



# IN OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

May 2017

Heavenly Father I come to you now in Jesus' name, to repent of all the sins in my life and also in the lives of my ancestors.

Wash me in the precious blood of Jesus. I command all demonic spirits of anger, rage, fear, depression, destruction, torment, guilt, bondage, vagabond, rejection, unforgiveness, bitterness, mind-control, double-mindedness, confusion, passivity, sickness, diseases, pain, fetter and all addictions to food, alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, gambling, or nicotine to leave me in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen

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# On Our Knees In His Hands

*May 2017*

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**Move from dominion to dependence on the Lord!**

Genesis 1:26, -2:3

Psalms 90: 2-4,  
12-14, 16

Matthew 13:54-58

The Book of Genesis speaks of the dominion God gave people over the world and all its creatures. It became the dominion of man, the larger of the sexes to dominate and have his say.

Over the centuries it is mostly men carrying weapons and instruments of destruction that have created tides of destruction that we will have to deal with for centuries to come.

When men and people experience the love of the Lord and the power of God they begin to live a different life. Till then we depend on our perspective to seeing things and our understanding of how we should move forward.

One such person who was always tuned into to what God was saying was St. Joseph. From the little that is recorded in the word of God we find a strange man. A man who did not rely on his gut feeling and instinct but on dreams and visions. While having real emotions of uncertainty and shame he also then adhered to what was shared to him in a dream or vision. Such was the effect of the dreams and visions that each time he made hard decisions, like undertaking hazardous journeys, he made them simply based on the word of an angel.

The learning we can receive is that God chose a humble carpenter to listen to His word and be a coworker in the mighty plan of salvation. Like in the Lord Jesus' time, people never expected low and simple people to be receivers of the direction of God. Even today we expect impressive people to be conduits for God's leading and guidance however God chooses broken and simple people who are shunned by the world and misunderstood by society.

Even in the Lord Jesus' time, people were only concerned with finding the source of the Lord Jesus' power and wisdom. Today people want to know the source of the power in the Community of the Risen Lord. They are trying to unearth techniques and reasons and even we get lost trying to offer answers and reasons. It all comes from relying on the Father's leading and ignoring the voice within our hearts. Let us learn to respond to the Father's bidding like St. Joseph.

***Prayer: Abba Father, help me through your Holy Spirit to fully accept the Lord Jesus as the Lord of my life. Amen***

**You who have received the law that was put into effect through  
angels but have not obeyed it.**

**Acts7:53**

Acts 7:51-8:1

Psalms 31: 3;8, 17-21

John 6: 30-35

The first reading reminds us about the first martyr of the Church and his final words. St. Stephen as he realizes that he had few more minutes on this earth, once again reminds his persecutors to repent and turn to God. The words he speaks need to ring a bell within ourselves. (Acts 7:51-59) 'How stubborn, hard-hearted and deaf you are to God's message...'

As I read these powerful words that were spoken by the Saint I realized that I am no different compared to the people who persecuted him. I might have not physically stoned anyone to death but have behaved in a similar manner as the persecutors. For many years I have been attending Sunday mass, but do I remember the message that was preached and have I put them into practice? Not really in my case. How deaf and stubborn are we to God's messages.

The reading goes on to say that St. Stephen sees the heavens opening and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of the Father. How was he able to see the glory of God? It was because he had a personal relationship with the Lord.

Sometime ago I watched this YouTube video where this particular gentleman spoke about the importance of having a relationship with God. He poses this crucial question. He goes on to say "Assume you have a massive house with many rooms with the best of luxury. One fine day an ordinary man walks up to your door. As you open the door he asks you, is it ok if he could spend the day at your place. The question is, will you take this stranger into your home? Most of us will not? Since we have no clue who he is because we have not had a relationship with him before. If a close friend of mine comes by and knocks at my door and asks the same question will I take him in and make him feel comfortable. I do it since I have a relationship with him and I know all about him.

This is how it will be when we leave this earth and stand in front of the Pearly gates. What will we do God gives us the same reply we gave the stranger. Do we have a personal relationship with God. If not the Lord Jesus Christ is inviting us today to do so.

***Prayer: Abba Father, we pray to give us the grace to listen to your word and put it into practice. Amen***

**“There is no word or sound, no voice is heard, yet their report goes  
forth through all the earth”**

**Psalm 19: 4 - 5**

Acts 9: 1-20

Psalm 117: 1-2

John 52-59

The great chasm, which was the consequence of disobedience of man towards God was bridged with amazing grace and the unfathomable love of God. One man chose to obey God and went unto his death on a cross. The result of obedience was and is life.

The greatest miracle of God is the resurrection of Christ. Love could not permit the Son to be limited to a dead body and to a tomb. God's miracle par excellence took place because of love. When the Father performed the miracle of the resurrection; Jesus Christ resurrected did not go to the Father without visiting His own whom He loved to the end.

In the first reading today we read clear evidence of the resurrection of our Lord. There would not have been good news without the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The resurrection of our Lord changed the hearts of the Apostles. Fear was turned to courage. Sorrow turned into joy. Mourning turned into celebrations.

We see the Abba Father in the Lord Jesus. That is what the Lord Jesus is telling the Apostles. Phillip's request to the Lord Jesus to show the Father was a clear sign of his love and obedience to the Father. We can see the Father when we fix our gaze upon our Lord Jesus. We become wanderers lingering in darkness if we do not turn to the Lord fully and totally. The Jesus Christ resurrected came into the lives of people to bring light to them. That is why the Lord Jesus declares that through Him fulfillment of life is guaranteed. As a consequence we are able to see the Father when we fix our gaze upon Him.

Saints Phillip and James were two men chosen by the Lord to be the pillars and foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, the Church of Christ. In the Gospel narrative today it may seem as if Phillip is asking obvious questions and the Lord Jesus is being direct to him. This shows the human limitation and the Divine Grace. Often like Phillip we interpret God's work according to our human understanding. Yet the scripture clearly shows us that we are on a journey to Holiness and that is only given by God and also received by us only through the grace of God. The Apostles were sent to teach, preach, exorcise and heal. Yet ultimately what became more important was love.

***Prayer: Abba Father, help us to love like you and to pass on that love according to the cry of the Psalmist. Amen.***

“They shall be taught by God”

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 66: 8,9,16,  
17,20

John 6:44-51

People’s hearts of men constantly hunger for things. We hunger for money, we hunger for power, we hunger for lust, we hunger for love, we hunger for happiness and we hunger for freedom. But the greatest and the true hunger is the hunger to be free of sin. It is because of sin that we have lost the relationship with the father and this is why man hunger after things which they think will satisfy them. But to our disappointment we find that these fail to satisfy as they are only a temporary solution. Because the only thing that can satisfy the deepest longing of our hearts is the Father’s love and a relationship with Him.

In today’s reading we see the Ethiopian in his heart knew that what he is looking for is found in the scriptures. He was reading the scripture from the prophet Isaiah which shows the suffering and death of Jesus which took place in that city. This was the answer to his problems this was the answer to what he was looking for. The lamb of God who was slain for his sins, But though he was reading it he could not understand it because his eyes were closed. He did not have the faith to recognize the Saviour whom he was searching for with all his heart. The Lord Jesus says an amazing thing here , he says the ones who come to me are drawn by my Father. “Thank you Jesus!” We seek him because he sought us first.

Today if we are in a situation where seems to be no answer unless God divinely intervene in our lives. we will need to seek him with all r out heart.

Praise God because he has sought us and has pre ordained it that in and through our crisis he will meet Him on the road in the desert (in the heart of the crisis were we are all alone and there is no one to help) He will baptize us fresh living waters and we will come out of that situation rejoicing and praising God. This is because he has fulfilled that hunger in our heart by becoming our food and our bread from heaven.

***Prayer: Abba Father, Thank you for Jesus who is truly my bread. You are my portion in the land of the living. You are my God who sustains my life because you have loved me with an everlasting love that does not depend on me but on your mercy and grace. Amen***

**“The Lord has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”** **Acts 9:17**

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Psalms 19: 2-5

John 14:6-14

Having celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus, we are now in a time of preparing our hearts for the great feast of Pentecost. In today's Gospel proclamation, our Lord Jesus says to us, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.." (John 6:52) Every time we receive His Body and His Blood, His Real Presence comes into our lives. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them." (John 6:56) It is the Risen Lord Himself that makes His home in us.

When the Lord comes into our lives through the Eucharist, He brings with Him the Holy Spirit. "Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22) The first Reading is proof of this fact. In the early church, the celebration of the Eucharist was an essential part of Christian life. Ananias was a person living and breathing the experience of the Risen Christ living inside him. The Lord appears to Him and asks him to Saul in Acts 9:17, "Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." This was the conversion and beginning of the ministry of the greatest missionary of all time.

We have that same calling which is no different. There are 'Sauls' in the society we live in, blind and helpless, waiting for a God encounter, so that God may transform them into 'Pauls' by filling them with His Holy Spirit. God has called us to be carriers of His Real presence. This is not the calling or right of a privileged few but that of every Christian. St. Paul who experiences this firsthand, tells us in Romans 8:11, "The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you."

The same power that conquered the grave lives in You! Let's pray together in expectation, that this Pentecost we will experience a personal renewal and revival in our lives, so that we may cooperate with God hand for His mission for us.

**Prayer: Abba Father, cause the scales that are blinding my eyes to fall away so that I may be used by You in any way that pleases You. Amen.**

**“It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail.  
The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” John 6:63**

Acts 9:31-42

Psalms 116: 12-17

John 6: 60-69

I was challenged to question my purpose of living. The Lord reveals that without a purpose and meaning in our lives we are dead in the spirit. We must know from where we came, what God wants us to do and where we are going. Conscious of this fact we can live purpose driven lives deeply connected to Him. We are invited to an intimacy that transcends our very being into a beautiful state of implicit trust and faith. Whether in crisis or in tremendous joy, he is our Rock and our salvation and our soul rests in God alone. It is the same place of silence that the Psalmist speaks of in Psalm 115. There is freedom there!

In the Gospel proclamation this question is posed ‘To whom shall we go?’ This question remains the deepest expression of our lives for us who serve the Lord. This is in answer to the question our Lord Jesus puts to the Apostles ‘Do you also want to go away?’ This was at a point when many disciples deserted him because the teachings of the Lord were hard. Their minds were closed and they were limited to their own aspirations of what they hoped to receive from the Lord Jesus. He had confused them further by saying ‘no one could come to Him unless it was granted by the Father’. But for those who loved him irrespective of their understanding, they knew he was the only answer to their confusion. They knew he was the ‘Holy one of God.’ This propelled Peter to say, ‘to whom shall we go.’ Our complicated lives are sprinkled with seemingly insurmountable problems. We are clueless how to handle them but have only one answer. It is Jesus! The word of God calls us incessantly to this solution. Our Lord Jesus says in Mathew 11:28 ‘Come to me all you are weary and heavily burdened I will give you rest.’

In the first reading we see a transfigured Peter with a power beyond himself, in the full flowering of his freedom. Freedom means giving oneself totally to something that is greater than what is within the person. Despite the scandal he had become, the remorseful Peter did not give up in despair. The Easter encounter with the Lord Jesus made his heart come alive. The wooing words of the risen Savior ‘Do you love me’ and Peter’s ‘You know that I love you’ broke through the barrier that gave him the freedom to love beyond himself, enter into the Spirit experience and give of himself to others totally.

***Prayer: Abba Father as you show me the way, guide me in the path of truth by the power of your word, that I might transcend into your holy presence. Amen***

“His sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

**John 10:4**

Acts 2: 14, 36-41

1 Peter 2: 20-25

John 10: 1-10

When I read today's scripture the first thing that jumped out was God's call to us to begin and continue a relationship with God. The benefits of knowing the Lord intimately are innumerable. When we know His voice speaking to us, we find security, love and contentment. We are able to face hardship or battles, because we know we are not alone. We are guided on the right path and given a mission bigger than ourselves. All this begins by sitting at the feet of the Lord and getting to know Him. Today's readings can help us come to the Lord in prayer.

In today's first reading, St. Peter converts 3000 people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He tells the people that they must know that God has raised the Lord Jesus, whom they crucified. How can they do this? Not by words but by deeds. The people must follow a process. First they must repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord, so their sins will be forgiven. Once their sins are washed away, they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Once they have the Holy Spirit within them, they will be able to evangelize for Christ; not through their words, but through their deeds. This is to emulate the Lord Jesus Himself. During His passion, He did not say a word to those who flogged him, spat on Him, nailed Him to the cross and finally crucified Him. Instead He loved them, prayed for them and blessed them. Matthew 27:54 tells us "When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and the Centurion exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" The Lord did not need to say anything, but he changed the heart of the Centurion by the way He died. St. Peter is telling his new followers that they too can change the hearts of others to follow Christ not by their words and sermons, but when they receive the Holy Spirit; their actions will convert the hearts of many.

Once we have repented for our sins and are baptized in the Holy Spirit we will begin to hear His voice. Today's Gospel proclamation tells us "The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." This shepherd is our Lord Jesus

Christ. When we start a relationship with Him, He says that we will begin to hear His voice and know to distinguish His voice from the voice within us and the voice of the evil one. We can know His voice through the Word of God.

As we read the scriptures, He will give us insights. We will be able to understand what is written in the Bible more clearly. As we continue to walk with God, next, we will receive illumination. This is when the Lord Jesus speaks directly to us or to our problems through the word of God. One word may give us a guide as to what we must do or where we must go. Once we begin sitting at the feet of the Lord day-in and day-out, we will begin to have an intimacy with the Lord. When I first started praying, sitting in the presence of God for 15 minutes or half an hour was difficult. I would watch others and wonder what they were doing. How much could you tell God? But as we wait on Him, the time goes by without even knowing. It is as if we are sitting next to our best friend and listening to their stories and ideas. As our intimacy with the Lord grows, we will find that one hour or two is not enough to spend with the Lord. We will find that God is close to us and we are loved by Him. We will know we have intimacy with the Lord when we refuse to live in sin as it takes us away from God. Intimacy with God holds us back from getting caught in sin and addictions. Fourthly, we will experience union with Christ. The saints achieved this union with God. There was no difference between them and the Lord. The Lord was in them and they were always in the Lord. They lived in His presence 24 hours a the day.

Today's epistle from 1 Peter tells us that those who have a relationship with Christ may face persecution. 1 Peter 2:20 tell us "But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God." When we know God, He calls us to give an inner response to the people and situations around us. When we come face to face with our inability to do this by our own strength, we will rely on God. When the power of God runs through our lives, no sacrifice or inner response is too much because we are not doing it by our strength, but by His.

This is the life-long journey we are called to. It takes a lifetime to know God and to continue a relationship with Him. However, once we make a decision to start a relationship with Him, He will be with us, guiding us till the end of our lives.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I want to know You, I want to hear Your voice, I want to know You more. I want to touch You, I want to see Your face, I want to know You more. Amen.***

**God has called all of us to be a part of His Kingdom**

Acts 11: 1-18

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

John 10: 11-18

Today's readings speak of God revealing Himself to the Gentile people. The Gentiles were any race that was not Jewish. Until the birth of the Church, the Jews believed that God was solely for them and therefore other people – Gentiles - were inferior to them. However, the plan of God included salvation for all people of the earth, no matter what race and for this plan to become real, God had to change the way people thought about divisions between themselves.

In Today's Gospel reading from St. John, the Lord Jesus calls Himself the "Good Shepherd". He wants to take care of us like a shepherd takes care of His sheep. He wants to lead us as a shepherd leads his sheep. In verse 16 the Lord Jesus says "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." The sheep of another pen are the Gentiles. The Lord is saying that he also wants to bring non-Jews into the Kingdom of God. This is accomplished in the first reading.

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter goes to the house of the centurion, a Gentile, and baptizes the whole household into the Kingdom of God. The Other apostles are stunned when they hear what St. Peter has done because no Jew would think of going into a Gentile home, much less eating with Gentiles, for the fear of becoming ceremonially defiled. St. Peter explains to the apostles how God revealed that He had called Gentiles into His kingdom. The Lord could have sent the angel to the house of the Centurion and converted their household. But God had another idea. He wanted to change how the Jews thought. He wanted them to realize that the Messiah was not just for them, but for the entire world.

In Genesis 12:3, God tells Abraham, "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Later God told him, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). In 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, St. Paul says that salvation is due to God's choosing and God's working. God grants salvation to those whom He chose before the foundation of the world no matter what race they belong to.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I thank You for calling the Gentiles into Your Kingdom. I thank you for great saints who took the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Amen.***

**My sheep hear my voice****John 10:27**

Acts 11: 19-26

Psalm 87: 1-7

John 10: 22-30

In the Acts of the apostles a beautiful plan unfolds. Due to persecution, the disciples are scattered and they travel as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. Here they assume that the good news is only for the Jews and limit their preaching to the Jews. But then among them some native people who have been touched by the love of the Lord speak to the Greeks and low and behold miracles take place together with conversions. We have the same problem today. We have been so obsessed and selfish with our religious experience as Catholics that we fail to take the experience to others. Instead of being concerned with questions about only Catholics will go to heaven, we are called to reach out to the Greeks and Gentiles of today.

When the disciples did that it is said that the hand of God was with them so that a great number believed and turned to the Lord. In our churches we are comfortable with our numbers, existing families and parish setups that we do not feel the need to reach out to others. Hence, we never feel or experience the hand of God upon us. We wonder about what is lacking. We are called to marshal our forces and step out. What was Barnabus' response? He went to Tarsus in search of Paul and brought him to Antioch and for a whole year they had meetings with the Church and instructed the people. The result was that many hearts were touched and the people were first called Christians at Antioch.

It seems that the Lord Jesus' heart was also shaken up and stirred. The people were concerned to know if He was the Messiah or not. Today if a lay person breaks the word of God, everyone wants to clarify if that person is a Catholic or not. The Lord Jesus however was focussed on the sheep.

For those thirsting for real answers the Lord says My sheep hear my voice; they follow me and I give them eternal life. They shall never perish and no one shall steal them from me. To snatch them out of the Father's hand is never possible, no one is able. I and the Father are one. Further, we and the Lord are one when we reach out to a thirsting world and the Lord will accompany us with signs and wonders.

**Prayer: Abba Father we pray for the grace to look beyond our boundaries and draw more souls to you. Amen**

“For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.”

John 12:47

Acts 12:24 - 13:5

Psalm 67: 2-8

John 12: 44-50

“For I did not come, to judge the world, but to save it.” If not so, Mary Magdalene who led a sinful life then would not have become a saint today. If not Zacchaeus, who led an unjust, selfish and greedy life would never have got a good life. If not I, who got stuck in the sin of self-righteousness by judging others and labeling them as sinners, would never have admitted that I was a worse sinner than them. All this changed because the Lord Jesus loved instead of judging. That is why He said, “Do not wait until you change. Come as you are. I love you. The world may judge you. Your loved ones may judge you but I will never judge you.”

This love that flowed from his heart saved many from wherever they were, including Mary Magdalene and Zacchaeus. Through it He revealed the heart of the Father to the whole world. The understanding of God of the Old Testament (punishing, judging and vengeful) was totally changed in the New Testament. It was revealed to the whole world that there is a Father who forgives instead of judging and who is merciful and forgiving instead of punishing and being vengeful.

“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.” (John 12:46) When we come as we are; believe in His love; give the truth of our heart to Him and when we belong to Him; through the Holy Spirit that light will flow into our hearts and lift us up from the mud that we are stuck in. We will begin to hear the voice of the Father; Experience His love and protection; enter into an inner journey with Him.

This is the experience of a young girl. When she was small she was raped by her uncle. The resulting inner wound pushed her continuously into wrong relationships. She could not exist without a man in her life. When she finished her higher studies she was trapped in a situation where there was no way out. Her parents tried to get her to the correct path through counseling. This failed. In this struggle she came to a four steps retreat. Years of her sinful life, was laid at the feet of the Lord Jesus. As she surrendered her life during the inner healing service forgave her uncle who raped her. Through the Holy Spirit she entered from darkness to light and was saved.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, Give us the grace to come to you, as we are always, without running to the world seeking solutions for our life. Amen.*

***But there is one coming after me whose sandals  
I am not worthy to untie.'***

Acts 13: 13-25

Psalm 89: 2-3, 21-  
22, 25-27

John 13: 16-20

The readings today seem to be about evangelisation. In the Book of Acts, St. Paul speaks to the Jews and others who are God-fearing about John the Baptist and his heralding of the coming of Jesus. The psalmist proclaims, "For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord" and in John's Gospel, the Lord, after washing the disciples' feet, tells them that "whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

We are four weeks out from Easter and the intensity of the Risen Christ is fading to some. The desire to spread the Good News may not be quite as strong. We may not be very good at evangelism. We fear rejection and we fear being ridiculed for our beliefs. It would be nice if there were some rules or instructions where all we had to do was say something and the person receiving the message would immediately recognize who Jesus is. Instead Jesus says, "go and spread the Good News." There is no fixed script to do so and it needs to be recognized by us in the Holy Spirit in our day-to-day situations that we face in our families, work places and in other places.

If we have a good relationship with Christ, why should we care whether someone else knows who Jesus is or not? We are followers of Christ and Christ commands us to share the Good News. It is our nature to want to share good things that we have discovered. God's love is a gift to be shared, not to store up and keep. We want God's love to shine in us, in those around us and in those who will follow after us.

The Lord Jesus said he came so we could have life and have it to the fullest. Christ brings a joy to life. A joy that we want to share. And when we share that joy, it does not diminish our joy, it expands it.

One of our preachers was sent to the jail to minister to the prisoners. He went there and shared the word of God. Ultimately it shook the life a prisoner who took on the word as a challenge and became a new person and a great example for our faith.

***Prayer: Abba Father, open our spiritual eyes. Break the blindness of our minds caused by the worldly things of this age. Help us to see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Bring us to the point to declare with our mouths, "Jesus is Lord," and to believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we will be saved. Amen.***

**The way to the Father's House**

Acts 13: 26-33

Psalm 2: 6-11

John 14:1-6

The disciples realise that the time with their Master was about to end. Their hearts are troubled and the Lord Jesus is comforting them. John 13:3 says, 'Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God.' Throughout His earthly life the Lord Jesus was in communion with the Father. He reveals to us a new way to live our earthly life. Always, "Not my will but Yours." His mission was to fulfill the will of the Father and yet His eyes were fixed on the way back to His Father's House. To save humanity from the bondage of sin He went through suffering, pain and finally death on a cross. But He knew, His death was not the end. He knew that He would be glorified and He promises His disciples that He will prepare a room for them in heaven to be with Him forever.

In today's Gospel proclamation the Lord Jesus says, "You know the way to the place where I am going." What is the way to heaven? Our Lord Jesus says in John 14,6, "I am the way and truth and life. No one comes to the Father except through me." For the Lord Jesus the way to glory was through the cross. Further, He told His disciples to love one another as He loves them and by that all men would know that they were His disciples. How did He demonstrate this love? To the end He blessed those who cursed Him; He forgave those who did wrong to Him and interceded for those who hated Him. This is the 'way' the Lord Jesus reveals to us as the 'way' to the Father's house.

Today we may be going through suffering, pain, rejection and loneliness because of others and our inner wounds. We may be troubled and sometimes may even complain to God, "Lord, why have you given this cross to me?" But the way to Father's house, the way to glory is the cross and the good news is that in this journey to the Father's house, we are not alone. We can always turn to the Lord Jesus, who is the way, truth & life. He said, "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest." As we turn to Him He will give us the freedom & the power to bless those who curse us, forgive those who do wrong to us and intercede for those who hate us resulting in inner peace and rest. Today, let us turn to the Lord Jesus, for the King of Glory is the way to the Father's house.

**Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to do your will and will alone in our lives. Amen**

**“At least believe it on the evidence of these works I do”**

**John 14:11**

Acts 13: 44-52

Psalm 98: 1-4

John 14: 7-14

In the Gospel proclamation today we see the deep desire of the disciples to know and see the Father God. We can see a subtle hint of exasperation on the part of our Lord Jesus in His answer to Phillip, one of the disciples as he asks the Lord to show them the Father and that would be enough.

The above scenario takes me into a deep and beautiful truth that is taught to us through the Community as a prayer tool and a daily morning reflection known as the “Ten Rememberings” In that we remember that the Lord came to this world and revealed God the Father’s true nature which is Agape Love. How do we know this agape Love of Our Father? It is through the works of His Son our Lord Jesus. The Lord says in John 5:19 that He can do nothing without the Father’s permission. Therefore, the forgiveness, the healings, the exorcising of demons, and many mighty miracles are all a mirror into the Father’s Heart. Therefore today is a reminder to us that the way to the Father’s heart is through the Son our Lord.

Jesus our Lord is the only mediator to God the father. This fact is confirmed again in the revelation of the eighth remembrance as we reflect how The Lord is seated at the Right Hand of the Father and they are discussing about every one of us. A profound truth given in such simple terms. In John 14:12-13, The Lord gives the disciples a great promise that He is going to the Father and everything they ask in His name, He would give them. The word of God is alive and eternal and it is true even for today for us.

This promise of the Lord Jesus to His disciples over 2000 years ago was carried out by the early Church through the apostles including the great Apostle Paul. They proclaimed the Good News boldly in the name of Jesus and today we are Christians because of the mighty works of evangelization done by these Apostles as shown to us in the first reading from the book of Acts.

We also look at our Beloved Mother Mary as we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima. She was one of the greatest and holiest mediators on behalf of us to Christ our Lord, her Son. It is the Mother who has the power to bring us closer to the heart of God.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I thank You for revealing your love to us through Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen!***

**“Rather, it is the Father, living in Me,  
who is doing His work.”**

**John 14:10c**

Acts 6: 1-7

Psalms 33: 1-5, 18-19

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14: 1-12

Today's liturgy elaborates the Mission and Commission of a Christian. As I reflected on today's Readings in prayer, what struck me most was the fact that a Christian cannot be a lone-ranger. In Baptism, our self-centered lifestyle is drowned in the waters of the Baptismal font and out comes a child of God. When God becomes our Father, all human beings become our brothers and sisters and we become a part of a big family, with Christ as its Head. Therefore a Christian, can never live selfishly.

Today's Gospel Reading is a comforting passage where the Lord Jesus tells the apostles and us what He expects from us, once He is gone to the Father. We are not a people following a concept or a philosophy, but those who have an intimate relationship with our Lord and Master. This opens an entirely new way of life. All we need to know is the One who chose to lose everything including His life, to win everything including eternal life back for us. This inheritance and grace is not for us to enjoy and cherish personally. Rather, it calls us to our mission to do the same work that our Lord Jesus did during His earthly ministry. It goes even beyond that, as the Lord promises us that we will do even greater things than what He did, because He is now seated at the right hand of the Father and is interceding for us. The one requirement for this unimaginable and undeserving grace is to believe in the Lord Jesus alone and do as He tells us.

The First Reading tells us about the Christian life. Each person has been called and anointed by the Lord for a specific purpose, whether it is for preaching the Good News or serving at the table. There is one qualification for whatever service we do in the Kingdom of God, and that is to be filled with The Holy Spirit. The Baptism of The Holy Spirit is an essential pre-requisite to be a useful 'vessel' in the Kingdom, to host the Presence of the Lord. Without the Holy Spirit we become people, acting and reacting in the flesh, seeking self-glory and self-fulfillment. Intellectual development or interpersonal skills cannot make a person a useful disciple of Christ. The Holy Spirit was in the center of the lives of the early Christians. They prayed together and ate and lived together as a community. Hence misunderstandings and complaints were ample, understandably. Yet the wisdom of the Holy Spirit prevailed and agreeable solutions were received in the Spirit. Isn't this what we all need in our families, workplaces, prayer

groups and parishes? Today, the Risen Lord challenges us to dare to seek the mind of the Holy Spirit in prayer, and then act accordingly.

In today's Second Reading, St Peter reminds us that we are a chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation and God's special possession, by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Let us pause for a moment and take in the enormity of this identity.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ chose us in love, even before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless. (cf Ephesians 1:4) As He knew that we could never be what we are meant to be, He has given us His glorious grace freely in the giving of His own Son to become a sacrifice on our behalf. Every baptized Christian receives the common priesthood, as he or she becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit and is built upon the Living stone, the Risen Christ. The spiritual sacrifices offered by a Christian, is his or her life, lived for the Lord who gave us life, and a life spent for God's children. In this process, we lose worldly gains and values, but receive the greatest possession, the Lord Himself. We become heirs of everything that belongs to God our Father.

Our Catholic Church is rich in relatively 'unsuitable', 'unworthy' people being lifted up by God to sainthood, simply because they lived this Christian mission and commission accurately. St Alfred (Andre) Besette is one such person who when He first came to the Holy Cross Brothers (in Canada), seemed like the most unsuitable candidate. Being of poor health since childhood and illiterate, he was not able to hold a job for too long because he could not satisfy his employers.

It seemed as if Alfred approached the religious order out of desperation, not vocation. Yet he was prayerful and deeply devoted to God and to St Joseph. The Holy Cross Brothers had no place to offer Bro. Andre, except being sent to a Boys' school in Montreal as a porter. He is quoted to have joked, saying, "my superiors showed me the door, and I stayed there for 40 years." The illiterate weak man, whose job was to answer the door and welcome guests, was great enough for the Heavenly Father, to be elevated to sainthood.

The Lord prefers to use illiterate over well-educated, poor over prosperous, and broken and addicted, over wholesome people. Whom do we prefer or choose?

***Prayer: Abba Father, fill me with the gift of faith and the Holy Spirit, so that I may be a worthy disciple of our Lord Jesus. Amen.***

“Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed”

Acts 14:9

Acts 14: 5-18

Psalms 115: 2-4,  
15-16

John 14: 21-26

In the first reading today we read about healing of a man who was lame from birth. He never walked a day in his life – having been born lame, his legs were probably underdeveloped, the muscle and bones naturally unable to support the weight of his body. But there he sits in the midst of the crowd, listening to Paul. The readings say that Paul looked at him and saw that he had the faith

to be healed – and at Paul’s command, the man does the unthinkable. He obeys and attempts to do what he has never done before, what he is naturally incapable of doing, what he really has no idea how to do – he jumps up and begins to walk.

Reflecting back in my own life, there are multiple areas that I am still waiting God to heal. A sickness that cannot be cured, a brokenness that I am still caught up in, reactivity, anger, faithlessness etc. The same God that healed this man in Lystra, the same God that gave sight to the blind, the same God who raised Jesus from the dead – this is the same God I profess to believe in. His power has not diminished through the ages. He is completely and utterly capable of healing me – but when He looks at me, does He see a faith that is capable of receiving the miracle I pray so much for? Is my faith deep enough or am I still scratching the surface with words, afraid to go deeper into the unthinkable and unknown realms of this faith. Am I asking God for a miracle only to continue doing only what I am comfortable doing and what I know how to do? Is God asking me to get up and move but I am still sitting down, trusting in the weakened and paralysed legs rather than in His power to restore life?

In the Gospel proclamation today the disciple asks Jesus why He chooses to show Himself clearly to the disciples but not to the others. How is it that these few men and women were able to recognise as the Son of God the same man that the Pharisees and scribes saw only as a troublemaker? The Lord explains that it is only because of the love they have for Him. Because of their love for Jesus, simple and unquestioning, free from the fetters of learning and pride, they were able to make room for Jesus and the Father to come dwell in them. Where do I stand today? Do I love Jesus and follow His commandments? Let Jesus see faith in us that we can receive His miracle?

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, we thank you for the faith we see in the word of God. We pray that we will be infused with the same trust and hope in your love. Amen*

**We must go through many trials to enter the kingdom of God****Acts 14:22**

Acts 14: 19-28

Psalm 145: 10-13, 21

John 14: 27-31

Today's reading talks to us about one out of the many struggles St. Paul had to undergo while spreading the word of salvation. Acts 14:19-28 states that, as St. Paul was proclaiming the good news some Jews arrived and turned the crowd against him and they stoned him till they thought he was dead. But after they had left, he stood up and the next day he left for Derbe with Barnabas.

When we read these words we can imagine the positive attitude St. Paul had. After being almost stoned to death he stands up as if nothing had happened and the next day sets out for a new town to continue his evangelization mission. Are we capable of the same behaviour? The reading goes on to say that he encouraged and strengthened the people to remain in the faith. It was he who needed encouragement and strength for the many atrocious things he was facing. But he hardly got sympathy from humans. All he needed was provided to him from above till the very end.

St. Paul tells the people in Acts 14:22 "We must go through many trials to enter the kingdom of God". In these words we can see that he considers it a pleasure and pure benefit when he faces trials because he was convinced that it was the way to enter the kingdom of God. All the apostles and most of the early Christians had the same attitude of St. Paul.

St. Peter says in 1 Peter 4:12 "Do not be surprised at the painful trials you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed". Because of this attitude a small group of people were able to convert a Pagan empire that had lasted for more than 500 years. This attitude was only possible because the Spirit of God was working in them mightily and everyone had a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Today as we read these amazing words from two great saints we need to ask ourselves how we will react to trials that will come our way in the future. Are we going to worry and complain or consider it as pure joy and accept trials from the hands of God.

***Prayer: Abba Father, we pray to give us the grace to face the various trials that come along our way. Help us consider it as a gift from you to grow deeper in the journey, so that you will reveal your glory to us. Amen***

“Remain in me, as I remain in you”

John 15:4

Acts 15: 1-6

Psalm 122: 1-5

John 15: 1-8

What is it that keeps us alive? What is it that infuses strength and power in us? We wake up every morning and go through the day, yet have we ever pondered over this. What is it that actually moves us forward?

With development in every aspect in this world also comes an equal destruction. To increase the quality of life of people, supposedly many things have been found. The result could be the negative of what we expect. Why?

The answer is a human person has both a physical and spiritual side. The world offers us the matter for our physical being but is unable to offer much for the development or the fulfillment of our spiritual being. Therefore what is the answer to this confusion? Who can fulfill our spiritual needs?

The author of life has offered us the answer. We cannot be separated from the source of life. For us believers, the author of life has come as a person and this person has been direct and clear. To the rest of the world this same author of life communicates in different ways. We human persons have become the products of the division of the evil. Therefore we cannot see ourselves as children of one Father and we have separated ourselves from the source of life.

There will be no fruit in us unless we consciously are connected to the source of life. In the Gospel proclamation today the Lord Jesus has made it clear. We need to be connected, or rather, we should have the attitude that we are emerging from this fountain of life. In and through the corrections that come from the Father above is the pruning that the Lord Jesus is mentioning. We are on a journey towards holiness. There again holiness is not achieved by being separated from God. But holiness is the presence of God within us. God who dwells in heaven should have sufficient space to dwell in our hearts also. That is holiness. Christ in me is my holiness.

Division cannot enter into this if we are true disciples of this God who is love. Love never brings division but union. The Apostles knew it well. The first council of the church was initiated to discern the mind of God. They never sought to be divided. Divisions are diabolical.

**Prayer: Abba Father, may every word in the Scripture become clear to us. May we have true union in you and in your church. Amen.**

**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.  
Now remain in my love.”**

**John 15:9**

Acts 15: 7-21

Psalms 96: 1-3, 10

John 15: 9-11

In today's first reading we see how people were merely focusing on the laws and urging the Gentiles to be circumcised so that they could be saved. How shallow their thinking was at that time where on the other hand the Lord Jesus died on the cross to save all people. They were merely focusing on following rules and laws to be cleansed and holy externally, yet failing to see the greatest sacrifice our Lord Jesus Christ made for us. In fact, this clearly reveals that they had no relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God was merely a concept for them. They tried on their own to be Holy because they believed that one had to be holy and worthy to be saved by God. But we understand the truth that we fail miserably. The good news is when the Lord Jesus came, He demonstrated a complete new dimension of our Heavenly Fathers' love, a kind of love that goes beyond all our inequities, sinfulness, brokenness and weakness. By dying on the cross and giving all of us His Holy Spirit, He accepted us as His own and we all belong to His Kingdom. But how many of us are still caught up in that kind of thinking where we merely focus on external appearance/behavior, failing to deal with our internal issues? And we remain the same; struggling with our own selves because of our own broken nature, fighting with others, living a defeated lives till we die. But let us remember today that God decided to love us the way we are, His mercy comes to where we are right now; just the way we are. No matter how deep in a struggle we are, God's love is deeper. When we go to Him, just as we are, we are touched and transformed by His unconditional love and our chains are broken. St. Paul writes this way "we are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. We can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done." This is true for everyone who believes. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.

In the Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus speaks about His love for us. It was a commitment he made because He took all of us seriously when He laid down His life for us. This has not nothing to do with our righteousness or what we deserve. He got what we deserve so that we can get what He deserves.

***Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for sending your only Son to save me and to show me Your unconditional love. Amen***

You are my friends, if you do what I command you.

Acts 15: 22-31

Psalms 57: 8-12

John 15: 12-17

There was this young person who received the God experience recently. Thereafter he began to attend prayer meetings frequently. He was able to carry this experience into his parish. But in the background he had lots of other problems. Recently, this person visited me and asked "Are you all rejecting me now". I said "No, why do you think so?" Even though he accepted my answer

I felt that he was not satisfied. This incident remained in my mind disturbing me. The next day as I sat before the Lord, I brought to His feet. The Lord reminded me about another incident. One day I happened to meet this young person's father and spoke to him. A person who had seen this told me that this is that person's father and said some adverse things about both father and son. I then realised that because of what I heard, I had begun to reject them from within. I felt remorseful, repented and asked the Lord for forgiveness.

In today's Gospel reading, the Lord commands us and says "Love one another, as I have loved you". In the incident mentioned, I could not love that person because suddenly I was looking at his background. I looked at his father. I looked at his past. What the other person said became so true to me. I could not accept that person. I could not love him. This was absolutely conflicting to what the Lord has commanded us. When we preach we often teach how Mother Teresa loved people. Isn't this our main struggle? How do I love my wife or husband? How do I love my father or mother? How do I love my mother-in-law? How do I love this person? How do I love that person?

The Lord has promised to deepen the relationship with us if we do what He commands. He is going to make us His friends. A friend is a person with whom one has a bond of mutual affection. He says you will know all that I do. He is going to give us everything he learnt from His Father. Isn't that the beautiful relationship between our Lord Jesus and the Father? The whole purpose of our lives is this. The Lord is readily waiting to open a door for this beautiful friendship today as we start dealing in love with one another as he has loved us. The window I open in my heart to my brother in love, opens a great eternal door for me. If we start dealing with this truth, all things will become possible.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, as we open our hearts to you today, help us to open our hearts to others. Amen*

“Serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful song”

Ps 100:2

Acts 16: 1-10

Psalms 100: 1-5

John 15: 18-21

When we were told that the parish where we were having our weekly prayer meetings could no longer accommodate us, we knew one thing; if God allowed it, there has to be a very good reason. As we went before the Lord in repentance, fasting and prayer using the Nehemiah’s prayer, the Lord opened doors we never even knew existed. He sent the resources to work in that place. Suddenly

we found we were running out of space. The numbers increased, and so did the testimonies.

Today’s first reading says that the Holy Spirit prevented St. Paul and his companions from preaching the word in the province of Asia. They were even prevented by the Holy Spirit from entering Bithynia. Sometimes, God Himself closes the doors that were open all along to take us in a new direction. We may not understand it nor even like it, but we can be certain that He is taking us to places where people need Him most. Not only is God leading us through opening doors, but He also keeps us on track and guides us in His mission by closing doors.

In today’s Gospel proclamation the Lord speaks of the price we have to pay when we go on mission: expect to be hated. Even though we are not excited about it, somehow we may come to terms with having to deal with the hatred of the world. However, it becomes a completely different ball game when we have to deal with a little rejection or a harsh word from a fellow-Catholic, or a family member or even someone who may be serving with us. We complain, react and we allow the “world” to come into us.

Today we allow the Lord’s words to penetrate our hearts; “But I have chosen you out of the world”. We claim His words over our lives; “I have chosen you out of the world.” As we allow His words to minister to us, what He commanded will happen in our lives and the world will be taken away from our hearts. We will receive a clearer perspective and a fresh anointing that will help us guard our hearts. We will receive the power and the grace to love and serve. Then, the words of the Psalmist will become a reality in our lives; “Serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful song”.

**Prayer: Abba Father, create in me a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me. Amen.**

Those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will  
love them and reveal myself to them

John 14:21

Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17

1 Peter 3: 15- 18

John 14: 15-21

During the time between Easter and Pentecost, the Church calls us to reflect on how God worked in the early Church. It invites us to look into the dream that God has for us.

In today's first reading we are introduced to the aftermath of the persecution at the hands of Saul, who later became St. Paul. We find disciples fleeing Jerusalem and St. Phillip lands in Samaria. I just wonder if the disciples thought that something had gone horribly wrong.

After His resurrection, our Lord Jesus identified Samaria as the next place where witnessing should happen. The persecution was the catalyst that fulfilled this dream of the Lord. The bad things that happen to us have the potential to open new doors and fulfil the plan of God in our lives. Just as much as Philip's suffering became a blessing for the Samaritans, our own sufferings can become a blessing for others in the most unexpected ways.

St. Luke describes how God confirmed the spoken word with signs and wonders. When it is God who sends us on a mission, something beyond human talent and effort comes into play. The favour of God manifests and supernatural intervention takes place, making God come alive among those whom we minister to.

The church in Jerusalem sent St. Peter and St. John to Samaria. The reading does not say why, but I think that it was to check out the authenticity of this unexpected development. It was not that long ago St. John wanted to call down fire on Samaria. In today's reading God uses him to call down a different form of fire from Heaven; The Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In today's Gospel proclamation, our Lord Jesus tells us that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. He goes on to tell them that "But you know him, for He is with you."

The signs and wonders that the Samaritans witnessed and the faith that resulted, set them apart from the world, to be counted among those who "see Him and know Him". We learn that if we have received a miracle or breakthrough in our lives, it is not an end in itself but a calling to a new beginning. When St. Peter and St. John did a simple

human act of laying hands on the Samaritans and prayed for them, God intervenes and fills them with the Holy Spirit. Thus, begins a new chapter in the life of the Samaritans who believed, and the prophesy of the Lord Jesus “He will be in you” is fulfilled.

The Gospel explains that if we love God, we will keep His commandments. The role of the Holy Spirit is to be a Helper in this equation. The final words of today’s Gospel reading say “If he loves me, he will also be loved by my father; I too shall love him and show myself clearly to him.” The Holy Spirit takes the love of God beyond a theological concept, and makes it an experience. He penetrates the cloud that hides the face of God, and reveals the presence of God in our lives and circumstances.

The Gospel proclamation says “I will not leave you orphans. I am coming to you”. Another result of the love of God being made real in us is that the Holy Spirit will facilitate a personal relationship with God. He will become the one close to us, our friend, who will share our most intimate moments, who will share our ups and downs, our disappointments and victories, the one who speaks to us and guides us. Because of our love for him, we will do things for him that we will not do otherwise .

In today’s second reading St. Peter gives some tips to those who have received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Bless God (Praise God) in your heart. Because of what the Holy Spirit reveals in your heart you will always have hope, even in the worst of times. Be ready to share this revelation with others. I can remember during a time the community was going through a lot of difficulty and the future seemed bleak, in prayer the Lord revealed that he had not stepped down from the throne, and that fashioned our response.

Keep your conscience clear, St. Peter says. When you fail and fall, waste no time in being reconciled. St. Peter continues “Remember how Christ died once and for all for our sins.” Never forget that if you did not need a saviour, Christ would not have had to die for us. As you keep on returning, a miracle will happen in your heart and the saviour’s saving power will spring in to action. Then those who are waiting to slander you will be put to shame by your upright behaviour. Our Lord Jesus will lead us to God, for He was raised to life, and He is alive.

***Prayer: Abba Father, baptize us in the Holy Spirit, like you did the Samaritans. Make your presence and closeness come alive in us, so that we, like St. Phillip will become a blessing to those among us. Do this as we face the challenges of living in a world that neither sees you nor knows you. Amen***

You too will be my witnesses for you have been  
with me from the beginning.

**John 15:27**

Acts 16: 11-15

Psalms 149: 2-9

John 15:26-16:4

In today's first reading we see St. Paul and his team leaving to visit a city of significance in the Roman empire. They are going there because they had a leading via a vision to visit this city. Once they get to the city, they do not know where to go, for they are strangers in that city. Yet, what touches me is that they were willing to follow the leading and go. St. Paul and his team deduce that inside a pagan city, if the Jews are to observe ritual cleaning, they probably will gather somewhere along the banks of the river. It is there that they meet Lydia and she is converted.

One morning, a person named Ranjan Anthony was praying in Baticaloa, a city in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. As he prayed, he got this leading "go to Badulla". Badulla is a city in the hill country of Sri Lanka, a journey of about 8 hours from Baticaloa. Following the leading, he got into a bus and went. He had never been to Badulla before. As he approached Badulla, he saw the bell towers of a church, and got off the bus. He saw a few people seated on a half wall, and went and joined them. The people were participants in a retreat and Ranjan joined in the retreat. Later, they were led into a group exercise. In the group that Ranjan was part of, there was a young atheist, who had a huge problem with alcohol. The young man had no intention of participating in the sharing session. But then, Ranjan said a prayer "Lord, he is only a man", and the floodgates opened. This was the beginning of the conversion of the young man. The young man was none other than Bro Lalith, who we now fondly refer to as Lalith Thaththa. I don't think Ranjan had any clue of the move of God that God was beginning through him. I am a witness to this miracle.

The Gospel proclamation tells us that "I will send you the Spirit of Truth, and he will be my witness, and you too will be my witnesses". He goes on to say, that in all appearances, it will seem that everything has gone wrong, but the Holy Spirit will open our eyes to witness something beyond the realm of natural possibilities. For example, how the simple prayer "Lord, he is only a man" could break through the hardened heart of an alcoholic atheist, and through that, build a movement touching the lives of thousands across the world. We are called to be witnesses to the work of the Lord.

**Prayer: Abba Father, baptize us in your Holy Spirit once again, that we may witness your saving hand. Amen**

It is better that I go away!

John 16: 6

Acts 16: 22-34

Psalm 138: 1-3, 7-8

John 16: 5-11

Sometimes I wake up crying. I had been talking to my father in my dream and He seemed so alive. Then I realised that he was no more. The problem is I want him alive for my comfort and convenience. But if he did survive for longer, today he would have been quite old and struggling in a crazy world.

The apostles were also holding on to the Lord Jesus and thinking it was the best thing. But the Lord knew that He had come from the Father and was duty bound to return to Him. That would complete the circle and it would be good for us. The Lord stresses that unless he returns to the Father can the Holy Spirit be poured out on the world.

The entire theme is about believing in the Lord Jesus. In the first reading there is a dramatic experience of Paul and Silas being physically beaten and thrown into prison because of their faith. Their response is to praise God and sing hymns while being in stocks. Ultimately, the Lord responds by causing a massive earthquake. Chains fall off, the doors are thrown wide open and the prisoners have the opportunity to escape and run away. Instead they respond to the shocked jailor who is awe struck and asks the classic question 'How can I be saved' to which St. Paul replies 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your family will be saved.'

In the Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus addresses this very same issue regarding the sin of the world. The world's sin is that they have not believed in Him. It is not anything else. When we do not turn to the Lord Jesus and receive strength, love and mercy from him, we turn to lust, relationships, people, wealth, power and that becomes our sin. We are therefore forsaking the path of righteousness which leads us to the Father. When the Jailor saw the glory of God, he humbled himself and began to seek the Lord. He received the Lord into his heart and home. The Lord also reveals the plan of God and that was that the Lord Jesus must suffer and die and leave the world. We are angry with the Jews, the Roman solidiers and Judas' behaviour but the fact is the Lord had to leave so we could be given the Holy Spirit whom has He describes to us as our Helper. Let us seek the Helper in our inability to believe. The Holy Spirit will bless us with the truth.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, reveal to me the truths of your kindgom through the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit my helper whom you have sent into this world. Amen*

**The Spirit of truth will guide you into the whole truth**

Acts 17: 15, 22, 18:1

Psalms 148: 1-2, 11-14

John 16: 12-15

Given a chance I would have reproduced here the entire text of St. Paul's message in the Areopagus hall in Athens. Every word is so beautiful and his approach to the topic is so warm and well linked.

Before that, in the Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus says that He has many things to tell us but we cannot bear them and that the Holy Spirit

would reveal all these truths to us.

We see the proof of the Holy Spirit's revelation in St. Paul's message. Here was a man once bound by rigid traditions and hell bent on serving justice to erring Jews. His convictions were rock solid and he single-handedly was on his way to more persecution when he was stopped in his tracks by the love and power of the Risen Saviour.

He tells the Athenians...you have so many altars and gods and even one to an unknown God.. and that unknown God is the Lord Jesus whom I intend to make known to you.

Then He takes them one step further. He opens their minds and hearts to the real concept of a living God. It is an eye opener to us. The truth is that our Lord Jesus is not limited to the scared altar and structure of the church but He lives in us and we live and move and have our being in Him. In other words, we are not alone but carry the presence of the Lord Jesus wherever we go and to whom ever we meet. Further we are not just disciples or believers of the Lord but His spiritual offspring.

What does this mean to us? We are invited to be in deep communication with the Lord throughout our day. Yes we choose to abandon Him when we are in sin, but the fact is He is always available to us. As we grow in intimacy with Him, He begins to respond to our prayers and intercession for others. The altar of His presence is in our hearts and the altar lamp is the Holy Spirit shining brightly through the thick and thin of life's experience. And we can sing this song 'Here and now, here in this moment, Here and now, I call to You. All that my searching heart has longed for can be found. Cause you're in this moment here and now. Let the Lord minister to you in this moment as He reveals the truth to you that He is with you, right now.

**Prayer: Abba Father, I thank you for the intimacy you offer me and the various new truths you reveal to me day after day. Amen**

Through the eyes of the flesh, or through the eyes of the Spirit?

Acts 18:1-8

Psalm 98: 1-4

John 16: 16-20

As we go through today's first reading, we see that when Saint Paul initially came to Macedonia and was alone as he spread the good news, he spent more time working. He set aside only the Sabbath for preaching in the Synagogue. Yet after Silas and Timothy came he devoted himself exclusively to preaching and testifying to the Jews.

Looking at this situation in a practical manner, to me it seems as if it should have been the other way around - Saint Paul should have spent more time preaching when nobody else was there. In his letters to the other churches, we see certain instances where despite strong opposition he continued his mission. But there were still other times where there seemed to be minor resistance but he left the place.

The Lord reveals to us that these can only be understood in the Spirit. In a worldly view, it is logical to spend more time preaching when nobody else is around to do that. But the Lord confirms this in Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways".

In the Gospel proclamation, the Lord Jesus fore-warns His disciples that there will be a time when they will not see Him; yet after a while, again they will see Him. When many of us go through a crisis, we lose sight of the Lord. We feel that we need to fix things. We do not have the patience to wait on God. If we overcome our flesh and wait we will see His hand and His plan in our crisis.

St. Gregory VII Pope, is the patron saint of musicians, singers, students, and teachers. He sought to reform the Church and secure its freedom against the intrusion of civil rulers during the 11th century. Born in Tuscany around 1020, he became a monk and served as chaplain. In 1047 he went to France. Later he was put in charge of a historic monastery and later served as an adviser and legate to Pope Leo IX. Though suitable to be a Pope he evaded opportunities and continued as a cardinal. In April 1073, he was finally elected as Pope Gregory VII. His electors praised him as "a devout man ... mighty in human and divine knowledge, a distinguished lover of equity and justice, a man firm in adversity and temperate in prosperity."

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, it's so easy for me to fall into the flesh than to be in the Spirit. Help me to come back to you every time I fall. Amen*

“Sing Praise to God, sing praise, sing praise to our king, sing praise”

Psalm 47: 7

Acts 18: 9-18

Psalm 47: 2-7

John 16: 20-23

Life offers us many choices. We have the freedom to choose what we should do and become. As adults we tend to make decisions even though as children we would not have had much of a choice. But as adults we know exactly what we need in life and what we should become. Our decisions should be conscious choices we make. St. Paul made such a conscious decision after his

encounter with the Risen Lord.

St. Paul's missionary journey was not always smooth sailing but it was an adventurous one without doubt. Every time he was on cross roads His master, our Lord Jesus spoke to him to give him the correct counsel. We see such an occurrence in the reading today. The word which was spoken to him through a vision at night was confirmed by the incident that took place. He was asked to continue the mission in that place and the way was paved to do so.

When we make correct decisions in life our lives too will be guided without any confusion. The reason why we remain confused is because most often we take decisions based on selfish or ulterior motives. We might step out to serve the Lord but on the way get deviated due to some human glory or human gain. Looking at St. Paul we see that our lives can be guided in the correct path when we do things with right motives, like the early church servers and the Saints did.

That's exactly what the Lord Jesus is teaching us through the Gospel today. When we make the right decisions in life to serve the Lord He himself will fight our battles. The clear weighing scale is the joy in our hearts. We could be parents, businessmen/women, professionals or missionaries, the question we need to ask ourselves is; have we taken the mission from the hands of God to bring glory to God?

In the process of bringing up children, meeting up with the deadlines, carrying God's word to the ends of the earth we certainly face challenges. But the challenges are turned into joy when we take the mission from the hands of God. St. Phillip Neri lived such a life. He lived the call which God had for him to the fullest. Such lived lives become witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Prayer: Abba Father, may I live my life to praise you in and through every challenge and difficulty. Let the trials of my life be opportunities for me to glorify you more because we are your children, Amen.*

**“Those who offer praise as a sacrifice honour me, to the obedient  
I will show the salvation of God”**

**Psalm 50:23**

Acts 18: 23-28

Psalm 47:2-3, 8-10

John 16: 23-28

Amos was a shepherd from Judah, called by God to take His message to where major social injustices were taking place. At the time under the reign of King Jeroboam II when Israel was prosperous Amos was called to prophesy against their evil ways. The result was that everyone rejected this prophet.

There are similarities in our lives too. When things go well, when we are both wealthy and healthy we move away from God. Prophets are sent to us, but we tend to judge them and we approve only the recognised ones. Seldom do we remembered that richness and good health come to us from God.

God is clearly saying that goodness and redemption came to us through Him and Him alone. God harps on the fact that He delivered us from our slavery. Yet we have forgotten this truth. We are quick to accept miracles but we abandon the miracle giver. We forget that we are the losers not God. We have to digest the repercussions of our own acts. God does not punish us but we bring punishment upon ourselves by living by our own actions.

We have not been called by God to live according to our own plans. A scribe was a person at the time of Lord Jesus who had more knowledge than an ordinary citizen of Israel. The answer that this scribe got from the Lord Jesus was confusing. The scribe wanted to follow the Lord Jesus, but was given nothingness. Why was this?

The Lord Jesus is calling us to be set free of all kinds of strings in life. We need to be absolutely free from any type of attachment. Knowledge of this world can blind us from the visions of God. We need to be wanderers where knowledge is concerned, We need to behave like homeless people, so that we will be filled with Divine wisdom.

In the Jewish culture the father's burial was an important act. Why does the Lord Jesus says to leave it to the dead itself? Those of us who are heavy laden with the things of this world are dead to the things of God. We are invited to live detached from earthly things that we may enter into the will of God. Are we ready?

***Prayer: Abba Father, I am your child, let me offer praise as a sacrifice, see your salvation, and gain only you. Amen.***

“I am with you always, even to the end of the world”

**Matthew 28:20**

Acts 1: 1-11

Psalms 47: 2-3,6-9

Ephesians 1:17-23

Matthew 28: 16-20

To say they were “overjoyed” when the disciples encountered the Risen Lord is an understatement. They would have been ecstatic because the Lord had overcome death itself. Most probably, everything that happened a few days ago in Jerusalem may not have looked so terrible after all. Having understood the potential of the Son of God, who had overcome death, the next step for the disciples was obvious; restore the Kingdom of Israel. Often we too make the same mistake; when we have an encounter with the Risen Lord, we too expect the Lord to “restore Israel” in our own lives. We want Him to fix all the messed up areas and make our lives perfect.

The Lord however warns the disciples not to get too caught up in their own little worlds: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority”. Instead, He says: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. In today’s context this means, be witnesses in our homes (Jerusalem), where we work and socialize (Judea) and even among people who clearly hate us (Samaria). Unfortunately, most of us do not have a perfect Jerusalem or Judea or Samaria... knowing the challenges to witness, we may give up even before we start. We could have at least attempted to be witnesses if it meant just telling them about what God had done in our lives. I believe when the Lord said “be my witnesses” He meant to imitate Him in the way we live, the choices and decisions we make, and the way we deal with others. Knowing fully well that we do not stand a chance on our own, the Lord assures us “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”.

Today’s Gospel proclamation seems like a repetition of the first reading: “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” I believe, the Gospel teaches us about the second part of witnessing; expanding the territories of the Kingdom of God.

All this sounds interesting and good, but how do we do it? Most of

us parents cannot even get our children to clean up their rooms, let alone go to the nations and make disciples. Yet, history tells us the apostles did just that! They went to the nations and made disciples because the Lord kept to His part of the deal: I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

One look at our own lives, we remember our circumstances, commitments, struggles, the mess that we are in and we wonder how is it even possible? The Lord assures us: “I am with you always, to the very end of the age”. When we respond to His command to witness and expand the territories of His Kingdom, He also works in our struggles, transforming, healing, restoring, and turning curses into blessings so that we can continue in the mission freely. We have seen so many people serving among us, who have been delivered of addictions and transformed, whose marriages have been restored and become greater blessings to those around them. The reason to me is clear, they have not gone home to “rebuild Israel” after the encounter, but have gone out in the mission of Christ and the Lord accompanying them to the ends of the world.

Today’s second reading sums it all up: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe”. When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, their spirit awakens to things that have been hidden all along. Their reality of life changes and instead of living like beggars, they begin to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. They become internally free to make personal sacrifices. They become deeply secure that they no longer have a need to hold on to people or control situations. They discover the hope they have been called to, the riches of His glorious inheritance that is available to them hidden in the mission; “I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

Today we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. His Holiness Pope Francis once said; “The Ascension does not point to Jesus’ absence, but tells us that he is alive in our midst in a new way. He is no longer in a specific place in the world as he was before the Ascension. He is now in the lordship of God, present in every space and time, close to each one of us”.

***Prayer: Abba Father, today I pray in a special way, awaken my spirit so that the cloud that has hidden the Lord Jesus from my sight be removed. Give me the grace to be a witness to the Lord Jesus in my Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria Amen.***

Take courage for I have overcome the world

John 16:33

Acts 19:1-8

Psalm 68: 2-7

John 16: 29-33

The disciples finally think they have got it. They say that they now believe. However, our Lord Jesus loses no time in bursting their bubble. He predicts that they will not be able to stay faithful and each will run back home and leave Him to fend for himself. Yet our Lord Jesus will be faithful. He shares his secret. "I am not alone, for the father is with me." A revelation so real that he is

not dependant on the support of those who are near and dear.

Even in today's world, rationalization is the first and foremost process to accept something as the truth. Our Lord Jesus demonstrates that to us that we do not have to understand first. We can walk in a relationship with God, and he will give us insights that will flow into our understanding, and make us see things in a different light.

Our Lord Jesus tells His disciples "I have told you these things so that in me you will have peace." If I was told that I will abandon the Lord and run away despite my best intentions, there would not be a shred of peace anywhere in my heart. To add insult to injury he goes on to say, "You will have trouble in the world." The Key phrase is "in me you will have peace." Not in knowledge and understanding, not in will power, but in Him. He is calling us to the same relationship that He has with His Father. He goes on to say, "take courage I have overcome the world." It is in knowing Him that we receive the strength and courage to be faithful.

In today's first reading a group of disciples have a conversion experience. They probably are like the disciples who finally understood that though they were intellectually converted, they were leading a powerless life. When St. Paul lays hands on them and prays, the Holy Spirit who was upon St. Paul is transferred on to the disciples. Immediately there is a manifestation of God's supernatural intervention. The reading goes on to say that St. Paul preached and discussed boldly. He seems to manifest the courage that our Lord Jesus spoke about in the Gospel. As we connect the dotted lines, it seems that it is the Holy Spirit who fosters the relationship between a believer and Our Lord Jesus. This fostering brings courage to be faithful.

**Prayer:** *O Holy Spirit, just as our own breath keeps us alive, you are the breath of God who makes God come alive in us. Please make this our experience, especially during our time of personal prayer. Amen*

Allow the Lord to lead you!

Acts 20: 17-27

Psalm 68: 10-21

John 17: 1-11

As we approach the feast of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church today's first reading gives us an important episode from the life of St Paul. Before he personally met the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) St. Paul who was then known as Saul was regarded as one of the greatest persecutors of Christians. But after he met the Risen Lord St Paul became the greatest propagator of Christianity, writing more than ten of the 27 books in the New Testament. These books specially the masterpiece like the letter to the Romans, today continue to inspire and build the faith of hundreds of millions of people all over the world. What St Paul preached may have been forgotten but what he wrote will be read till the end of time and will continue to inspire millions of people.

In the letter to the Romans St Paul tells us those who allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit in doing God's will, will grow in their awareness that they are sons or daughters of God (Romans 8:14). He also assures us that for such people even crises or calamities can be taken by God and turned into great blessings because they do the will of God in any and all situations. (Romans 8:24).

In today's reading St Paul says "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace. (Act 20:22-24) Like the Lord Jesus St Paul who was filled with the Holy Spirit and deeply aware that the Risen Lord was living in him as an assurance of God's love, was ready to face any situation—blessing or calamity. He was aware that even when he walked through raging waters or blazing fires, that even if he faced 'the fires of hell and death was in His sight,' the Risen Lord would be with him through it all.

So he was not afraid. He rejoiced always, prayed constantly and gave thanks in all circumstances knowing that such an attitude was the will of God in Christ for him. That should be our attitude also as we prepare for this great feast.

**Prayer: Abba Father we pray that what happened to St Paul will happen to us all. Amen.**

Thy will be done!

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Isaiah 12: 2-3,4-6

Luke 1: 39-56

Today we celebrate the feast of the visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To me this feast speaks about “waiting on the Lord.” One woman who had waited almost her entire life, and through faith was finally blessed with a son, another who will soon go through a very difficult waiting period trusting in the Lord to make her Son the King of all nations. Both these women demonstrate to us what it means to trust God’s timing and to wait on Him with Hope.

As I write this reflection, I too am in a waiting period. Next week I will be receiving the results of my final exams – the final hurdle in a battle I have been fighting for 9 years! As a child, I was an average student. It was very common for me to get scolded and insulted by my teachers.

Obviously God knew better. Out of nowhere I got selected to a degree programme. It was my dad who persistently pushed me to follow this path. The first year of the degree went smoothly. Disaster struck in the 2nd year when my dad passed away. My heart broke into a million little pieces and I started declining little by little. My life went from bad to worse. I failed the same exam thrice over. I was severely depressed but sadly neither I nor those around me were aware of it. My life took a complete detour and for 3 long years I was lost in the wilderness.

Thanks to my loved ones and the support of the CRL I was gently coaxed to come back to the Lord. My family pushed me to do the exams again. I honestly could not bring myself to study for the exams. The journey was difficult, all my batch mates had completed their studies, and what took them 4 years took me 9 long years. I had to learn to wait on the Lord and believe that His promises will one day come to pass.

By the time this reflection is published I would have got my final results. Whatever the result might be, this time around I won’t be as heartbroken. For I know that “Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!” And no matter how many re-sittings it may take, I chose to wait on the Lord.

***Prayer: Abba Father, I pray for the grace to wait on you. While I wait for you to show your glory, may I cling to your promises in your Word and may I rejoice even when there are no immediate answers. Amen***

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## **Testimony of Hosting the Presence of God!**

*I have been following the new Theme of “Hosting the Presence” with avid interest. The more I dwell on what you say, I realise just how much God relies on people carrying His presence in the world to reach people in Crisis like me. .*

*My mind always goes back to 31st night of December 2006, praying quietly before the dawn of the New Year. My life was about to enter a Chapter full of promise; the Birth of my twins, A new job as consultant upon my return from maternity leave, plans drawn up for a new house to be built. At that midnight hour, I was standing on the cusp of a new life.. Two weeks later I sat dazed amidst the carnage of those dreams and it so happened the year of 2007 was the year I was to become a pilgrim walking a path through a mine field.*

*I always wondered what God must have been thinking in that moment I spoke to Him. Did His heart break for me at how oblivious I was about what was yet to come, I wonder: did He wish with all His heart that I would not break, but endure all that I had to overcome on my path ?? I always wondered how God feels when He knows that His children are about to take that step where they have to walk through hell and not know if we would come out seeing Him or totally blind to Him.*

*In this back ground, the teaching of people “carrying the presence of God” has made me see God's ways in a fascinating new light. You say God needs a host to carry Him through this world and He needs a voice to carry his word, and I see clearly this : Yes He may have let me walk on through that mine field, but never alone. He had those who carried Him alongside me, ring fencing me from the perils of this journey.*

*I can tell you that the lovely people God has surrounded me with (Made up mostly of the people of the CRL Community) have been my touch stone to leading me increasingly towards His presence, they have been the spring in my Desert nurturing me with His word with amazing instinct of knowing exactly what I needed to hear. I have known moments where I would be crippled with terror and insecurity and the next moment to be free by simply having a casual chat or a cup of tea with them. The presence they carry is so strong they don't need to utter a single word or prayer.*

*It is not merely the physical proximity of those hosting God that is at work.. It is also those little moments they are inspired to utter words, messages and gestures that take a life of it's own in bringing God's plans into play. This is how I have experienced this amazing miracle.*

*As someone who has been blessed with a front row seat to God's amazing ways,*

*I can tell you how spectacular it is when God's faithful rally around people like me and how breath taking it is to see How God pulls it all together.*

*I can tell you of the time when my son underwent his 2nd heart surgery. Of that harrowing day when they said something had gone wrong and they had to take him back to the theatre a day before he was to be sent back home. For me it was a moment of blinding crisis of faith. I could not see my way out of the dark despair. Like a person amidst a panic attack not remembering how to breath, I struggled to see God and His hand in this situation. Amidst a feeling of being abandoned, I was disparate to know what He wanted me to do. It is in these moments, in those places where it is no one but God and Me that all the things people like you and those in the community do in carrying God through the world come in to fruition.*

*It is your voice that you lent God that broke through the dark despair gently leading me and coaxing me through the Nehemiah's prayer, ( I have prayed this many times before, but in the midst of a crisis my mind simply is no longer functioning). Once I reached that point of calm blankness, God began the process of consoling, counselling and gently coaxing me in the direction He wanted me to be. The whole of God's counselling was made up a collage of all that the prayer worriers had done over the years and months as they prayed. It was a moment it all came alive in God's purpose. an e mails sent by Jayanath a few years back flashing across my mind's eye that read "God has not vacated His Throne", Mercy Amma's voice that said " Jesus is above what we see or the Doctors see", Gerry's voice singing a part of a worship song, Sonia's voice with part of a testimony, memory of another song sent by Peter, these are but a few of the things of the many voices and actions God pulled together in that moment of need. A few hours later it was the urging of two messages I received from 2 different continents that led me to pray the Rosary with my terrified son, it was the voices and reflections I had followed many years before of a CRL way of the cross that guided me- This saw the atmosphere of the room change from a tangible sense of fear and trauma in to one of peace and calm strength visible in my son. Like refugees depend the Good will of those who donate funds, People like me who walk in the midst of Crisis depend on those who Carry God in to the world. Without their voice, their Spirit led intuitive actions and connectivity to the world that brings down the presence of God , people like me will struggle to find our way to Him,*

*Through this teaching , I have realised something new : The stranger that has walked beside me all this while , nurturing me and counselling me as a navigate this path, is none other than God Himself, My Dad who watched perhaps with fingers crossed and a heavy heart as I stepped off that cliff of anticipation on that 31st Night of 2006. - Nicky Ahamat Watawala*