



# IN OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

March 2016

And Christ replied to them, The term of years of Satan's powers has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven.

Mark 16: 14 u

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# **On Our Knees In His Hands**

*March 2016*

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"Do not withdraw your mercy from us."

Daniel 3:35

Daniel 3:25, 34–43

Psalm 25:4–5b, 6,  
7b–9

Matthew 18:21–35

From the book of Prophet Daniel, we are shown the true contrite heart of a faithful servant of God not for him but for his nation Israel. This song of Azariah is known as a form of communal lamentation. What is significant is that Azariah's plea for his nation was sung at a time when he, along with his two friends were thrown into a fiery furnace to die for being faithful to God.

Today we are called in the same way to stand in the gap in blazing fires, hail storms and destructive floods that go around our families, societies, communities and nations, praying to an ever faithful God who will answer our prayers for them and give us the power to get involved in finding a solution. We are called to have the faith of martyrs for the salvation of others.

The second reading reveals a beautiful truth. The mercy of God that Azariah cried out for his people (Daniel 3:35) indeed came down from heaven in the form of our Lord Jesus Christ who Himself is Mercy. The reading speaks of what we need to do to follow one of the greatest commandments that the Lord Jesus taught. Love one another as I have loved you. St. Peter's question to our Lord Jesus is "How do I love my brother or sister who offends me repeatedly?" St. Peter goes on, perhaps, with the Jewish understanding of that time that seven times was a justified limit for forgiveness. The Lord Jesus shows the magnitude of the need for forgiveness when St. Peter is told that he needs to forgive "seventy times seven"

Through the first reading we are called to have the faith of a martyr for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. Through the Gospel reading today the Lord Jesus calls us to a greater and a more difficult task than martyrdom itself, true and complete forgiveness in the face of repeated offenses by our own loved ones. For their salvation shall come only through mercy offered through true forgiveness. In the Lord's Prayer we say "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" Are we true to our heart when we pray this prayer of salvation? Let us remember, that the Lord Jesus loved us first and forgave us first. Therefore, let us not be like the cruel servant of the King in the parable today to forget the mercy of our King and Lord Jesus on us and have a hard and unforgiving heart. Let us enter the modern day martyrdom by dying to our ego, unforgiveness, stubbornness and hardness of heart.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, forgive us of our unforgiveness and melt our hardened hearts today to see things with eyes of love. Amen.*

Not the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law,  
until all things have taken place. Matthew 5:18

Deuteronomy 4:1,  
5-9

Psalm 147:12-13,  
15-16, 19-20

Matthew 5:17-19

During Lent, we especially try to imitate the Lord Jesus when He was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert. There the Lord Jesus overcame the temptations of the Evil One by using God's Word. We too can use God's Word to have victory over temptations.

However, to do this, we need to be aware that the word of God is not just a request but a command.

Sometime ago I wondered how the Bible could be different to any other book. And then Lord showed me; When He spoke, the world was created; at his command everything appeared. (Psalm 33:9) The Words that God spoke had power to create the entire Universe. Do we accept the promises of God?

All Scripture is inspired by God and God-Breathed. (2 Timothy 3:16) Therefore, the Scripture or the Words in the Bible are the message and promises of God. The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. (John 1:14) The Word was not just written, it was demonstrated to us by the life of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the Word of God is alive and it can live inside us.

However, we cannot use God's Word to fight our temptations if we do not read, pray and live it. Even if we do quote the Scriptures, the Evil One will not tremble, if we do not tremble at God's Word but only give it lip service.

The Word of God is a weapon given to us in our battle against the Evil One and our own flesh. Victory through God's Word is based on living in His Word. When we obey God's message and act on his promises, the Word of the Lord will bring down every stronghold and it will come alive. It will be active and sharper than any double-edged sword.

Before we use God's Word as a sword we must first cherish it as the joy and the happiness of our hearts. This Lent Season let us sacrifice our favorite TV show or a game we would like to play and spend extra time reading the Word of God, cherish it in our hearts, obey it with a joyful heart and share that joy with the others around us. Fighting the Evil One then will become an effortless adventure.

Psalm 119:105 says Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Let the word be so in our lives.

**Prayer: Abba Father, we delight in every Word You have spoken. Grant us the grace to love it, live it, obey it and share it by the Power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Today, if only you would hear His voice, "Do not harden  
your hearts as you did". **Psalm 95:8**

Jeremiah 7:23–28

Psalm 95:1–2, 6–9

Luke 11:14–23

Do you think God still performs miracles today? Let us ask ourselves how life, death and resurrection matter to us. Though we appreciate how God works His power in us, do we believe in the supernatural realm for real? In the Gospel reading we see the powerful finger of God at work. In our own lives we see the miracles He does for us.

Jealous about the Lord's popularity, the Scribes and Pharisees were concerned if the Lord Jesus was carrying out the miracles by the power of God or by Beelzebub. What are we concerned about. The Lord Jesus only wants to occupy our hearts. There are many ways we can respond to Him. The people marveled and gave a proper response seeing the works of the Lord, so can we through praise and worship. We can see how the Lord Jesus loves people by performing miracles and bringing them together. It's not all who believe in the Lord's wonders and acknowledge His power. That is why in the Lord Jesus' day they doubted and asked for signs.

Even today we look for more signs from Heaven. The problem is that our hearts are hardened. Walk outside, look at the sky, stars, day and night, the animals and plants and all the wonders God has created. We do not need any other proof of His love when He made us in His own image and gave us authority over all the earth and told us to be good stewards of God's creation..

Today we may be seeking a sign to believe. We know that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, which is an indisputable fact of history. Acknowledge the evidence and believe in Lord Jesus and not harden your hearts. We can be religious, preach, and even cast out demons but if we do not love Him we still remain in sin. The Lord Jesus said listen to preachers and do what they preach but do not act like them because they are more caught up with the worldly things than a relationship with God.

Knowing and experiencing the Lord Jesus is all that counts, everything else will be icing on the cake. Let all the deeds we do be out of thankfulness to the Lord for what He has done in our lives. We can come back to the Lord via the 4 steps; Come as you are, I love you – Give the truth of your heart to the Lord – Surrender your life to Jesus and Be filled with the Holy Spirit. We in the Catholic Church also have the wonderful sacrament of reconciliation to be restored and healed.

**Prayer: Abba Father, help us to know the dreams of your heart, go into deeper places and find all the secret places you have in store this season of lent. Amen.**

**“Love the lord your God with all your heart... Love your neighbor as yourself”.**

**Mark 12:30-31**

Hosea 14:2-10

Psalm 81:6c-11b,  
14, 17

Mark 12:28-34

In the first reading, Prophet Hosea speaks of immense hope for the future. History has it that prophet Hosea was deceived by his wife, but he did not stop loving her in spite of her infidelities. God who called him to speak on His behalf to an idolatrous and materialistic generation, wanted the prophet to experience the grief and shame of a betrayed husband. In and through this the prophet reveals a God who feels a love so real

and so personal for us that it cannot be expressed in words.

This is the reality of the unconditional love of the Father. It is beyond our limited comprehension. The innumerable times we have failed him and deceived Him, have not brought about rejection, anger or hatred from Him. He has only responded with love compassion and divine mercy and the greatest He could do for us is He sacrificed His Son on the cross. The cry to return to God and seek Him without fear assuring us of healing and love beyond our understanding and fruitfulness like an evergreen Cyprus tree is proclaimed by Hosea. We will find completion and wholeness in him alone. The Lord further confirms this through the psalmist ‘I would feed you with the finest wheat and would satisfy you with honey from the rock.’

The Gospel reading presents the Ten Commandments being encompassed into the one most powerful and greatest command God gives to us, that is to love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls and all our minds and with all our strength and further more to love our neighbours as ourself. This is our call, a call to true discipleship. In this Lenten season let us examine our lives and respond to this call. We cannot do it in our strength. Through the four steps portrayed in St Peters Sermon in the Acts of the Apostles we can reach this total giving of self and experience inner freedom. We are called to accept our sinfulness and believe God loves us anyway and that we can never be separated from his love .despite our shortcomings and infidelity. Further, we are urged to give the truth of our hearts to him in total honesty, believe in the redemption by His blood and the forgiveness of sins and finally surrender our lives totally to His will. In this total surrender God will fill us with His Holy Spirit and the peace, love and righteousness of the Holy Spirit will be ours.

***Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for the grace to love you in the depth of the spirit as you deserve and may we experience a lasting transformation in our lives that we may take this love to others. Amen***

**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God  
rather than burnt offerings...**

**Hosea 6:6**

Hosea 6:1-6

Psalms 51:3-4,  
18-21

Luke 18:9-14

Hosea's words are immensely challenging. In life we find it easier to give something to a charitable organization instead of offering a word of apology to our immediate family members. Or sometimes we find it much more rewarding to give a helping hand to an outsider compared to assisting that 'troublesome relative'. I remember as a child, I loved to help out my neighbours and do things for them, rather than help out at home. This was because I received more appreciation from outsiders. Though this is just a fraction of today's message, I now realize that this revealed my human nature of doing good to receive recognition and appreciation.

As indicated in the first reading and also confirmed in the Gospel reading, the Lord looks more at a person's heart than at external actions. The Lord reminds us also to look at the motive of our actions. Are they aimed at pleasing God, ourselves or others? Sometimes we find it easier to make sacrifices within our comfort zones instead of doing something not-so-easy that the Lord wants us to do. For many years I fasted without breakfast and lunch on Wednesdays, and I was quite pleased with myself, that I was able to do something good. However, over the years I had to undergo certain surgeries, sometimes I was not well, and then could not skip both meals but through the Lenten preaching on Wednesdays, the Lord challenged me to fast on my words and from judging others.

I found this much more difficult. Then the Lord showed me that I was actually pleasing myself that I was doing something good, instead of really doing what the Lord was calling me to do. I needed to 'acknowledge God rather than offer Him a meagre burnt offering'. Many of us may also be going through spiritual pride, thinking that we are on a journey, but those who do not come for the prayer meeting are not. We could even be judging our office colleagues, friends and relations, and internally feeling far superior to them and judging them. But the Lord reminds us today that what he requires from us is mercy and not judgement.

During this time of Lent, let us examine our hearts. Are we like the Pharisee or the Tax collector? Like Hosea says, let us return to the Lord. Though sometimes we may feel that He has torn us to pieces, we know that He will heal us and bind up our wounds.

***Prayer: Abba Father, help me to return to You each time I fall. Amen***

Today I have rolled away the reproach.... from you

**Joshua 5:9a**

Joshua 5:9a,

10–12

Psalm 34:2–7

2 Cor 5:17–21

Luke 15:1–3,

11–32

As we get closer to the Passover of our Lord Jesus, the Church presents to us a major characteristic of our God, namely His mercy and compassion. In the First Reading God tells Joshua that He has prepared a whole new life for His people. The Israelites had been living on manna, the food from heaven sent day after day to satiate their hunger while they walked through wilderness for 40 long years. The day after they celebrated the Passover, manna stopped and Israelites started eating the fresh produce of the Promised Land. Their wandering was over, they had reached the land flowing with milk and honey. God, who delivered them and guarded and led them through the wilderness despite their disobedience and waywardness, had already prepared a new dawn upon His people. Were they worthy of it? No, but God had willed it!

The Gospel presents a similar transformation in the son who wandered to a distant land looking for fulfilment and entertainment. Having squandered all his wealth on wine, women and song, he returned to his father starved and defeated, deprived of even normal food, having pig food to fill his stomach. Yet that simple return in honest repentance was all that the father needed. The son's return said it all. The father received the lost son; the dead son was restored to life again. He did not wait any longer, to roll away the reproach from the son and turn his shame to glory, his sadness to joy. He received the abundant life overflowing with love and joy from the hands of the father. Did he deserve it? No, but the father willed it.

This is our God, our Father in heaven. This is our Saviour Jesus Christ attracting tax collectors and sinners around Him. We have received the Grace to be called His own, be pursued by Him when we ran away, be embraced by Him the moment we turn to Him. The Lord Jesus rolled away our reproach and gave us an altogether new life overflowing with peace, joy and inner freedom even in the face of sickness, poverty and rejection. Did we deserve it? No, not at all, yet His mercy willed it so.

St. Paul beautifully elaborates this wonderful transformation in today's Second Reading. God our Father scrapped our old self completely and created us anew in Christ. What a master plan! The God who created everything and everyone could not bear to be separated from His wayward stubborn children. So He reconciled us to Himself through His own begotten Son, Lord Jesus Christ, who though He had no sin, became sin, just to win eternal life back for us. The

Father, who was wronged and hurt by us, did not count our sins against us, making us blessed people. "Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit." (Psalm 32:1,2)

As I ponder over the above words of the Psalmist, the last phrase challenges me. Am I free of any deceit in my spirit? Often I tend to act like the unmerciful servant whose enormous debt was cancelled by the master, but failed to have mercy on the fellow servant who owed him a small debt.

How do I overcome this deceit in my spirit? I receive the grace to sit at the feet of the Lord each morning, going to Him as I am and open my spirit, mind, heart and body to His forgiveness and mercy as I give the truth of my life to Him. With no questions asked, the Lord washes me with His Precious Blood and cleanses me from all the dirt within me. As I surrender my whole being to Him and submit every area of my life, to His authority, I am filled with His Spirit who brings me His love, peace, joy and freedom. Each time I receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I experience this freedom in a more tangible way.

How do I respond when a member of my family hurts me or becomes indifferent towards me? How do I react when a colleague at work makes a wrong judgement about me? What is my inner response when a fellow parishioner or a brother or a sister of my prayer community acts unlovingly towards me? Am I rich enough in God's love and mercy, in order to allow it to flow through me to the others, forgiving them, blessing them and interceding for them?

Today the Lord is inviting us to be His ambassadors, showing His mercy to those around us. (cf 2 Cor 5:20) We are invited to become the eyes, ears, hands and feet of the Lord as He appeals to His children through us. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Holy Father, Pope Francis invites us to accompany those who are marginalised not only in the society but also in our parish communities.

I remember looking into the eyes of a person after a retreat. She had come for the very first time and when she touched love and mercy she was so shocked that she did not know if she should go home or just remain in the church and fathom the love she had received.

As we walk through this Holy Season of Lent, let us not look at our own self-righteousness and judge others, but let us look to the One who welcomed sinners and ate with them, the One who made us righteous with the Father through His death and sacrifice on the cross. He will make our faces radiant, never allowing us to be ashamed at the end.

***Prayer: Abba Father, for the sake of Your Son's sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen***

Be glad forever in what I am creating

Isaiah 65: 18

Isaiah 65:17-21

Psalm 30:2, 4-6,  
11-13

John 4:43-54

I placed the gift in my son's hands. I challenged him to guess what was inside the box. All three guesses were off mark. He never in his wildest dreams imagined it would be a model ship he had always dreamed off.

A dream of the future is being placed in our hands through the verses from the first reading taken from Isaiah. In the future we are promised a new heaven and a new earth. A complete new start to life itself. God promises that it will be so enthralling and comforting that the pain previously suffered will be forgotten. Every sad and upsetting experience will be adequately compensated. The place will be a place of Joy and we will be called a people of Gladness. The uncertainty that we faced will not touch us again and length of life will be unimaginable. Can we believe this word and accept it?

In the reading from St. John another person was given a promise and he held on to it. The royal official's son was gravely ill and the man had travelled a long distance to request the Lord Jesus for a healing. The Lord began to unleash a tirade about lack of faith and people wanting signs. Unperturbed the supposed-to-be tired, weary, long travelled official instead replied with calmness. He said, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.' He was clear about what he wanted and he was so sure that the person he was speaking to had the right answers even if He was not saying them. The Lord stopped all His sermonizing and said 'Go home, your son will live. The man proceeded.

Here was a stranger to miracles and wonders, taking the Lord Jesus at His word and believing in the final say from the Lord. Once he received the answer, he went on his way home where he found his son totally healed.

We have received so many convincing stories, testimonies and even read the word today about Heaven. But, are we convinced? If we are convinced that such a future awaits us, we will be ready to bear pain, setbacks and misunderstandings that come our way. If Heaven is the vision we hold before us throughout the day, we will respond to people and those we relate to in a different way. We will be called a people of gladness right here on earth and the true spirit of praise will rise like incense from our hearts. Let us pray for such a measure of faith and hope about what awaits us.

**Prayer: Abba Father, We pray for a strong conviction about the existence of heaven and the joyful future life, You have in store for us. Amen**

**God is our refuge and our strength,  
an ever present help in distress**

**Psalm 46:2**

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6,  
8-9

John 5:1-16

Cause me to come to thy river O Lord, cause me to drink from thy river O Lord and cause me to live by the river O Lord. The river of God's mercy flows freely. We are called at different times through different situations to experience this river of God's mercy.

The Israelites were given hope through the visions given to Prophet Ezekiel. They were in exile, when God gave this vision of the wonderful stream. This denotes the super abundance that will come upon God's people. Imagine, when we are in a hopeless situation in life, we are uplifted when we hear a word of knowledge or get a vision that addresses our situation. This is exactly what happened to the Israelites who were in exile. God who is merciful gave hope to His people whom He chose to be His faithful flock.

When we become disobedient and go away from God, a prophet is sent to us by God to give us hope. When we are afflicted by sickness, drawn down due to financial crisis, and given into temptation, we lose sight of God. Our mind is filled doubt and darkness. We cannot bear fruit and our whole being becomes like parched land. But the super abundance of God's love and mercy flows into our darkness and hopelessness. It happens not because we are good or deserve His mercy, but because God is merciful and loving. When we live by God's mercy we become like trees on the either side of the river bank and bear much fruit.

The vision speaks of blessing flowing at different stages. Firstly ankle level, then at the knee level and finally brimming over where we can swim in it due to its abundance. This is how the blessings of God flow into our lives. The grace of God does not depend on our purity. Grace is a gift. The Lord Jesus asked the man who was sick for thirty eight years an obvious question; do you want to be healed? What would a man in such situation need other than cure? Yet, what is amusing is the answer that man gave. His answer was an excuse. Often we do it too. We use our impediment as an excuse for our convenience. We should be responsible people. We should be testimonies. We need to deal with life situations genuinely. The Lord Jesus warned the person not to sin again because something worse could happen. That warning is an invitation to a sincere relationship with the Lord Jesus. He is our savior who knows how to save us.

***Prayer: Abba Father, cause me to accept the Lord Jesus as my master and Saviour. May your love become true to me. Amen.***

**The Holy Trinity our model community**

Isaiah 49:8-15

Psalms 145:8-9,  
13c-14, 17-18

John 5:17-30

As we come close to the Holy Week the holiest week in Christianity, the Lord Jesus in today's Gospel passage makes it absolutely clear that He and the God the Father are one.

A part of the Lord's mission was to reinterpret and put in proper perspective the Jewish understanding of the Torah or the Pentateuch, the first five books in the Holy Bible. Down the centuries the Jewish religious leaders according to their own understanding had interpreted God's laws in different ways. For instance they had hundreds of laws relating to the Sabbath day or Saturday according to the Jewish Lunar calendar. There were hundreds of laws relating to what people could do on the Sabbath day and what people could not do. The Lord had healed a paralytic on the Sabbath Day and the Jewish leaders accused Him of breaking laws. But the Lord Jesus who had been with God the Father for eternity knew that the Sabbath had been created for the people and not the other way around. Therefore the Lord regularly, blatantly and openly broke hundreds of laws that the Jewish religious leaders had imposed on the people and He encouraged His disciples also to break these laws which He knew were not from God the Father.

After giving this strong response the Lord Jesus shocked and stunned the Jewish leaders by insisting that He and God the Father are one. This is one of the greatest truths in Christianity and we need to believe it with all our mind, all our strength and all our spirit. God the Father, God the Son and the God the Holy Spirit are one. They are the first and the eternal community, living for each other and serving each other. The Holy Trinity is the model for community life to which the church is called and to which many communities in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement have entered into.

In a pre-resurrection prophesy the Lord Jesus tells us that He is living in us along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. St Paul in the letter to the Colossians tells us that the truth of all truths the mystery of all mysteries, hidden for generations and centuries is that God is living in us as a sign of His unending, unfailing and ever merciful love for us. We are called upon to respond by living a life of prayer and be a discerning people as the Lord Jesus was during His life here.

**Prayer: Abba Father thank you that the Holy Trinity is living in us and you are regularly telling us, "Fear not, I am with you". Amen.**

**Then as long as you do not believe in the messenger  
His word is not in you**

**John 5:38**

Exodus 32:7–  
14

Psalms 106:19–  
23

John 5:31–47

The first reading from the book of Exodus the writer says God was angry and disgusted over the behaviour of the people of Israel. They had witnessed the power of God in a mighty way but once again were falling back into their old ways and cravings. They had not accepted the command of God to conquer the Promised Land. They wanted to get back to their old religion of rites and feasts. They had no faith. While God

wanted to keep His promise to the people He was also disheartened with the faithlessness of the people. But Moses stood in the gap and interceded for this foolish nation as the word is further confirmed by the Psalmist.

The Gospel reading today also shows us how the Lord Jesus was rejected by the religious hierarchy of the temple. They worshipped God read his word but were not willing to accept or believe the revelation of this word which was being fulfilled. The truth was revealed through St. John the Baptist as he witnessed for the Lord who fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. The religious leaders were blind to God's astounding revelation and their hearts were closed. The Messiah they had in mind was someone quite different to this poor humble man who had a great capacity to love beyond boundaries. Hence they were trapped in their own sinfulness.

We fall into this trap even today. In a crisis we lose faith and we resort to other gods to find solutions and overcome the situation not trusting in the God of love. Even though we are filled with the knowledge that God sent His only Son to the cross as a salvific sacrifice and redemption was won we are still bound by our own choices. All these amazing truths are sometimes of little value to us. We end up distraught with nowhere to turn, then we cry to God. Where are you? His divine mercy is there always!

Pope Francis has invited us to a renewed experience with Jesus Christ. This is a moment to look at our lives and examine our conscience. How much in control are we of every situation in our lives? On the surface it may seem perfect. But we need to question the motive behind the decisions we make. We will be surprised how self-centered and egoistic we have actually been. The Lord Jesus is in the gap interceding for us! Let us confess our sinfulness.

**Prayer: Abba Father increase our faith to believe in the power of your love to make a lasting change in our lives through total surrender to you and giving you full control of our lives. Amen**

## The Lord is close to the broken hearted

**Psalm 34:19**

Wisdom of Solomon  
2:1a, 12-22

Psalm 34:17-21, 23

John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

The Jews were seeking to kill the Lord Jesus. The Gospel says, therefore He did not wish to travel to Judea. His human nature is revealed here. Yet after His disciples went to the feast of Tabernacles, He also goes to the feast not openly but in secret. He could have waited without going there. But He surrenders Himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This leading becomes so powerful when the feast was half over. Leaving aside the fear of death He begins to teach publicly. 'You know me and also know where I am from. The One who sent me is true.'

The Lord Jesus did not entertain human feelings. He knew the reason for coming into this world and the secret purpose His Father in heaven had for Him. He had a higher purpose in His life that was way beyond the things that He had to face here on earth.

We also 'come as we are' to the Lord Jesus. When we fail to fulfill the God given purpose of our life for which we were sent in to this world and leave at the feet of the Lord Jesus our weaknesses, sinfulness, worldly desires, and refusal to go through suffering and then surrender our lives to Him, this same Lord Jesus Christ comes into us. Through the Holy Spirit, He comforts us and makes us strong. He will reveal to us the secret purposes of God the Father. He will give us power to go through suffering. He will reveal to us the way to holiness. It is not to gain popularity, not to get a good name and to climb higher pushing others down but He will teach us to suffer joyfully in response to the will of our Father in heaven even if others condemn me. When we give that inner response the same God who raised the Lord Jesus from death will raise us up to a new level.

The way the unbelievers think and their wickedness is beautifully stated in the first reading. The unbeliever attempts to taunt the righteous one by brutally torturing him. Yet in Psalm 34 it is said even though the righteous face many disasters when they cry out to the Lord, He listens and delivers them. Therefore let us not look at the environment. Let us look at His promises and thank and praise Him. Let us look at the Lord who is above all circumstances and let us thank and praise Him for His mighty protection and blessing upon our lives.

**Prayer: Abba Father, who are in heaven. Let your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.**

**The Lord is alive and living with us!**

Jeremiah 11:18–20

Psalms 7:2–3,  
9b–12

John 7:40–53

Galilee was one of Israel's poorest areas and many who lived there were from other countries. The Jewish leaders so despised it that even the people believed that little or nothing good could come from Galilee. Among the ordinary people some thought that the Lord Jesus was a prophet others believed He was the Christ or the Messiah. But influenced by the thinking of the Jewish leaders they also asked whether any good could come from a marginalised place like Galilee. The Jewish religious leaders sent temple guards to arrest the Lord Jesus for proclaiming Himself as the Messiah and God the Son. But the guards were amazed by the teachings of the Lord and did not arrest them. They were also reprimanded by the Jewish leaders who thought they were ignorant and foolish. Nicodemus one of the Sanhedrin members who secretly came to the Lord Jesus at night asked the other Jewish leaders whether it was just to condemn a person without first hearing him and knowing the facts. They scoffed at Nicodemus asking whether he also comes from Galilee. This Gospel passage has an important message for us. Today the Lord Jesus is alive, living in us and among us. Often in our daily lives He comes to us through mysterious unexpected people and in unexpected ways. If we are prayerful and discerning we will recognise and respond to the Lord Jesus when he speaks or comes to us through unexpected people, specially from lowly places like Galilee in the Lord's time.

When we are sincerely trying to discern God's will specially when the choice is between two good things God can speak to us through a domestic aide or a child. The Syrian army commander Naman was told by a maid to go and get himself baptized by a prophet and he would be cleansed of his leprosy. He was not only healed but it went down in history and is known to billions of people today.

Enlightened Bible scholars tell us that God's love is available to all people of all races and religions. South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu has written a book with a somewhat shocking title, 'God is not a Christian'. Therefore there may be instances where God could speak to us through sincere, selfless and sacrificial people of other religions also.

**Prayer: Abba Father often You speak to us through the poor, the lowly and the oppressed or the marginalised people. May we recognise your voice and respond. Amen.**

**What marvels the Lord has done for us...****Psalm 126:3**

Isaiah 43:16–21

Psalm 126:1–6

Philippians 3:8–14

John 8:1–11

The latest and most remarkable discovery in the world today is that of gravitational waves which though discovered by Einstein 100 years ago could not be detected due to the minuteness of their action.

So is the love of the Lord. It is like an impulse reaching out to the most distant hearts and though it cannot be seen, its impact is so great and creates a shift in the lives touched. No matter how far away or hopeless the situation of the soul would have been, the Lord did a marvel in that life and in newer lives.

Isaiah speaks about the Lord declaring that He is doing a new thing which is the impossible, of making a way in the sea, a pathway in the raging waters and when He does that there is no need to remember the past events. He terms it a roadway in the desert and rivers in wastelands. The wild animals will then praise God and the people God has shaped will broadcast His praises.

To me this echoes about people who once lived in total darkness where there was no hope of them having a God experience, suddenly coming to an awareness of His love and encountering his forgiveness. These people would have been considered as wild animals with no pathways to their heart and then the wave of God's love would have overcome their rebellion and transformed them.

Such was the life of the woman caught in adultery. Her encounter with the Lord Jesus was life changing. Instead of coming face-to-face with a stern judge she was face-to-face with the God of love. I can see him bending down and drawing in the sand. It's so simple, he was making pathways in the desert of her life and it was being manifested in her soul. The author of life was declaring life into her being and her spirit was being awakened to a new life. The past did not matter anymore, she would only begin to broadcast His praises and here was a person being reshaped into a new being for eternal life. While we and the world would continue to address her as the adulterous woman who was forgiven by the Lord, in the Lord's eyes she was a new creation, fit and perfect enough for her to catch the first glimpse of Him soon after He rose from the dead. He offered no condemnation but made a river in the wastelands of her life giving her a new meaning and reason to live. She walked away from that scene, as a

woman caught up in the love of the Lord, her soul embraced by His presence and a life set on the path to eternal life.

Such was the life of St. Paul in his days as Saul. He went about his call to destroy the Christians with such a dedication that there was no hope that his relentless blood thirsty pursuit of them would end. And then it happened, a wave of God's love overcame Saul's horse and Saul's heart. No one understood what happened but in his description to the Philippians one can read between the lines.

Today these words can also describe our lives as we echo them with St. Paul, if our hearts have been touched by the wave of God's love.

Truth No 1: I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ and be found in him. If we are still grappling with garbage, we will know where our heart lies.

Truth No 2: Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. It's no more about doing and fulfilling the rights and avoiding the wrong but living in freedom within the love of God and believing that He is saving us.

Truth No 3: I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Every morning as I wake up I should want to know Christ and not only His glory but his suffering and his death.

Truth No 4: Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. No matter what obstacle I face, I press on, take hold of Christ and move on.

Truth No 5: Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

As one touched by the Lord, I choose to forget what is behind or cherish those memories, but instead I look forward to His work in my life and my home in Heaven, a promise I must believe in.

***Prayer: Abba Father, make that pathway in my life, through the desert of my unbelief and sinfulness that like St. Paul and the woman caught up in your love my life will be transformed and reshaped by you. Amen***

**“You restore my strength. You guide me along the right path****Psalm 23:3**

Daniel 13:41c–62

Psalm 23:1–6

John 8:1–11

Two women are presented in the scriptures today. The first woman did not commit adultery. She is pure in the eyes of God of Israel. Her refuge and protector was her God. She was delivered from the false accusation and was given life instead of the death sentence.

The contextual truth is; Israel was a male dominant society. Therefore the two judges who lusted against the beautiful woman, could not handle her rejection of them and sentenced her to death out of fury and humiliation. God rose up for her. God himself became her defender and the wise man Daniel was stirred up to speak on behalf of this innocent woman.

Wisdom par excellence, Lord Jesus came face to face in a challenge near the temple area. The scripture says the Pharisees and the scribes brought the woman who was caught in the very act of adultery. Was she in action with a Pharisee or a scribe? How did a person away from the act come to know that she was committing that sin? This was a plot to trap Lord Jesus. Does it mean that the male who was in the very act of adultery did so in order to trap the Lord Jesus? In this unjust society, the man who committed the very act could have been the one who dragged her to the feet of the Lord Jesus. Fortunately they brought her to the feet of Lord Jesus. If it was the governor or any other official, they also would have used this woman for the same pleasure.

God's mercy is a paradox that we cannot fathom. We assume that we need to be holy and blameless in the eyes of God to be approved by God and man? Indeed it is so at times. But we are dealing with the mercy of God that we, human beings cannot understand.

According to our understanding the woman in the first reading would anyway be saved because she didn't commit adultery and it was a false accusation on her. God would anyway defend her. But what about the woman mentioned in the Gospel? She was caught in the very act of adultery. Could God save her too? God's mercy was shown through Daniel who saved a righteous woman. The Lord Jesus saved the woman who was in the very act of sin. This is the love and mercy of God who has the power to love us with a love that sets us free.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I accept you as my Shepherd, I shall never be in want. Amen.***

**“So Moses made a bronze snake... anyone was bitten by a snake...  
looked at the bronze snake, they lived.” Numbers 21:9**

Numbers 21:4–9

Psalms 102:2–3,  
16–21

John 8:21–30

Both readings today show us the confusion of the people about the identity of God. In the first reading we see the impatience and the complaining nature of the people of Israel as they grow weary of the wilderness experience. They become so consumed by what their human eye perceives and see only the lack.

We then see the hand of God in the permitted affliction of His people when venomous snakes bit many people to death. In seeing the death of their loved ones and the danger to their own lives, the people of Israel finally see the need for repentance and beg Moses to intercede on behalf of them. He instructs Moses to erect the very symbol of destruction, the snake, as a bronze rod of healing and life. All who were bitten by a snake had only to look at the bronze snake, and the word of God says, they lived.

The prelude to today's Gospel passage is that the Pharisees challenged the Lord Jesus to reveal the Father. Just as in the days of the wilderness, the people could not fathom or understand the love of God, in this instance, which was the Lord Jesus, who was in their midst. For God so loved the world that He sent His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16-17)

In the scripture readings is the story of salvation which was same for those in the forty years of wilderness and for those at the time of Lord Jesus and even for today. The Lord Jesus speaks of Himself being lifted up just as the bronze serpent was. Gazing at this love lifted up was all that was required to be saved and to have eternal life.

In these forty days of lent, are we still in the land of the snakes with complaints and lost to the affairs of the world or are we looking beyond the deathly bite of the snake and gazing at the Lord Jesus on the cross. By His wounds we have been healed and given eternal life! In our wilderness moments, let us remember to gaze at the Cross and cry out as the psalmist did. 'Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly' and our God whose identity is Love and Mercy will answer us.

***Prayer: Abba Father, open my blind eyes to see your love on the Cross and believe. Amen***

The truth will set you free.

**John 8:32**

Daniel 3:14–20,  
91–92, 95

Ps. Daniel 3:52–56

John 8:31–42

In verses 31 and 32 of today's Gospel reading the Lord Jesus speaks three specific words to us. They are 'word', 'truth' and 'freedom'.

We seek 'freedom' in our lives. We desire to live a peaceful and problem free life. For that we toil throughout our life. Through our education, profession, marriage and luxurious life, what we finally seek is 'freedom'. On the worldly level some of us may be in a high position. We may have a good name in society, may be wealthy, valued and respected by others. But through these have we really experienced peace and freedom? Let us stop for a moment and look into our hearts.

We will see that our wealth itself has made us poor. Our good name itself has destroyed us. Acceptance and value given by others have made us selfish and egoistic internally. Instead of inner peace and freedom internally our lives are filled with fears, loneliness and dissatisfaction. The reason for this is the false life style that we selected and planned. This has made us slaves. This is the father of the world. This father of the world has blinded us. In John 8:41 the Lord Jesus says, "You are doing the things your own father does." Who is this father? In John 8: 44 He says, that your father is the devil.

Through human acceptance, worldly wealth, without our knowledge the devil creeps into our lives. It hides the 'truth' from us and destroys our freedom. Today the Lord is inviting us. It is enough that we have lived as a sinful woman, prodigal son, Zacchaeus or a Pharisee. "If you understand my 'truth', today that 'truth' will set you free.

How do we know this 'truth'? From where is this 'truth' coming? This 'truth' comes from the 'Word' of God. What is the truth of my identity? What is the meaning of my life? What is the true purpose of my life, here on earth? All these truths are revealed in the Word of God. When I believe that 'Word' and build my life on that 'Word' I will experience His freedom. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were freed from the blazing furnace through this way. We are heirs of this life of freedom. Thus let us decide to let go of the father of this world and believe in the Father of the 'truth'.

**Prayer: Abba Father, have mercy upon our fragile lives. Give us your Holy Spirit to build our life on your Word of 'Truth'. Amen.**

“Whoever keeps my word will never see death”

John 8: 51

Genesis 17:3–9

Psalms 105:4–9

John 8:51–59

Abraham begins public life as a nomad. With no permanent home, He faces many a trial, tribulation and disappointment. Even worse is the fact he is ninety nine years old and bears no son. The Jews believed if one had no son, the perpetuation of their name and life beyond would cease.

It is said that today’s reading was probably written during the Babylonian captivity, to give hope to the captives. Up to that time the experiences of Abraham were narrated by word of mouth. God makes the first move by making a covenant with Abraham, calls him to belong to him and build a close relationship of obedience with him.

Something stupendous happens when he does so. He is privy to the knowledge that this God operates in the realm of doing impossible things. A seemingly impotent man is told that he would have progeny scattered throughout the world. Kings would come from his lineage. The foreign land where he receives insights would belong to his descendants. Abraham believes the impossible. When finally Isaac is born, Abraham’s wife becomes jubilant and cannot believe what’s happening (Gen 21:6).

The Lord is waiting to have such a relationship with us. To be deeply in love with each other. In doing so His word must become embedded in us. We desire to please Him. We then elevate into the realm of the impossible. We can think preposterous and do things unimaginable. We are labelled as crazy like the Lord Jesus. Probably Abraham too would have experienced such hurtful responses.

Lo and behold the one who spoke to Abraham has come. The one who desired a relationship with Abraham and now us, is here. He reveals his divinity. “I AM”. Remember Moses receiving God’s visiting card to show the Hebrews. “I AM” sent me to you (Exodus 3:14).

The Lord speaks something preposterous: “The one who keeps my word will never die”. Just believing this word makes it happen. The Jews think he is possessed for saying so. Abraham rejoiced to see the Lord’s day of fulfillment when Isaac was born and continued rejoicing over the future promises that was coming. God wants us too to do so.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, as I go through my daily journey with uncertainties let me know that with you I am on the road to certainty, fulfillment and life. Amen*

**My God, my rock of refuge, my shield,  
my saving horn, my stronghold!**

**Psalm 18:3**

Jeremiah 20:10–13

Psalm 18:2–7

John 10:31–42

It is a challenge to cooperate with God in doing His will and working out His plan for us. We, Christians, who are baptized in the name of God, are called to this mission. Prophet Jeremiah was chosen while he was in the womb of his mother. That applies to all of us, who are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. We are neither an accident nor has there been a coincidence. We have been created with love, and with a purpose by our loving God.

Prophet Jeremiah had to prophesy against Israel, since it was heading towards disaster. That was his mission from God. The religious leaders and rulers did not accept him or want to hear what he was saying because Jeremiah was uttering negative prophecies against them.

God always chose and sent a prophet to get the people back on track. God loves His people. Therefore this is what our God is doing now. When we give way to temptation, are motivated and led by our superiority / inferiority complexes, weak and unable to move forward and when we are hard pressed and do not know where to turn, God in His mercy sends someone to bring us back to Him.

The words uttered by Jeremiah could be the words of our Lord Jesus, which he whispered silently during His trial. Our Lord Jesus was despised and rejected by the religious leaders. He was constantly provoked by them. The moves He made and the words He uttered were monitored by the authorities of the Temple. Surely, the Lord Jesus being fully human must have sought the comfort and support of God the Father whom he called ABBA.

God chose and called Jeremiah at a time when Israel was falling apart to guide them to act wisely. God sent His only begotten Son to us, not only to do what He says but to accept Him as the Saviour. When we accept the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we receive power to fulfill our God-given mission. The Lord Jesus begins to speak and act from within us when we make our hearts His dwelling place. During persecution and trial, Jeremiah and the Lord took refuge in God. This amazing truth is available for us too. Let us turn to the Lord and seek Him in times of difficulty.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I take refuge in you. Amen.***

## Saturday 19th March    Feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the BVM

### God's destiny and purpose for our lives

2 Sam 7:4–5a,  
12–14a, 16

Ps 89:2–5, 27, 29

Rom 4:13, 16–18, 22

Mat 1:16, 18–21, 24a

On the feast of St Joseph we are reminded of God's destiny for our lives.

In the first reading, God reveals His plan to send His Son, our Lord Jesus, to this world as the saviour of the world. The Glory of Heaven was going to come down to earth, to walk amongst us as a man, to suffer and be crucified.

God chooses St Joseph for the mission of fathering the child Jesus - God incarnate on earth. In the Gospel reading we see St. Joseph's struggle. St Joseph would have had his own plans just like any other bachelor who was just about to marry. That was shattered when the Blessed Mother told him she had conceived, because he knew this child was not his. In that moment God speaks to him and reveals to Him his divine destiny. Jeremiah 1:5 says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart"

St Joseph was set apart for this divine purpose. He was given the choice, and he said 'yes' to the purpose God had for his life. The blessing St Joseph received as a result of his surrender to this divine purpose was twofold. God visited his home in the person of the Lord Jesus. Through St. Joseph, God was able to bring salvation to people. Imagine the happiness he would have experienced.

Today God is reminding us that even before we were born, He chose us for a divine purpose. Each of us has a God-ordained destiny, but we have got stuck and preoccupied with our own limited plans and assumptions. Therefore, because we are not being who we were meant to be, our hearts are empty and happiness seems far away. If we choose today like St Joseph to surrender our lives to God and to say "Lord, not my limited plans but the divine destiny you have carefully thought of and planned for me" and say "yes" to that perfect plan, God will also visit our lives, our homes and He will use us to transform and bless the world we live in. The same happened in the life of Abraham. Through Abraham, God reminds us to hold on by faith to the promises He gives us. The Lord calls us today, to believe and trust so that when we surrender our lives to Him, His divine purpose becomes a reality.

**Prayer: Abba Father, we pray that you will give us the gift of faith today, to trust in Your purpose for us and to surrender our lives fully to You. Amen**

**The Sovereign Lord****Isaiah 50:4**

Isaiah 50:4-7  
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-20  
23-24  
Phil 2:6-11  
Luke 22:14-23:56

Today's first reading reveals a beautiful characteristic of the servant who pleases the Lord. He is awakened every morning. Why? To listen. Who wakes him? The Sovereign Lord. Sovereign means that He is above all people and circumstances. Therefore the servant has a perspective that is different from others.

The Gospels tell us how our Lord Jesus climbed the mountain "to awaken the dawn". Therefore, when he speaks, something beyond mere knowledge, instructions and advice are communicated. The weary, the broken, and the messed up are healed, strengthened and sustained. There is a supernatural anointing upon his words. Not only that, the Lord Jesus has a revelation in his own heart and it sustains him. This revelation gives him the assurance that the Father is Sovereign and that he is not going to let him down. Therefore He responds to those who act hurtfully towards him in a totally unexpected way. He offers His back to those who beat him and cheeks to those who pull his beard. He does not shirk from those who mock and spit at him.

The Lord reminds me that if my words communicate mere head knowledge and fail to sustain the weary, or if the way I treat those who hurt me is no different from those who do not follow the Lord, it just maybe that I do not awaken morning by morning. Even if I do, it just maybe that I do not hear as one who is instructed.

The passion narrative describes the external manifestation of the internal disposition of our Lord Jesus. The events described in today's Gospel are too numerous to be dealt in their entirety, but I'd like to focus on a just a few that struck me as significant.

The apostles witnessed most of the miracles first hand and heard almost every sermon. When they went out two by two, the sick were healed at their hands and demons fled in response to their words. When they distributed food, the bread and fish multiplied in their hands. Yet one of them, perhaps disillusioned, or perhaps concluding that money had a better answer, decided to betray Him. The others, not getting Our Lord Jesus at all, were arguing who the greatest among them was. If I was the Lord Jesus, I would have seen myself as a failure and probably ended up in depression. But how did He respond?

In Lk 22:22 our Lord Jesus says “The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to the man who betrays him! He knew he was being betrayed, and the betrayer was at table with Him. But His eyes were not on the betrayer, they were on His Father in heaven. His Father had decreed the event. His Father was sovereign and had not stepped down from the throne. The betrayer was cursed because he could not see beyond what his eyes could see, what his mind could understand, and what his emotions could feel. He did not have the divine revelation that Our Lord Jesus had, that God was sovereign.

In Lk 22:28 - 29, Our Lord Jesus tells His apostles, who have little or no clue about what is happening “You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my father conferred one on me”. Our Lord Jesus is seeing beyond the logical conclusions He can reach us by looking at His circumstances. He is looking through the eyes of faith. Even though the apostles did not understand the secrets of the Kingdom, just because they spent time with Jesus when he handled crisis, they are conferred the Kingdom. What a powerful statement! During this Holy Week, I too get the opportunity of being with Him during his suffering. What’s more, I learn that when I handle a crisis in the Spirit, those around me are going to be conferred the Kingdom.

Lk 22:31-32 reveals that Satan needed permission from God to “sift” St. Peter. The sovereignty of God is such that without God’s consent Satan wouldn’t have been able to touch St. Peter. Our Lord did not pray that St. Peter would not fall. In fact, the words “when you have turned back” imply that our Lord Jesus had no doubt that St. Peter would fail. He prayed instead that St. Peter’s faith would not fail. Faith in what? Faith in the sovereignty of God over evil and sin. When we have faith in the sovereignty of God, evil attacks, and failures are transformed into events with a divine purpose. St. Peter was to strengthen his brothers and sisters, when he had turned back.

According to the second reading, our Lord Jesus sheds equality with God and takes on obedience. Obedience so that it seems that His own creation had power over him. But God’s ways are different. The act of powerlessness, becomes the one that makes the name Jesus, the name above all names. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, even that of the most cynical, that His way was the best. This is the sovereignty of God; even though it appears that God has failed, God cannot be defeated.

*Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace to climb the mountain and listen like one being taught. May I stand along with Jesus’s suffering this week. May I never lose sight of your sovereignty. Amen.*

**One thing I ask from the Lord that I may dwell  
in the house of the Lord all the days of my life!**

*Psalm 27:4*

Isaiah 42:1-7

Psalm 27:1-3,  
13-14

John 12:1-11

In today's first reading we reflect on the inner journey of the servant of the Lord; who is our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah proclaims that He is directly upheld by God alone; He is the chosen one in whom God is delighted and upon whom God's Spirit is placed on (Isaiah 42:1). Under this deep inner revelation, our Lord Jesus serves and offers His whole life to do the Father's will to the end. He does not live and thrive for human acceptance, authority and self-glory, but instead yields completely to the love of the Father. However, having all this favour of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, "He will not shout or cry out, or raise His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out" (Isaiah 42: 2 -3). The ministry of this servant of the Lord is "to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness!" (Isaiah 42:7).

In the Gospel reading, we directly encounter this ministry of our Lord Jesus. The Lord stops by the house of Lazarus to open the eyes that are blind, to free captives and release those who are sitting in darkness. The Lord Jesus was received to the house of Lazarus as a "guest of honour" and given the foremost place. We can see that various people in this Gospel passage related and connected to the Lord Jesus at different levels. However, for Mary, she had experienced this ministry of the Lord Jesus and was now laying down everything she had before Him. She had found the priceless pearl of the Lord and even her most materially valuable possession meant nothing at the sight of the servant of the Lord. She received the Lord Jesus as the guest of honour into her heart, gave Him the foremost place and worshipped Him as the Lord of her life. The Gospel reading testifies that as a result of her worship, the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (John 12:3), and everyone was blessed.

Today, as I journey into this Holy week, I too desire to receive the Lord into my heart as a guest of honour and give Him the foremost place. The Lord Jesus will minister to me this same anointing. His love will transform me into a worshipper who will become an incense and a servant of the Lord.

***Prayer: Abba Father, let my life be filled with the fragrance of worshipping you and be a blessing to everyone. Amen.***

Where I am going, you cannot follow now,  
but you will follow later

John 13:36b

Isaiah 49:1–6

Psalms 71:1–6b,  
15, 17

John 13:21–33,  
36–38

There are only two more days to the Easter Triduum, the three day period that begins on the evening of Holy Thursday and ends on the evening of Easter Sunday. The intensity of the Lord's inner journey has been felt by us profoundly over the past five weeks. The sweat poured out as blood in the Garden of Gethsemane is going to win us re-entry into the Garden of Eden.

Today's First Reading reveals the battle that went on in the depths of the Servant of God. The prophet Isaiah speaks about the Lord Jesus' experience. The Messiah was clear about His calling received from the Father and had no reservations about His inner response either. Yet, it seemed a total failure. The words of Isaiah 49:4 would have been echoing in the Lord's mind; "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all." (Isaiah 49:4a) Yet His Spirit replied it did not matter at all. "Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God." (Isaiah 49:4b)

We too have to go through rejection and misunderstanding in whatever capacity we have been called to serve. The Lord reminds us that our reward comes from Him and not from those whom we serve. When we do the will of God at home, in our workplace and parish, the Lord reaches out to the ends of the earth through us.

The battle between the mind and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus is revealed in today's Gospel. St John says that the Lord Jesus was troubled in spirit when He spoke to His closest friends about the impending betrayal by one of them. Yet, His Spirit was fully alive and sensitive to the mind of the Father. The paradigm shift took place and the Son was already visualising the Father being glorified in Him and He being glorified by the Father. It was the Holy Spirit who told St. Peter that he could not follow the Lord just then, to where He was going. It is only through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, that our spirit awakens and receives power to follow our Master... to the Cross. The Holy Spirit empowers us to die to our selfishness and ego and to rise to a life in the Spirit, just like He did in the apostles at Pentecost. Not only St Peter, but also all who received the Holy Spirit did ultimately follow the Master to the Cross and eternal life.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, empower us through the Holy Spirit to make a shift in our reality. Amen.*

**The Lord Jesus' focus remained on God and not on His betrayer**

Isaiah 50:4–9a

Psalm 69:8–10,  
21–22, 31, 33–34

Matthew 26:14–25

The First Reading reveals the nature and character of the Lord Jesus. Verse 4 tells us that the Lord was led by God the Father through prayer every morning. He had a relationship with God through which he was able to strengthen the weary. He arose early to pray and learn what the Father taught Him. In turn the Father rewarded Him by awakening His mind, body and spirit to

the plans of God.

The Lord Jesus had an understanding of what was going to happen. He embraced it and the Father gave Him the strength to endure the torture and agony of the cross. Just as He had a relationship with the Father, we are called to have a relationship with our God. When we set aside time for God and develop and nurture a relationship with the living God, He in turn will give us the strength to face the challenges of life. Instead of anxiety or depression in the face of problems, we will have an inner peace and an assurance that God is in control of everything. It is said that prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God and a scourge for Satan. So this morning let us make a commitment to God and sit at His feet morning by morning and expect Him to reveal His plan to us and give us the strength to face the challenges of life.

Today's Gospel reading tells us about Judas' betrayal. While the Lord Jesus was focused on God; Judas was focused on money. Acquiring wealth was his primary aim. Betraying the Lord was a profitable venture. Having read this passage over and again for many years, the good Catholic inside me has always wondered how Judas could have even thought of betraying the Lord. But then the Lord reminded me that even I can become like Judas when I make something or someone more real or important than the Lord in my life.

At the Last Supper, the Lord wanted to lead the disciples into a relationship with God, but instead they were more concerned with the approval of the Lord Jesus that they failed to hear the Lord speak to Judas. Let us be less concerned with the world and more concerned with what the Lord is speaking to us today.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I pray to be focused on You just as the Lord Jesus was. I pray that through each struggle I may experience You in a deeper way. Amen.***

If I do not wash your feet, you will no longer be my disciple.

John 13:8

Exodus 12:1-8,11-14

Psalms 115:12,13,15-18

1 Cor 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

We know that two wrongs don't make a right. If that is true, why do we find God preparing to strike the first-born of the Egyptians in today's first reading? Was that in retaliation to what the Egyptians did to the Hebrews? Or is there more to it that we have missed? There is no argument that the night of the Passover appeared as the wrath of God, a divine act of violence that shook

a super-power.

In the movies we have seen the destruction, the death, the wailing that the Passover left behind. The focus on the death is so much that more than once I have found myself crying with Rameses as he held the body of his young son. What the movies failed to portray was the mercy of God that was hidden behind the apparent destruction that was highlighted. It was the mercy of God that was working to rescue the weak and the helpless who could not help themselves. It was a night when God came seeking those who lived enslaved for generations who had no answer to their lives.

There was however one condition to be met; the houses of the Hebrews had to be marked with the blood of the lamb after they shared in the Passover meal. In other words, being a Hebrew was not enough, the Passover meal and the sign of the blood was essential.

Today most people go through life just like the Egyptians on the night of the Passover; without partaking in the Passover meal, unmarked by the blood of the lamb and exposed to the destruction in the world. Twenty-two years ago, our sister was diagnosed with cancer.

In her desperation she searched for an answer and she found God. She chose to live the rest of her days covered by the blood of the lamb. His blood protected her from things worse than cancer; fears, self-pity, doubts, depression, anxiety... Her heart was filled with inner peace and joy that came directly from God. There were moments she fell into the flesh, acted and reacted in the flesh. But it did not matter to God, for she was marked by the blood of the lamb and that was enough for His mercy and saving grace to be upon her life.

In today's Gospel reading we find the Lord Jesus preparing for the second Passover. St. John writes something significant about the Lord on the night He was betrayed; "Jesus knew that the Father had

given him complete power". Having complete power means there was no one more powerful than the Lord that night. Not the devil, not the Romans, nor the Chief Priests. The Lord Jesus was in complete control of the events that were to follow.

He could have easily changed what was to come; instead He begins to wash the feet of His disciple. He takes the dirtiest, lowliest part of them into His most powerful hands and washes them clean! That night, history repeated the way it did in Egypt; Lord Jesus was taking the lowliest, most unworthy people into His most powerful hands, washing them clean from what had enslaved them and preparing them to a life of freedom. This is the mercy of God that continues even to-date; He takes the dirtiest parts of our lives into His most powerful hands, and washes them clean, making us worthy to enjoy the freedom that comes directly from God.

Just like the Hebrews had to mark their doorposts with blood, there are wo things that we are required to do. We have to give Him the truth of our hearts, the ugly truth that we rather not deal with in the sacrament of reconciliation. As we put our past, our present, our sin into His powerful hands, He washes us clean and makes us worthy for Him to come and live in us through the Holy Eucharist.

Today's second reading confirms this. After He washed the feet of the disciples He gives them bread and wine that has been transformed into His body and blood. Once He cleanses us, He gives us His own blood and body for us to consume, so that just like the bread and wine a transformation will take place in us; physically, mentally, emotionally and our spirit will come alive. Cleansed by the Lord, sealed by His blood we move from our enslavements to a place of freedom that gives us power to wash the feet of others. Washing the feet by not only serving those who do not deserve to be served, but accepting them and loving them to the end, the way the Lord did.

Let us take time to be washed not just with water but in the Blood of the Lamb. In His blood we have completeness. In His blood we have all the answers for life's problems. In His blood all the channels of healing can be opened and all possibilities of healing take place. We are healed from the causes, we are inner healed, our memories are cleansed, our personalities are rectified, our flaws can be chipped away and we can be made complete in the Lord. The easiest would be to sit in His presence and allow the Lord Jesus to minister to us. And as He ministers to us we are transformed into awakened people.

***Prayer: Abba Father, wash me whiter than snow and come and live in me so that I may wash the feet of those you have placed in my life. Amen.***

**He endured the suffering that should have been our's****Isaiah's 53:6**

Ish 52:13–53:12

Ps 31:2, 6, 12–13,  
15–17, 25

Heb 4:14–16, 5:7–9

Jn 18:1–19:42

Golgotha! The place of the skull – a mound resembling a skull! The word used to send shivers down my spine. Was this to be the destiny of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, God's only beloved Son? In the past I would dwell on the physical suffering of Christ and be overwhelmed at the agony of Christ's suffering. But now I journey deeply into the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus and have been led to a new understanding of the meaning of the mystery of the crucifixion.

In the first reading of Isaiah, we see the loftiest expression concerning the redemption reminiscent of 49:1-6 and 50:4-9. They speak of the willing sacrifice of the one who bears the sin of the world on Himself. We stand in amazement, as the prophet spelt out in graphic detail what would happen to the Saviour 600 years later. For many years people sacrificed a lamb believing that it would take away their sin. But John the Baptist pointed to the Lord Jesus as the 'lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world'. The disciples too were wonder struck as the passion of the Lord as revealed by Isaiah unfolded before their eyes.

The Gospel passage opens with the Lord Jesus going past the Kidron Valley (did He avert His eyes from the river running red with the blood of animals sacrificed as an atonement for sin?). Strange that soldiers, guards and weapons were needed to capture one lone carpenter.

We see a new picture of Peter who had the boldness to challenge them by cutting off Malchus' ear! The Lord who had broken down at Gethsamane now filled with the Holy Spirit stands tall and defiantly answers Pilate. Step by step, during His passion, He gives an inner response to all the horrible suffering He underwent – physically, emotionally and psychologically. With bound hands He behaves like a King and shames Pilate who condemns Him. To the shame of the whole human race, people chose to free a robber rather than the sinless One.

At the cross Jesus cuts Himself off from His dearest ties and hands His mother to John who represents all humanity. It is significant that He addresses her as 'Woman' freeing Himself from His human attachment. Just as the fragrance of the alabaster jar filled the whole

room, the sweet fragrance of the broken body of Jesus invades the whole universe.

Does not our hearts break as we read today's Psalm? At no moment during His passion did He question God's will on the cross. He felt abandoned (His descent into hell), but His final words were 'into thy hands I commend my Spirit'. John says 'it is finished', telling the Father that He has totally accomplished His will.

The reading from the Epiphany speaks of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest representative of the people before God. A perfect priest having been tempted in every way. (Forgetting His manhood is as serious as forgetting His Godhead). In Gethsemane He fought the inner urge to escape the cross. I always think that God deliberately made the apostles sleep so that Jesus would rely only on Him. As He surrendered His will, the angels ministered to Him and the Holy Spirit gave Him the courage to face the cross

We need a paradigm shift when we contemplate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Leviticus 19:1-2 says 'be holy as I your Lord Am holy'. Is such a thing possible? But Col. 1:22 says, we have been made holy and blameless by Him. Col. 1:26 says a mystery hidden for ages has now been revealed, 'Christ in us'. It is a good thing to grieve over the physical suffering of Jesus, but it is more important to discover what His Death and Resurrection mean for us. Sin separates us from God and we lead lonely, sad and depressed lives. The repercussions of sin are endless. How good it is to know that Christ pinned both on the cross.

When we accept Him as our Lord and seek His forgiveness, it is freely available. By His precious blood we are washed and made clean. This is why we can call this day 'good'. It is said that grace is what we get when we don't deserve it. Mercy is what we don't get when we do deserve, i.e. the punishment we deserve was taken by Him. Being so burdened by our sin, that God Himself seemed lost. He shared even this suffering with us. This was His descent into hell.

Through His cross and resurrection, He came to live inside us. So we can believe that in His strength, washed in His blood, we can be what our Father expects us to be. Good Friday is associated with much piety and acts of worship. But to make His sacrifice a concrete reality, we need to experience the unfathomable reckless love of the Father and Son to recognize Him in our own hearts and see His face in every person we meet.

***Prayer: Abba Father, let this Good Friday be a new beginning for me. Let me love as you loved, I ask in Jesus' name. Amen***

**The Significance of Holy Saturday**

What is so holy about Holy Saturday? Why is it called Holy Saturday? The word holy in Hebrew means “Kadosh”. It means cannot be compared to anything ever seen or heard before or set apart. This is the same word that the Angels in heaven cry out in the presence of God. Every Time an Angel looks at God they cry out “Holy”. We see the holiness of our God on this Saturday.

God had done something that no one had ever known or heard of. The one who is eternal and has no beginning and has no end had become a normal ordinary human being like us but there was a difference, he was holy and remained holy. He was tempted just like us but remained holy and free from sin. This holiness of God walked among his own creation and when he encountered the suffering, broken and hurting humanity his holiness dispelled the darkness and the sin in them by bringing healing to the sick and setting free the ones who were oppressed by the devil.

The Lord Jesus was fully surrendered to the Father and was the only person in the history of this planet who fully did the will of God. And this led him into the hands of the devil. But Jesus never reacted to the people who crucified him neither did he react to the devil but he responded to the Father. We saw how this had shaken the heart of the Father when the noon day sky turned black and the earth shook and the temple curtain was torn in two.

On Holy Saturday everything was silent. The storm had ended And it looked as if Satan had won and God had been defeated. When God remains silent it's because he has accomplished what he wants to do even though it may not look so from the outside. Because Jesus died holy free from sin and when the sin of this world was laid upon him the power of sin broke under his holiness. Because He is life itself death could not hold onto life. This is what is holy on this Saturday. We learn this from our Blessed Mother whose faith we see on this Holy Saturday. In our own lives if God seems to be silent let us remember that this is the holiness of our God and he already is victorious all we have to do is to believe this with our faith.

***Prayer: Abba Father on this Holy Saturday give us the grace like the Blessed mother to see with our spirituals eyes and not with our natural eyes. Amen***

Let us encounter the Risen Lord!

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17,  
22-23

1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9

Happy Easter! Today many will heave a sigh of relief as the forty days of lent have been completed, the rigors of Holy Week covered and Easter dawned. For many people it is a day of relief and rapture because sacrifices can stop, hours of fasting can end and life can get back to normal.

But there are those who have waited for their spirits to be awakened and the Risen Lord to come alive within their being. For them it is time to fellowship with the Risen Lord with the Four Steps and the words that He shared through the four Gospels and the experiences of the Lord's loved ones.

### **The Risen Lord says Come as you are I love you anyway**

As we look at the word, Mary of Magdela and the apostles were afraid of encountering the Risen Lord. Both the angel and the Lord himself told them, 'Do not be afraid.'

Yes, do not be afraid to come to this Risen Lord. He is glorious, exalted and He says all authority under Heaven and Earth has been given to Him. We are coming to the feet of the Almighty, Sovereign God who has the final say in our lives. No matter what we are dealing with, His word has complete authority over it. No matter how difficult, large or impossible it may seem. He is Lord over everything and we can rest in His presence and like St. Peter who had run back to fishing say, 'It is the Lord'. It is the Lord who is here with me who has called me on this Easter Sunday to spend time with Him.

*My Risen Lord, I come as I am to you, declaring that you are Sovereign over my circumstances and your love for me is unfailing. I choose to sit at your feet, at the feet of the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth and I offer my life to you. Amen*

### **The Risen Lord says Give me the truth of your heart**

The Lord looks into my eyes, offering me something I love like the piece of fish He cooked for Peter and all He is says is, 'Do you love me more than these.'

Yes, my son, my daughter, you have been serving me and showing your love for me and sacrificing so much for me. But, do you love all

of this more than me. One day like I told Peter, you will be old, unable to carry yourself and will you still get your value and love from all that you have achieved. And what if people forget all that you have done. Will you be angry and wretched or will you choose to love me more than all of these.

*My Risen Lord, You know that I have tried to love You more than anything and I declared it but you also know those remnants of yeast like my ego and pride that remain within and rise up unseen to others. Lord this is the truth of my heart, my brokenness and my pride. Wash me in your purifying blood and set me free. Amen*

### **The Risen Lord says Surrender your life to me**

As He looks at us, He sees the doubts, fears and uncertainty and He says, 'Come place your finger in my wounds.'

Lord, I am forced to kneel before your glorious body which still contains the wounds of your Passion. You see my fears and welcome me to lose them in the depths of your wounds and suffering. As I surrender my life to you, I become aware that you died to cover my sin and shame that I might rise to righteousness and a life in you.

*My Risen Lord, I surrender, I surrender all to you, I surrender the lurking fears, pains, doubts, unforgiveness and choose You. Amen*

### **The Risen Lord says Be filled with my Spirit**

The word said the Risen Lord, appeared to them saying, 'Peace be to you, and breathed upon them His spirit.

Lord, what I have been looking for and thirsting for is contained in the Baptism and outpouring of your Spirit upon me. My awakened Spirit has been thirsting for your Holy Spirit. That union is a true Resurrection in my being. In a flash the word says the apostles believed what the Lord has spoken when they encountered His clothes in the tomb. And Lord in a moment I have a new revelation, that I am no longer, lost, abandoned, alone and weak, but I have you, my glorious, almighty Saviour with me.

*My Risen Lord, your Spirit is resting upon me. I want to shout it out that I am no longer alone. You live in me, You walk with me and You talk to me. My life from now on is a journey to Emmaus where You will teach me and reveal to me new things. I welcome your presence my Risen Lord and the intimacy of your Spirit on fire within me. Amen*

Go tell my brothers they will see me.

**Matthew 28:10**

Acts 2:14, 22-33

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

Matthew 28:8-15

The Joy of Easter is upon us. Something startling and stupendous has taken place. A new awakening has dawned. The futility of human history has come to the crossroad of meeting with the certainty of discovering meaning to existence. At long last we can dare to hope and believe that beyond the horizon lies something we can possess. The God of surprises has revealed the greatest of surprises we call resurrection day.

Some women came to the tomb of the Lord Jesus. They expected to see the body of the one crucified. They are told he has been raised from death. They are shocked to be told there is no body, because it's raised. Even we will be shaken up unless our spirits are dormant, awaiting an awakening.

The 'Overjoyed' women are met by the Risen Lord. They can't believe their eyes. They worship him. The Lord tells them to inform "His Brothers" that they would see him in Galilee: their home town. Where is our Galilee where we are able to see him? Is it not our own home, neighborhood, communities and places we work? How so necessary it is to have our spiritual eyes opened, to see him. The spirit of the Risen Lord is so present in each one of us, than we are to ourselves. He knows us more than we can know ourselves. We may be lost but not to him. We can't understand ourselves without knowing him personally. I must therefore discover the ultimate mystery of Christ in me and those around through grace.

With such an encounter, Peter and the Apostles go into Jerusalem. They boldly proclaim the Risen Lord. Having seen the Lord, something had happened to them. They who denied and betrayed, become bold and courageous to proclaim him. Seeing him, they saw his mercy and forgiveness. They saw divinity, for only God could forgive someone so weak and sinful. We are invited to see such a God inviting us to be his best friend. The more weaker and sinful we are, greater will be his mercy and compassion. There could be moments too unbearable or no answer to our endless problem where nobody can help. Just look up at the cross. Hidden within, is resurrection and hidden within is a meaningful life that we seek and yearn for in the Risen Lord.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, Thank you for your resurrected Son. Take me from my tomb to new life. Amen.*

**We wait in hope for the LORD; He is our Help and our Shield****Psalm 33:20**

Acts 2:36–41

Psalm 33:4–5, 18–20,  
22

John 20:11–18

In times of pain and crisis we find it hard to hold onto the Lord. The magnitude of our troubles overwhelms us and we lose sight of His face. The Holy Bible tells us that the Lord is an ever present help in times of trouble and need. But how many of us struggle to believe that He truly is with us.

In today's Gospel reading Mary Magdalene faces a crisis. She cannot find the Body of Jesus. But her grief is short lived. Mary's sorrow soon turns into joy when she hears a voice call out her name.

It was the voice of her "Rabboni" (John 2:16). She had experienced His saving grace in her life and had followed Him wherever He went. She had sat at His feet, immersed in His presence, taking in the life giving words pouring out of His mouth. She had heard the Lord Jesus call her by name before. She was familiar with the sound of His Voice. That is why, even in the midst of the most impossible circumstances, she was able to recognise His voice and believe that it was indeed the Lord who was present in her crisis.

There are some of us, like Mary Magdalene, who diligently seek the Lord, even when it's difficult. We pursue His presence day after day, spending time sitting at His feet, fellowshiping with Him and hearing Him speak to our Spirit through His word. We are familiar with His voice because of the time we invest in communing with Him.

Therefore, when crises, pain, failures and disappointments come, although they momentarily disturb us, we are not shaken. Psalm 16:8 becomes true for us, "I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken." Even in the darkness, our ears are fine tuned to hear and recognize His still small voice strengthening us and assuring us that He never leaves us and that we are never alone. We have received this confidence and security in and through the relationship and trust we have built with Him over time in the secret place.

A perfect example of this is the life of our sister in Christ, Damayanthi, who went to be with the Lord after a long battle with cancer. She helped us to see a new way of dealing with crisis.

**Prayer: Abba Father, give us Your grace to be a people that relentlessly and diligently pursue your presence. Amen.**

...It is true! The Lord has risen...

**Luke 24:34**

Acts 3:1–10

Psalm 105:1–9

Luke 24:13–35

In today's Gospel reading we find two disciples of the Lord Jesus on their way to Emmaus, troubled and downcast. They expected their Master, the Lord Jesus to be a political Messiah, who would liberate Israel from the hands of the Romans. Their hopes and aspirations were shattered. The Lord Jesus was crucified and put to death. Lost in sorrow and in their own shattered expectations they could not recognize the Lord Jesus who was walking and talking to them. It was at the last hour that they recognized the Lord Jesus, as He was breaking the bread. In their pain, sorrow, loneliness and despair the Lord Jesus was right there beside them and the Risen Lord was the answer to their crisis.

Today in the first reading, the man who was crippled from birth wanted some money from St. Peter and St. John. On one hand the crippled man thought that he would never be healed from his infirmity and on the other hand he was satisfied with a momentary solution to his life. We too, when we go through struggle, sorrow, crisis, and sicknesses in our life, find solutions to them and think that they are the only answers. Yet if we lift them up to God, He is waiting to give us much more than that.

As we look within we may not be physically crippled but we may be mentally, emotionally and spiritually crippled. Our hearts may have become a land of captivity because of our brokenness, sinfulness, addictions, fears, financial crisis, sorrow, selfishness and wickedness. We may be condemning ourselves for who we are and think that the only answer to our life is to consume more alcohol, take drugs, have wrong relationships, gamble and hurt our loved ones. This ends up in untold misery to our own lives and to those around us.

Today let us believe that in our pain the Risen Lord is standing beside us, walking with us just as He was with the disciples on the way to Emmaus. He is waiting for us to reach out to Him, just as the crippled man reached out to the apostles. He is the Lamb God who takes away our sins and gives us a new life. Today let us remember that there is power in the name of the Lord Jesus. He is the answer to our life.

***Prayer: Abba Father, We glorify Your Name and our hearts rejoice as we seek your face and strength. Amen.***

**“Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures”****Luke 24:35–45**

Acts 3:11–26

Psalm 8:2ab, 5–9

Luke 24:35–48

The apostles were startled when they saw the Lord Jesus. They could not believe that He - Jesus, their friend and their master, the one who was mercilessly crucified on the cross had now come back to life. It's a beautiful occasion where two realities come face to face; the natural Vs the supernatural.

The sentence of the Gospel that caught my attention was “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures”. When the natural and the supernatural collide, there is revelation, new things that we did not understand before come into being. God gives us the grace to see the same incident, person, or crisis with new eyes. That is what the Risen Christ was doing to them. He gently guided them to see His reality, and His ways of doing things. He was quietly shifting their reality.

Though I have been on this journey for close to 10 years, I could not experience this shift in reality until a couple of years ago. In spite of attending prayer meetings, I was living in a world of my own. I could not believe that the Lord Jesus was alive. It was easier to believe the visible chaos of my life, rather than the invisible God.

Because of this gap I was always limited to the natural ways of thinking. I believed that there was no way out of my internal woundedness, it was reasonable to believe that I would live and eventually die, carrying the burdens and the scars of my past. I would wake up and go to sleep into this reality. It was a difficult place to be – a life without the resurrected Christ. But as years passed, I continued to come to the Lord, confessing my inability to believe that He was alive. One day after a server's retreat I was struck by this overwhelming wave of anointing and I stayed up the whole night praising and worshipping him. That was the day I experienced the living presence of the Risen Christ to the core. It opened my eyes to see the supernatural reality. A reality where the biggest sin and the thickest curse is taken away by the power of the resurrection. In this season of Easter ask the Lord to open our eyes. Ask him to take over the fears and failures of our natural life and replace them with the Joy and peace of the supernatural Kingdom of God.

***Prayer: Abba Father, open my inner eyes that I might see you and experience you in a tangible way. Amen***

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## **Lent is a time to reflect on the cross of Christ.**

Many people reflect on the wounds of Christ, "It is paining here, broken there, they pierced Him," it is a physical reflection. It's a good start but you have to come here: He carried the sin of the world. He carries my broken nature to that cross and nails it and says, "If you believe in this, I will give you a revelation - how I am living inside your broken, sinful nature."

When we experience this mercy and touch, our inner eyes are opened. That is when you can be holy as your Father is holy which we see in others.

Mother Theresa is a great example. In Calcutta, the government did a research and found out that abandoned, poor people who were taken to government shelters tended to die; while those who were taken to Mother Theresa's shelters tended to live. What was the difference. They couldn't fathom it because the circumstances were the same. Then they asked her, "Mother, do you have an answer for this?" She said, "Yes. Every person that is brought here, in their face we see the face of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That is not an intellectual reflection. You can try to see the face and the moment they have a dirty face it's gone. She said, "When we serve them, clean them, wash them, feed them and love them, we are actually giving an inner response to our Master."

The blindness of our world is we are offering these insights without first telling them that it comes from your own intimacy with God. So people are told to see Jesus and the moment their behaviour changes, you lose it all because we ourselves are broken and lost inside. This lent, primarily, forget about others. The best thing you can do for your family is to find God in your own life - because you will be much more loving, much more forgiving, much more accommodating - bringing Jesus to them because He has come in your life.

How do you do that? Go before the Blessed Sacrament and ask the Lord to teach you how:

1. He carried my sin to the cross and because He carried my sin to the cross.
2. He lives inside of me

Find this. Suddenly the shutter will shift and a light will flood you and it becomes real. You will begin to see with your inner eyes, the meaning of the cross, you will begin to feel the love and intimacy of the Father and Jesus and your spirit will become awakened, enabling you to see the Lord Jesus in people and circumstances around you.