 5,
7–10

Mark 1:29–39

The river of God's love and mercy showered down on the Israelites during a dry and barren period when revelations and visions of God were absent. God's divine plan is perfect, He heard the cry of a barren woman, and brought forth a boy child to be dedicated to His purpose. Samuel was used mightily during a dry period in Israel.

Samuel was a child when he was sent to the Priest Eli according to the promise his mother, Hannah made to God. The child grew up in the temple of God. The lamp of God was not extinguished; the young Samuel was at the feet of the ark of God. Samuel was Israel's hope in this era. Eli was aged and his eyes were dimming but he was wise and knew that the God of Israel was calling young Samuel. He guided Samuel who obeyed him.

We seldom find today the qualities of listening to elders and wise men. Young and energetic men and women do not sleep at the feet of God as Samuel did. They are not tuned to listen to God and seldom do we have even elders who seek to discern the voice of God. In this present context can we be a Samuel? Can we dedicate our hearts to God?

God invites us to live a life of surrender which is a beautiful life. We opt for external spirituality rather than internal surrender. Is this the sinfulness of humanity; I wonder? While the centre of our life becomes our selfish gain, we begin to sacrifice so much externally. The psalmist captured it beautifully today. We take advantage of people and throw money to compensate. We do rituals without our internal attitudes being changed. A surrendered life is different; we see the surrendered life at work in the Gospel.

In the early days of His public ministry, our Lord Jesus visited a home with his newly found disciples. Many were healed and demons were cast away. The people gathered around Son of God. The miracles were a sign of God's presence and Kingdom which is love, peace and joy. The people were attracted to the Lord. Yet, the Lord as a surrendered person did not limit Himself to the external signs rather He moved to the internal serenity He found in the love of His Father. This is the invitation we should receive from the Lord Jesus today.

Prayer: Abba Father, human as I am; caught up in my inner needs. I seek inner fulfillment from others. Cause me to immerse myself in your love. Amen.

**“He reached out and touched the man.
I am willing’ He said.’ Be clean”.**

Mark 1:41

1 Samuel 4:1–11

Psalms 44:10–11,
14–15, 24–25

Mark 1:40–45

Today’s first Reading from the book of Samuel, reminds us that we cannot take God for granted. For all Israel, the word of Samuel was as the word of Yahweh. It happened that Eli was very old and his sons persisted in their wicked behavior towards Yahweh. At this particular time the Philistines gathered to make war on Israel. The troops were disappointed as they were beaten badly and they questioned why Yahweh had caused them to

be beaten. They decided then to bring the Ark of the Covenant and take it with them into the battle field hoping God would be compelled to save them. The Philistines mustered their courage although they were vary at first of the God of Israel and the Israelites were beaten again and they even captured the Ark of God while the two sons of Eli died in the battle.

The psalmist echoes the same lament complaining to God about the shame and the disgrace, being brought down to the dust, but then they appeal to the great goodness of God and His faithful love.

We see in the Gospel of St. Mark the utmost willingness of the Lord Jesus to help a man suffering from leprosy, a virulent skin disease. He shows compassion on the man and says ‘I am willing. Be cleansed’ Leprosy was a cursed disease in those days and those who got it were classified as sinners. This is the same message He is giving us. Because of our own folly we may be down in the dumps and groveling in the dust in despair and feeling utterly abandoned but the good news is He did not abandon us, it was we who abandoned Him, and He is always there for us. His mercy, His compassion and unconditional love reaches out to set us back on our feet.

Today the world is in the same state as Sodom and Gomorrah were about 4000 years ago. The Lord Jesus has already made the supreme sacrifice on the cross liberating all people, but people persist in being blind to this fact and are caught up in the darkness of the world. That is why the Holy Father has declared this year as the year of mercy. Only with love and mercy can we reach the untouchable and unlovable and those who are lost in darkness. Romans 8:37 says: ‘In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.’ Open your heart and receive your healing and share it with the world.

Prayer: Lord Jesus I thank you for your merciful touch on my life and for your willingness to heal me always. Amen

Truly the Lord is our shield, the Holy one of Israel our king.”

Psalm 89:19

1 Samuel 8:4-7,
10-22a

Psalm 89:16-19

Mark 2:1-12

In today's first reading the Israelites are asking for a king to rule them, supply their needs, protect, fight for them and to lead them to victory. They are asking for a human hand and human power. They forgot and rejected the God, who delivered them from the slavery of Egypt, who parted the Red Sea to save them from the enemy and for 40 years supplied all their needs. He protected and led them to the Promised Land but they were asking for a human king.

Through Samuel, in 1Sam. 8: 10-18, God explains to them the governance of the human king. Yet adamantly they refuse to listen and plead with Samuel to fulfill their request. Then, according to their free will, God fulfills their need though the consequence of this was fearful.

Today, who is the king who reigns over our lives? It may not be God. It may be mother or father, wife or husband, girlfriend or boyfriend, actress or actor. Is it not they who reign in our lives today? Are we not depending on people for our needs, security, happiness and victory? Even in our prayers we ask God, “Lord, give me that love. I cannot live without this person. This person is my only hope and consolation. Please fulfill my request.” There is not much difference between the then Israelites and us. Like in those days, even today the Lord will not interfere with our free will and will allow us to do what we like. But, in that free will, how many of us give up God and reject Him? We try to win the battles of life without Him and depending on people.

God shows compassion to the Israelites who fall into sin because of their hardened mind and selfishness. He sends His only Son into this world to save and redeem them. Through the sacrifice offered on the cross, He breaks the power of sin and by His resurrection defeats death and becomes the King of heaven, earth and the nether world. In today's Gospel reading through the healing of the paralytic, the King's unlimited kindness and love is expressed. Not only does He bring physical healing, through the forgiveness of sins but also inner healing. This is not possible for any king of the human world. The Lord Jesus Christ is waiting to forgive, heal and save our lives that have become paralyzed because of our sins. Today, let us turn to Christ our King just as we are and receive His healing touch.

Prayer: Abba Father, as we turn to You, in repentance and hope, forgive us and grant us Your healing and salvation. Amen.

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature”**Mark 16:15**

Acts 20:17-18,28-32,36

Psalm 96:1-3,6-8,10

Mark 16:15-20

History is divided into two eras, before and after Christ. This happened after the miracle of God, par excellence, took place. That is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. God raised Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, died and was buried back to life by the power of His Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead never to die again. Therefore the early Christians who were captured by this love and power of God dedicated their whole life and their families to take this good news to the ends of the world.

St. Paul stated clearly in his farewell speech at Miletus that we are the overseers of this church that God established on Golgotha. There it was sealed with the blood of the Lord Jesus. St. Paul warns the overseers then, but this warning is appropriate to us in the present era. The race that Lord Jesus Christ began was continued by the Apostles of Christ. The baton was passed on to generation after generation and in this present day; we have the baton in our hands. We need to be mindful of the Word of God. St. Paul says to the overseers to be watchful that a different message could be preached and God's flock could be scattered. This warning is relevant to us today. Are we living and actively carrying the baton in the same mentality of the Apostles or are we scattering God's flock?

The Lord Jesus commissioned the Apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit which brought forth the necessary charisma into their lives. The good news of the Lord Jesus went to the ends of the world with signs and wonders. The words and deeds of God changed the whole world.

We are celebrating today the feast of St. Joseph Vaz – Apostle of Sri Lanka. We could say that he was chosen by God while in his mother's womb. He was zealous to carry out the commission of the Lord Jesus. When the Catholic church of Ceylon was persecuted and did not have a single priest for several decades, St. Joseph Vaz from India was chosen by God to tend the Lord's flock in Sri Lanka. He left everything and entered this unknown land to carry out God's work. He worked his way to come to Ceylon never to go back to his own country. The greatest miracle of St. Joseph Vaz is the vibrant Catholic Church we have in Sri Lanka. St. Joseph Vaz as we celebrate your feast, pray for us to follow your example.

Prayer: Abba Father, burn our hearts with fire for you. Amen.

Do whatever He tells you**John 2:5**

Isaiah 62:1-5

Ps 96:1-3, 7-10

1 Cor 12:4-11

John 2:1-11

Are we doing whatever He tells us to do? When we do whatever the Lord tells us to do, the Lord begins to do the impossible in our lives. When the fruits of our life should have been ordinary, as plain as water, the Lord makes them as special as wine.

It has been declared in the word that spiritual gifts were given to build up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12) They were never meant to benefit the person who carried them, but the body of the people. In my experience, the gifts begin to manifest when we minister to others, in small communities and when we do what He asks us to do.

The passage from the second reading today tells us that there are different kinds of gifts. We have to understand that for example the God who made so many varieties of fish, in terms of colour, size, location and the food they eat is also capable of introducing into our lives 'different kinds of gifts'. Simply because we may have never seen, touched or experienced them, we cannot assume that they do not exist or are limited to what is mentioned in the word. We have heard of a priest who has the gift of calming down wild animals who stray into human habitations and wreck havoc.

More importantly, though there are different kinds of gifts, they all come from the same spirit, the all-powerful Spirit that hovered over the earth when it was a void. The Spirit that entered Adam as God blew and gave him who was from the earth life. Just because we do not see the Spirit, it does not mean that he does not exist. The awesome gentleness and power of the spirit is an experience we must long for because it is this spirit that revolutionised the lives of the timid disciples, making them yearn to be martyrs for Christ Jesus.

The word says though there are many gifts, it is the same God at work. Let us read the passage about the gifts to discover where we stand. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these

are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. Look into your heart and discover your gift and if you cannot find one, speak to the Lord saying "Lord, for the common good, to build up your body, if you find me worthy enough, grant me a gift of your spirit."

The Lord Jesus came for this reason, to ease us of the burden of life and living. Were the people at the wedding at Cana, sick or in need? It was a joyful celebration. They were having a merry time. The Lord at Mother Mary's bidding understood that. He was not going to be a spoilsport but His compassion was present for even this aspect of humanity. We often assume that God has to intervene in only pathetic and needy situations and has no need to answer prayers that may be in answer to seemingly frivolous needs. But we can be wrong. It also reveals to us that at times, even the gift of an iPod, handbag, tie, air ticket or a chocolate are from the hands of God. We place God in a box where He is dead serious about life and is waiting to make it difficult for us to carry on. Sometimes we lack the freedom to surrender our partners into the hands of God assuming that God will break up the relationship. God is God, above all our assumptions and notions.

Through the Gospel reading we are encouraged to believe in the power of the intercession of the Blessed Mother. As a mother and a host she was sensitive to the crisis of the wedding party. While the people were having a gala time, she was sharp enough to notice the alarm in the eyes of the stewards as the wine began to run dry. Though the Lord Jesus seemed to have asked Mother Mary to mind her business, He responded with a lack lustre method of creating a miracle. All He said was fill the six stone jars and serve. No blessing, no powerful or memorable words but a simply stunning miracle. Yet this was no ordinary miracle. It shows us the importance of marriage in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. He chose to be there and He chose to turn the water into wine. When the water of love dries up and becomes stagnant, at Mother Mary's bidding, the Lord will cause the wine of love to flow between couples if we only ask.

In the first miracle of the Lord's ministry, water was turned into wine. At the Last supper, wine was turned into His blood and on the cross, after His blood was spilt, water came forth. It was complete. The ordinary became extraordinary and today the extraordinary comes to us in the form of an ordinary piece of bread. Our God makes our ordinary lives, extraordinary with the presence of gifts. Let us humble ourselves and ask Him to show us His favour and shower His gifts.

Prayer: Abba Father, for too long we have been limiting You, Your power, glory and might. Walk into our lives through Your son Jesus and breathe on us Your Spirit that we may be renewed and blessed with your gifts for others. Amen

“Does the Lord so delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience to the command of the Lord?” 1 Samuel 15: 22

1 Samuel

15:16–23

Psalms 50:8–9,
16b–17, 21, 23

Mark 2:18–22

I don't delight in sacrifice but obedience. In this new year with the many resolutions we have made it is better to take this seriously as well. Sometimes our faith is limited to monotonous things we have to do. All the readings highlight the importance of obedience, but let us look at obedience and see what actually the Lord wants from us. We cannot obey someone without knowing them. To know someone deeply results in obedience without any doubt or fear. If we try to obey people without knowing them, we probably do so without a reason and our only reason could be because someone told us to do so or may be because everyone is following the same. The fear in such attitude is that the moment that connection is broken you could move away and break every command because you had no reason to follow them. Yet another fear of not knowing the person of whom we take instruction is that we will never know if a command was actually from that person and we can be easily manipulated.

Are we not like this? We follow the commands of God not knowing Him. It becomes a superficial act. We do things for the sake of it. We go to Sunday mass because we were taught to do so. How many of us are excited about going to mass because we are going to encounter Lord Jesus in flesh and blood? And the moment someone says these are nothing but traditions we tend to swing that way because we did not know the real meaning in the first place.

Every year is new, but it won't be new if we remain as we are, if there is no progress. New Year was exciting back in school because we made progress every year, from one grade to another. But after that life became stagnant and monotonous. Let this year make difference, let us progress deeply into the heart of God to know him, let time excite us because it's yet another year with God. Let the psalms come alive, the readings that will arouse our spirit. When people asked Lord Jesus, why are your disciples not fasting? He replied that they would do so once He was gone. This is something interesting to think about because the disciples would not because it was law, because they know Him who is the law. They did not follow because everyone else was but because they had seen the Holy One. Are we ready to change our ways and seek him?

Prayer: Prayer: Abba Father! Help me be more aware of you, Holy Spirit revive me from within. Amen

**God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart**

1 Samuel 16:7

1 Samuel 16:1–13

Psalms 89:20–22,
27–28

Mark 2:23–28

In the first reading Samuel anoints David, who is chosen by God for His glory. Samuel is appointed and commissioned to anoint a king. When we do God's work we should do as Samuel did, 'as a servant of God' and not in pomp. It is His love for us that He sought and rescues us and uses us for His glory.

Samuel is mourning the loss of Saul. When faced with bad or good experiences we should know that God has a better plan for us and is working for the good of those who love Him. He will not abandon us. Samuel had such a tangible communion with God, and yet did not have enough faith in God for his protection, instead fear filled his heart. Samuel, as any of us, looked for a 'King' who looked good in the eyes of the world.

In the eyes of God, the least is the first in the kingdom. He finds the chosen no matter where they are scattered. So was David, the youngest son, who looked after sheep. This is so in many who God has raised for His glory, especially St. Peter, just a fisherman with absolutely no clue about anything other than fishing. Our Lord Jesus saw in him 'A rock on whom He built His church'.

We believe the social mirror, i.e. what people tell us about our capabilities and drawbacks. Instead we should look to God and hear Him say "I love you my son/daughter, you are precious to me." As we sit at His feet each morning and walk with Him at day, the Holy Spirit will come upon us and God will slowly raise us to be a part of His glorious plan. If we find it difficult to find words to speak, words start gushing out of our mouth, shyness is blessed with boldness, absent minded people are blessed with great memory, lack of knowledge with the wisdom of God, and even the bold and strong spirited are given the spirit of humility. So much more that takes place in our lives when we receive the anointing from the Lord. David is empowered as in today's psalm. God stands by him and strengthens him in his undertaking.

In the Gospel, our Lord Jesus, sees and knows the hearts of the Pharisees and His disciples and puts in perspective the Sabbath that it is a blessing to man and human needs and that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath and what it entails should be a blessing.
Prayer: O Lord, you see and know everything. I believe that you are enlightening the eyes of my heart to see and know your plan in my life. Amen.

The Sabbath was meant for man

1 Samuel 17:32–
33, 37, 40–51

Psalms 144:1b, 2,
9–10

Mark 3:1–6

In the Gospel reading today we see another instance of the mercy of the Lord Jesus. As Pope Francis tells us in the 9000 words proclamation for this Jubilee Year of Mercy in Jesus of Nazareth we see the face of the God of mercy.

According to Jewish theologians it was against the law even to heal a person on the Sabbath day. This was one of the many laws with the Lord Jesus openly, regularly and blatantly broke. He also told His Apostles to break them. In today's episode the Lord Jesus sees a man with a shriveled hand in the synagogue. The religious leaders as usual were watching and waiting for a chance to find some wrong doing in the Lord Jesus. Deeply distressed by their orthodox and hard-line attitude the Lord Jesus asked the religious leaders, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?". They remained silent and the Gospel reading says the Lord Jesus was angry over their insensitiveness if not senseless attitude towards a handicapped human being. He told the man to stretch out his hand and he was healed immediately. Then the Lord Jesus told the religious leaders an immortal and widely quoted truth that man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man. The Lord Jesus openly and powerfully often told the religious leaders that the hundreds of laws they had made in the name of God were really not God's will. He repeatedly stressed that God is love and anyone who lives in love, lives in God and God lives in him.

The Lord Jesus also stressed that God is not interested in animal sacrifices or other rituals which the Jewish leaders thought were important. He said God is pleased when we are merciful. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to be merciful not only to family or community members and friends but even to strangers or enemies. In the afterglow of Pope Francis' widely acclaimed encyclical on the environment and mother nature we are also called to be merciful even towards animal and other creatures. A world animal rights group reported recently according to statistics some 70 billion animals were slaughtered in a selfish world last year besides the tens of thousands of fish and other species of the sea. We need to think deeply whether this is God's will and in line with God's mercy.

Prayer: Abba Father may Your law of love and mercy be our guiding light. Amen.

He told his disciples to have a boat ready for Him...

Mark 3:9

1 Samuel 18:6-9,
19:1-7

Psalms 56:2-3,
9-13

Mark 3:7-12

Today's first reading relates the way David kills Goliath the Philistine since the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. In all the tasks that Saul entrusts to him, he was victorious. The mighty protection of God was upon him. Even Saul's son with whom Saul discusses to kill David helps David.

The story of Saul who lived in the flesh is entirely different. He hated David who won for him great victories. When the people applauded David, he was filled with jealousy. He could not handle it and would lose his inner freedom and peace. Behaving like a mad man he plotted to kill David. When he allowed his flesh to take over, an evil spirit began to lead him and the fear that he will lose his place increased.

As we look at this incident, through today's word the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking to us. When we allow our flesh to take over us, it enables dark spirits to dominate us. Finally it leads to massive destruction within us. We lose our inner peace, joy and freedom. We enter into a life filled with fear and dissatisfaction. Yet like David if we enter into a life surrendered to God, we will be filled by His Spirit. We will be filled by supernatural power enabling us to do mighty deeds that we cannot fathom with our human mind. We will receive immense inner security. Our hearts will be filled with peace, joy and freedom. The Lord is calling us to such a life.

Today's Gospel reading tells us that a large number of people gathered around the Lord Jesus, who was filled with the Spirit of God. To avoid the crowd, He requests His disciples to have a boat ready for Him. He did not want to make His name popular or receive an honorary name from the people for the miracles He performed. His focus was to fulfill the mission entrusted to Him by God the Father. He had such freedom and peace and was filled with the love of God. We do a small thing and expect lot of appreciation. When we don't get it we stop what we are doing. That happens because we are empty inside. When we are filled by the love of the Father we will no longer need the appreciation of others. The joy that we receive doing the will of the Father brings gives us fullness of life. To live such a life, we need to be deeply connected to our Father in heaven.

Prayer: *Prayer: Abba Father, lead us through our Lord Jesus to receive the grace of deeply being connected to You, every moment of our lives. Amen.*

“He appointed twelve that they might be with Him...”

Mark 3:14

1 Samuel 24:3-21

Psalms 57:2-4, 6, 11

Mark 3:13-19

After much prayer, the Lord Jesus choose ordinary, weak, messed up, broken people. This is good news for us. The world chooses the qualified, the worthy, the rich, and the influential. God does not choose as the world chooses.

The Bible tells us what some of the disciples were really like, not to embarrass them, but to encourage us. They were very much like us.

St. Peter, whom the Lord nicknamed as the “Rock”, shot off his mouth on numerous occasions, had an anger problem, denied the Lord, two weeks after resurrection day he went back to his fishing business. St. James and St. John wanted the foremost places of glory and wanted to call fire down from heaven and destroy a Samaritan village because the Samaritans did not welcome and accommodate the disciples (Luke 9:51-56). Matthew was a tax collector who worked for the Romans and was despised and labeled as a traitor by the Jews. Simon the zealot was a political rebel who hated everything that had to do with Rome. Judas was greedy for money.

But God in His supreme wisdom saw the church being built on these broken people, because their inability and disqualification would make them look to the Lord for help. Filled by the Holy Spirit all of them endured horrendous torture and persecution whilst preaching the Gospel.

St. Vincent of Saragossa, whose feast we celebrate today, because he refused to throw the scripture in the fire, was stretched on the rack and his flesh torn with iron hooks. Then his wounds were rubbed with salt and he was burned alive upon a red-hot grid iron. Finally he was cast into prison and laid on a floor scattered with broken pottery, where he died.

All of us were created by God for a purpose, a mission. How good and worthy and qualified we are, have absolutely nothing to do with why God has called us. It is only by His Grace that we are given the same call as the apostles. First, that we might “be with Him.” Second, to preach the good news wherever we are. Third, to drive out demons and heal the sick. (Matthew 3:14-15) The very first assignment we are given is to ‘be with the Lord’ and to know Him in a personal way.

Prayer: *Abba Father, We pray that you will help us to trust in you to help us make the decisions in our lives. Amen*

More of You and less of me

2 Samuel 1:1-4,
11-12, 19, 23-27

Psalm 80:2-3, 5-7

Mark 3:20-21

Today's readings take on the theme of jealousy and its result. The Lord Jesus' relatives assumed He was crazy after he became so sought-after by the crowds of people that He could not even eat a meal. Were they jealous of the attention the Lord was getting from the crowds or were His relatives concerned about His health? They could not understand why so many people wanted to

be near the Lord and hear what He preached. Jealousy sometimes disguises itself as concern for others.

The First Reading is taken from 2 Samuel where David is informed of King Saul's death. Upon hearing the sad news, David and all the men with him tore their clothes and mourned. To understand the greatness of David's actions we must know the background to this story. God selected David, "a man after God's own heart" to become the next king of Israel. With God as his protector, David fought Goliath, the Philistine giant, and claimed victory for Israel. King Saul was jealous and tried to kill David in fear of losing his throne. David respected King Saul and fled with his army. In the end, King Saul tragically died while losing on the battlefield. David was truly a man after God's heart. He had no jealousy or hatred in his heart. He could have killed Saul and become king. Instead, he retreated and when he heard of the king's death he mourned. King Saul, on the other hand, was jealous of David and eventually died a tragic death.

It is said that the jealous are troublesome to others, but a torment to themselves. It is an emotion that most of us do not want to admit that we have. It is not an emotion that we can stop easily. But we can learn from St. John the Baptist. When his disciples came to him complaining that all the people had were following the Lord Jesus and not him, John the Baptist could have easily become jealous of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, his response was "I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him. The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:28-30). In moments of jealousy let us repeat this prayer - "Lord Jesus become greater while I become less."

Prayer: *Prayer: Abba Father, as I journey with You I pray that there might be more of You and less of me. Amen.*

Come back to Christ and be transformed

Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6,
8-10
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
1 Cor 12:12-30
Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

Today the church teaches us about connecting to and being a part of Christ. Just as a machine cannot run without all its parts assembled and working together we are all a part of the body of Christ and cannot accomplish the mission of God without working together. The First Reading shows us how we can connect ourselves to Christ.

When we read the Old Testament we see that the Israelites took God for granted. God work many miracles for His people. He led them out of slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea. He provided water and food out of nowhere when they were in the desert. However, time after time the Israelites forgot God. They strayed from His decrees, worshiped other gods, indulged in all kinds of worldly sins and killed His prophets. After years and years of falling away from God, He allowed them to be taken captive by the Assyrians and Babylonians. Their land was ruined, Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were scattered across the world. Many years after being taken captive, God mercifully allowed His people to return home. It was then that the Israelites recognised that it was God's gracious mercy that allowed them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild what they once had.

The First Reading tells us how the people reconnected with God. When the Israelites were taken into captivity, the people had been distanced from the Word of God. Now, Ezra, the prophet of that time, called all the people together to hear the Word of God. The people stood in honour of God's Word, bowed low and humbly worshiped God. When Ezra read from the Word of God they listened attentively for hours. The prophet Ezra began a renewal of the Israelite nation by reading and teaching God's Word.

In our lives, we too can take God's goodness and mercy for granted or live without God. Today, the Lord is calling us back to Him; to reconnect to Him through the Word of God. It is through the Word of God that we can hear God speaking to us and know that He is alive. It is through the Word of God that we can rebuild a relationship with our Father in Heaven. The Word of God can cleanse us (Ephesians 5:26) and make us grow in faith (Romans 10:17). It can help us know ourselves better by judging the thoughts and reflections of our heart (Hebrews 4:12) and it can feed us spiritually (Matthew 4:4). The Sec-

ond letter to Timothy says “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (verses 16 and 17).

The Gospel reading tells us of how the Lord Jesus began His ministry by reading and proclaiming the Word of God. The Word read from Isaiah is about the Lord Jesus’ mission to bring the Good News and proclaim release to the captives, restore the sight of the blind, free the oppressed, love the unloved and serve the undeserving.

The Lord Jesus knew exactly what the people needed to hear that day and He knew exactly what he wanted to read to them. All of the people in the synagogue were the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, the imprisoned and the blind. He wanted them to connect Him with the prophecy of a Saviour so that they would know that their wait for a Saviour was over, that He had come to liberate them from their sins. It is fair to say that He was telling them of his qualification of being the son of God and that He was uniquely qualified to help them.

He wants to do the same for us today. He speaks to us and says He is the one most qualified to change our lives and bring us new life. He sets us free because of His death and resurrection. It is a victory over sin and death, but only if we stop trying to solve our problems ourselves and turn to God instead. We are all captives to something, whether it is our jobs, relationships, money or something else. We need Him to guide, comfort and transform us.

The Epistle speaks about working together to form the body of Christ. Once we have turned back to the Lord, touched and transformed; we become a member of the Body of Christ. St. Paul gives us the analogy of the human body and compares it to how the body of Christ should work. “Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body” (v.15). Each part of the body is unique and each one is needed. In the same way, each of us in the Body of Christ is unique, gifted by God and needed to form the body of Christ. Therefore, when we work together for the mission of God we must see each other as parts of one body. To work together is not always easy. Our human nature comes out and our brokenness and weaknesses are exposed. God does this intentionally to bring out our weaknesses and to heal us of our wounds. Through these experiences we are made into one body and we become a true reflection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Abba Father, today I pray that I may grow to know you more and more through Your Word, that my life may be transformed to become a member of Your body. Amen.

Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6,
8-10

Ps19:8-10, 15

1 Cor 12:12-30

Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

St. Paul is celebrated as one of the greatest evangelists of the early church. He falls outside the common definitions of a typical apostle. It was he who opposed the apostles. And it seems like God had a great sense of humour in selecting a persecutor to be a great witness for the church. When we look deep within we realise there is great meaning in his calling and there is so much

we can relate to and draw from the life of St. Paul.

St. Paul's encounter on his way to Damascus brought about a great shift in his life. It goes on to prove that a single encounter with Christ can truly change our identity. He was no longer Saul the persecutor but Paul the evangelist. The Lord Jesus gave him a new purpose and meaning to his life and it was because he received this identity and purpose from the Lord that he was able to remain in the Lord even during the most testing times of his ministry.

Each of us has received this calling to become evangelizers and serve the purpose of His Kingdom here on earth. But the truth is, staying committed to this calling is not easy. St. Paul himself teaches us about this struggle through his writings. While firmly rooted and convicted in God's calling, it is apparent that he regularly struggled with his weakness. But the beauty and the hope that we receive today from his life story is that, while he may have continually struggled with his weaknesses, it did not shake the conviction he had towards the calling in his life. Even if he battled daily with his own nature, God's favour and faithfulness made him believe firmly in his calling. That despite his weaknesses and sinfulness He was the chosen one and had a purpose that was bigger than himself.

There are many times when I doubt myself as a server. This happens especially when I fall into sin. I immediately begin to doubt if God will listen to my prayers. I start doubting even the great things He did through me in the past, it's as if sin casts a shadow over all the great things God did and is doing in my life. But as I drag myself to a good confession and truly repent of the "not so holy" areas in my life, I instantly receive the revelation that I was in fact called by the Lord, and the identity that he gave me remains unchanged.

Prayer: Abba Father, I yearn for the experience and faith of St. Paul that my life may be changed as I look away from my sin and look to your grace. Amen

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few**Luke 10:2**

2 Timothy 1:1-8 or
Titus 1:1-5
Psalm 96:1-3,
7-8a, 10
Luke 10:1-9

Across the world we see that there is a tremendous spiritual hunger. There is a profound interest in spirituality. However people are looking for it in places they cannot find it. Indeed, the field is ready for the harvest, and the Lord of the harvest wants every one of us out in the field. God wants us to take hold of the countless opportunities and challenges around us to bring Glory to His Name.

But, often we see ourselves taking a lazy approach to reaching out to people. This reminds me of a story of a farmer who said lightning struck an old shed and saved him the trouble of tearing it down. Then it rained and saved him the chore of washing his car too. When someone asked him what he was doing now, he replied, "I'm waiting for an earthquake to shake the potatoes out of the ground." Aren't we like this farmer? We do nothing but wait for God to do something or show us a sign.

Our journey of discipleship is an exercise in obedience and faithfulness to the will of God. The opportunities for reaching out are endless and most often very close to us. The Lord Jesus has sent us out as his disciples among the people we meet in our daily lives. Today's Gospel teaches us being part of those who are sent out, is not easy. There is stress, tension, an element of risk, and great uncertainty. It requires letting go of a lot of baggage. We must be able to move quickly, without unnecessary hindrances. We as disciples of the Lord Jesus, are part of the mission to share the Good News of God's Kingdom with others. God Himself has chosen us.

Although we do not always know where our journey with the Lord Jesus will lead us, He faithfully provides for the tasks ahead. All we need to do is hold on in faith when the going gets tough. Moreover as we strive to live as faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus, the greatest barrier that hinders our witness is our lazy attitude like the farmer waiting for an earthquake. Nonetheless, let us fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus and be motivated by the passion that the Lord Jesus had for our salvation. Let us fall at His feet every day and by the power of the Holy Spirit minister to everyone that the Lord sends us our way

Prayer: Abba Father, fill us with Your Holy Spirit and empower us to be Your disciples and spread Your Kingdom wherever we are. Amen

...‘This is what the Lord says...’

2 Samuel 7:5

2 Samuel 7:4–17

Psalm 89:4–5,
27–30

Mark 4:1–20

Today's first reading reveals that King David wanted to build a house for the Lord. He felt it was not right for the ark of God to remain in a tent while he himself lived in a magnificent palace. Initially it seemed a very worthy and good thing to do, so much so that even prophet Nathan encouraged him to go ahead, because God was with him. Yet this was not the Lord's will.

The Gospel reading supports the first reading, because in order to discern the will of God, we first need to know the Word of God. To know the word of God we need to read scripture, meditate on it, be immersed in it, and through the four steps and the Holy Spirit allow it to take root and grow in us; like the seed that fell on good soil. Otherwise like King David our journey and actions will be just based on our understanding, thoughts, emotions and also as a means of satisfying ourselves, by receiving praise from others. As the Lord revealed in Matthew 7:21 then He would say to us also - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Some times I wonder how Jesus preached to the multitudes with a mic and still everyone heard Him clearly? In this day and age, we use extensive sound equipment. Yet when the Lord preached, none of that was available. But, because He was doing the will of His Father in heaven, the Holy Spirit opened the spiritual ears of every person to hear the word of God.

St. Angela Merici is an example of a person who did the will of God. She was born in 1474 and founded the Ursulines order. She became an orphan at the age of ten and thereafter went to live at her uncle's home with her elder sister and led a prayerful life. Back in her own home, she was convinced that the great need of her times was a better instruction of young girls in Christianity, and converted her home into a school where she gathered little girls and taught them. In 1525, when visited to Rome, Pope Clement VII, who had heard of her great holiness and success as a religious teacher of young girls, invited her to remain there. However, Angela returned to the duties to which the Lord called her to.

Prayer: *Abba Father, give me the grace like Lord Jesus to say 'not my will, but your will be done'. Amen*

2 Samuel 7:18–19,
24–29

Psalms 132:1–5,
11–14

Mark 4:21–25

What a beautiful proclamation by David and how timely it is during this year of Mercy we have just begun. David sinned against God. He committed adultery.... He was a murderer.... But God's mercy upon him was greater. David marvels at the mercy of God and calls out to the sovereign God and asks how it could be that after failing God so badly, yet God is creating an everlasting

promise for all eternity.

Despite David's sin, the Mercy he tasted was so great that David forgot his sin just like God did and committed his life to the service of God. He desired to build a temple for the Sovereign Lord. The Gospel of St. Mark today speaks how everything that is done in the dark will be brought to light. David's sin could not be kept in the dark but was brought to light. However, that which was the greatest sin of his life became the biggest blessing of his life. A total transformation only because of the mercy of God. Many Christians today prefer to keep their sin hidden from sight. They are reluctant to deal with their sin and live condemning themselves. They keep their sin hidden without bringing it into light and seeking God's forgiveness. God in His richness is waiting to forgive our sins and bless us to make an everlasting covenant like He did with David. His mercy is so free and within easy reach only if we repent and bring our sins to light.

As the Lord Jesus teaches, His light is revealed to us and is not hidden. But we may not be able to see or to use all of that truth right now. Only as we put God's teachings in to practice will we understand and see more of the truth. As we obey in true repentance and surrender, we will sharpen our vision and increase our understanding to live for God like David did, so God could build an everlasting covenant for all our generations.

The best way for us to become aware of our sin, is to sit before the Blessed Sacrament and surrender ourselves to the Lord. As we sit before and allow our spirits to be cleansed with the blood of the Lord Jesus not only will our sin be revealed but we will realise that our inclination to sin will slowly but surely diminish. What appealed to us earlier will not hold any attraction for us any longer as the Lord's light fills us.

Prayer: Abba Father, we thank You for Your sacrament of reconciliation which makes each day a new beginning with our sins of yesterday erased. Amen

You have a Father in Heaven. You are not alone.

2 Samuel 11:1-4a,
5-10a, 13-17
Psalm 51:3-7,
10-11
Mark 4:26-34

In the first reading we find David an instrument of God facing temptation. We are all born into this world with an emptiness within us. From our birth we are searching for an answer to this emptiness. Temptation is the illusion and answer, offered to us by the world. It promises to make us happy and complete but it never does. David was promised the illusion of a relationship with a beautiful woman. The answer the world offered was to get rid of Uriah at whatever cost, but these only led him to a path of misery and crisis.

Our temptations are also, the many illusions offered by the world. We are trying to find happiness, love and security, from our marriages, friends, career or business. From accumulating wealth and riches, from alcohol, drugs and sex. But none can make us feel complete.

In the Gospel reading the Lord Jesus gives the answer through the parable of the seeds. The seed is that you have a Father in heaven and you are not alone. This Father is powerful, rich and owns the universe and promises to look after your every need. You are a son and a daughter of this eternal Father. You have a Saviour, Lord Jesus Christ. He forgives all your sin and He makes His love and intimacy real in your heart. He wants to be your constant companion, and will always be faithful to you. When we put these seeds of revelations into our heart and hold onto them, His love and presence become real in our hearts and take away the emptiness within.

A lady attending prayer meetings had financial difficulties. She regularly asked people for the bus fare to return home. At a prayer meeting, she heard during the sermon the revelation of the Father she had in heaven. The next day, she went to a church and asked a person there what time the mass was. This person replied that there was no mass that day, but there was a prayer meeting and invited her to attend it. Once again she heard the revelation that she has a Father in Heaven and that he will provide for her, and chose not to ask money from anybody. When the meeting was over, the person who invited her gave her one thousand rupees. This lady experienced the supernatural providence and love of her Father in heaven, her emptiness was taken away. Let us allow these seeds to take root in our hearts.

Prayer: *Abba Father, we pray that the three seeds of your Kingdom will be planted, take root and bear fruit in our lives. Amen*

Who is this?

Mark4:41

2 Samuel 12:1-7a,
10-17

Psalm 51:12-17

Mark 4:35-41

“Who is this?”(Mark4:41), This was a very strange question for the disciples to ask. They had left everything to follow Jesus. They saw all the miracles that the Lord Jesus had performed. They heard all the sermons that the Lord taught. They knew who He was and what He was going to do. They saw His power. But they truly did not know Him. In the middle of the crisis the truth came to light.

Even though they had lived with the Lord they truly did not know who He really was. So when they saw Him command the seas and the storms they were shocked.

This is like most of our lives. We know who God is. We know God can do miracles. We have heard all the sermons. We have seen all the miracles. But when it comes to the crisis of our own lives we don't believe that the Lord Jesus is in control and has the power to command our lives. Because we do not know Him. We can see by the Gospel that the reason for their unbelief was not knowing who Jesus Christ truly is. For St. Paul says that Lord Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The Lord Jesus asked St. Peter this same question. St. Peter replied that Jesus was the Christ the son of the living God. This is the key into entering the kingdom of heaven. It is to know the Lord Jesus and to know him as your Christ, your Messiah who is also the son of the living God. Know Jesus like this brings the faith you need to calm the storms that we face in our lives. These storms are not only the problems we face outside but also the sinful nature we battle inside of us.

King David also faced such a storm in his life which was his sinful nature. This blinded him to God and made him commit an act that showed utter contempt of the Lord. In the Psalm King David prayed restore to me the Joy of your salvation because knowing Jesus is the Joy of salvation. If a person like King David whom God called a man after God's own Heart could lose sight of God and lose sight of his Saviour in the midst of his sinful nature so can we all, But the Good news is Jesus who has the power to command the storm and the seas is in our boat. Through the four steps we can give him control of our life and He can change everything in just one moment.

Prayer: *Prayer: Abba father we thank you for sending Jesus your son into this world to save us. To revive your love into our hearts. Amen*

“Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.”

Mark 10: 15

Deutr.6:1-9

Ps.128:1-5

Col.3:12-21

Mk.10:13-15

In today's Gospel reading the Lord Jesus holds up children as models for His disciples, to enter into the Kingdom of God. The disciples of the Lord Jesus are the ones who follow Him, closely. Why is He using children as models? We know, children totally depend and put their complete trust in their parents. As children, even if they are punished, they soon forget it and cling on to their parents. Such is their trust, confidence and dependence on their parents. Similarly the Lord Jesus says, His disciples too should totally depend on God, trust Him and obey the Gospel. In total surrender and with lives ruled by God, they will enter the kingdom of God.

The Lord delivered the Israelites from years of bondage in Egypt and provided for them in the wilderness for 40 long years on their way to the Promised Land. In today's first reading God is addressing these people who lived in darkness and bondage, now about to enter the Promised Land - A Land flowing with milk and honey and a Land of prosperity. He reminds them that once they enter into this Land of prosperity they should remember that the Lord alone is God and Israel must love Him, with an undivided heart. Further He says this knowledge of God should be passed on from generation to the next and great shall be their prosperity. It must be noted that Deuteronomy 6, 4-9 became the principal Jewish confession of faith and the Lord Jesus identifies this as the Greatest Commandment in Matthew 22: 36-38.

The Old Testament books tell us that the chosen people of God, the Israelites forgot their first experience with God and neglected to obey the Greatest Commandment of God. (Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. [Deut. 6,4-5]) They were influenced by the pagan nations around Israel and their internal sinful desires and began to worship other gods. They tried to build their lives and their little kingdoms on earth, according to their own understanding but ended up being forcefully exiled from the Promised Land for several years.

Today when we look into our lives, have we forgotten the first experience of encountering our Lord Jesus? Just as it was for the Israelites, the Lord Jesus came searching for us while we were still sinners and

living in bondage and darkness. In His mercy and love, He took us out from the dark pit that we were stuck in. We experienced His love, mercy and forgiveness flowing into our lives and like little children we hung on to Him. The Lord Jesus was the whole world to us and we simply followed Him. We experienced divine intervention internally and externally in our lives and there was so much inner freedom, simplicity, love, peace and joy within us that the journey with our Lord was effortless. The Kingdom of God was here on earth.

Today, am I that same little child who simply trusted and followed the Lord Jesus or has my life become complicated, burdened and weary? Deep down, as we received blessings from God, we became comfortable in this journey, as it happened to the Israelites. Gradually we forgot to give the first place in our lives to God? Did we not start to do things by our own efforts and no longer depended on God or listened to our elders or leaders? Did we not become arrogant, envious, judgmental and unteachable? As disciples or followers of Christ instead of building the Kingdom of God did we not try to build our own little kingdoms? Without our knowledge, have we not lost our first experience with the Lord Jesus? Have we not fallen back into our old sinful way of life and have become weary and burdened?

When we look into our lives if we are in a similar situation, the Lord Jesus is speaking to us through today's Gospel. Let us reach out to Him, as a little child would, just as we are. The Lord Jesus loves us anyway.

As Hebrews 4:15-16 says, '...we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.' When we give an account of our lives to God, from Whom, nothing in all creation is hidden and surrender our lives to Him, once again He will fill our lives with His Holy Spirit.

Then we will experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Epistle. – Heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love and peace. The values of Christian families mentioned in Colossians 4: 18-21 will become a reality in our families. We will become the true disciples of Christ and the Lord will use us, our children and generations to come 'to dispel the darkness of the world.'

Prayer: Abba Father, grant to us the simplicity of the heart of a child to cling on to you always. Amen.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

“ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS”

(To be filled in block capital letters) Date:.....

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 LEAVEN OF THE KINGDOM - Nobody has the leaven of the kingdom naturally. Nobody has the leaven of the kingdom coming from inside of them - it has to be planted inside. That's what you call the gospel. St. Paul said, "I have become a servant of the gospel." He has become leaven, a seed.

There are three seeds for the kingdom:

I have a Father - The nature of this Father is:

- He is rich - you don't have to be poor and begging and caught up. We have a very rich Father.
- He is powerful - He can handle everything in your life. Many of us are thinking and behaving desperately because we don't know about the Father.
- He is the true owner of the universe -

I have a Saviour and Lord

Two things Jesus brings into our life:

- ***Forgiveness of sin and freedom from the past***

You would have messed it all up and now your life has come to the end. It doesn't matter. If you come to Him, buy the washing of His blood, He can make that misery the platform of His greater blessing. You have to reach beyond the cloud - don't get stuck here.

- ***Intimacy***

All the saints call this companionship that Jesus brings, intimacy. The lover comes to love us from within. When I started having those thoughts being imprinted on my mind about the intimacy of Jesus - it was only ideas. But as I held on to that and I began to pray through that, and rest in that - that intimacy idea started becoming an internal experience. I was experiencing being loved and experiencing having the favour of God. Experiencing the blessing on your life and enjoying the presence.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit

The power that we don't have comes into our lives. We don't have to be afraid.

We don't need to have strength from within our own selves – it will come from the Lord. The power of the Lord will be within us through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. If we don't pierce the cloud, we will forever be stuck here at this level.