

*May the  
Word of God  
Enlighten our lives*

A V E

**AUGUST 2022**



23 August

**"We must not fail to help our neighbours, because in them we serve Jesus." St Rose of Lima (1586-1617)**

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### **POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION**

#### **Small Businesses**

We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to continue operating, and serving their communities.

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Where The Mind Is Without Fear

Where the mind is without fear and the  
head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the world has not been broken up  
into fragments

By narrow domestic walls

Where words come out from the depth of  
truth

Where tireless striving stretches its arms  
towards perfection

Where the clear stream of reason has not  
lost its way

Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee

Into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,  
let my country awake.

**Rabindranath Tagore**

Death is a natural and essential part of life. When we experience death in our own family, it could instil in us shock, sadness, denial, despair, anxiety, fear, guilt, loneliness, depression, helplessness etc. At this great moment of loss, one looks for company or at times wants to remain alone.

In today's Gospel, something similar happens with Jesus. Given the truth that Jesus is fully human and divine, He looks for a quiet time and place so as to mourn the killing of John, the Baptist. He needs time to process His own feelings and emotions, the loss of His cousin, His predecessor-the one who introduced Him to the world as the expected Messiah. It is a personal loss for him. However, He knows that His ministry awaits Him the other side. Forgetting about Himself, He attends to the needs of the people who seek Him. He feels compassionate and gives them food. Yes! He gives them spiritual and physical healing. Jesus doesn't stop there, rather urges His disciples to do their bid to ease the need of the people; the disciples, without holding back anything for themselves, follow the footprints of their Master. Jesus, the Son of God, can understand and feel with the people; for He himself is a human and hence knows the pains and sufferings that humans undergo. Yes! We can always have our refuge and solace in Jesus.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, direct our emotions in the right way so that we may use our emotions and feelings constructively.

**01 Mon (St. Alphonsus Liguori)  
JESUS, OUR REFUGE AND SOLACE**

Roshan Toppo, DJS  
Jer 28:1-17  
Mt 14:13-21

*"You give them something to eat."*

**02 TUE (SJ: St. Peter Faber)**  
**WALKING WITH THE LORD**

Rakesh Sharma, SG  
Jer 30: 1-2, 12-15, 18-22  
Mt 14: 22-36

*“Truly you are the Son of God.”*

Today's first reading has three parts in it: a brief introduction, the people of Judah deserve their sufferings and the better times are on the way. After so many dire predictions of terrible things going to happen, a note of hope creeps into Jeremiah's words with the promise of

recovery of the kingdoms – the calm after a storm. Something very similar or literal to this saying happens in today's Gospel, too. Jesus walks on the sea and stills the storm.

We could learn three important things from today's Gospel. 1)The importance of prayer: Jesus completely depends on His Father and it is very evident from the fact that Jesus regularly prays to the Father. He does so prior to His walking on the sea. 2) Love for His beloved: Jesus always cares for His disciples. He comes 'towards' them and strengthens His terrified disciples. He never abandons the followers and is always there for them during their need. 3)Jesus keeps revealing Himself: Jesus wants to teach His disciples that nothing is impossible for the Son of God and that everything that happens in our lives carries with it an opportunity to recognize the hands of God in it. All that we have to do is to only open our inner eyes and ears to know the presence of the Lord in it.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us recognize You even in our troubled times so that we don't feel abandoned, rather feel strengthened and accompanied.

In our Christian life, we develop faith in our hearts by hearing about Jesus from our elders. However, today's readings invite us to have a personal understanding of faith in our own context. St. Anselm would name such personal understanding of faith as 'faith seeking understanding'. In the first reading, Israelites languish in exile amidst tortures and paganism. However, it didn't stop them from hearing the comforting words of Jeremiah and developing faith in their hearts. They believed that God would restore His covenant with His people and He would rebuild the lost city of Jerusalem. Finally, they recognize God as the God of promises and as the God of history in their own context of exile.

In the Gospel, being a gentile, a Canaanite woman develops faith in her heart by hearing the words spoken about Jesus by Jews and others in her town. She recognizes Jesus as the Son of David, just as the Jews do. Nevertheless, Jesus helps her have her own understanding of faith by giving her the children-dogs metaphor. She then recognizes God as the God of justice in her own context, who feeds children at the table and allows dogs to eat the crumbs falling from the table. Jesus admires her faith and grants healing to her daughter. In our Christian life, is our faith still spoon-fed by hearing from our elders about Jesus or do we have a personal understanding of faith?

## 03 WED PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING OF FAITH

Karunakar, SJ

Jer 31: 1-7  
Mt 15: 21-28

*"Woman, great is your faith!"*

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us have a personal understanding of faith so that we truly understand Your mysterious ways of working wonders in and through us.

**04 THU (St. John  
Maria Vianney)  
SHEPHERDING THE  
SHEEP**

Savariappan, SJ

Jer 31: 31-34  
Mt 16: 13-23

*"You are the Messiah,  
the Son of the living  
God."*

The readings and the feast of today invite us to examen how much we love and imitate God in our lives. The first reading exhorts us to trust in God's covenant that God loves us with an everlasting love. He is very much faithful to us of His promise and love. Though Israel was a privileged one, we too share the same privileges as we are the sons and daughters

of God Almighty. He, in turn, demands our love and faithfulness to Him. How far do we keep up His covenant in our day-to-day life?

In today's Gospel, Peter reveals the identity of Jesus with full faith that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of living God. All of us, Christians, are expected to proclaim openly that Jesus is the Messiah just as St. Peter did. We are called to do so through our way of living. Do our faith expressions and way of living really reveal who Jesus is? Today's saint affirmed Jesus' identity through his life and work. St. John Maria Vianney was a man with a vision and Jesus Christ was the centre and purpose of his life. His passion for the reconciliation of souls of his parishioners was simply extraordinary and incomparable. Yes! Just as he professed that Jesus is the true Messiah, through his ministry of administering the sacrament of reconciliation, we are also called to proclaim our faith in Jesus by all means possible.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us recognize You in our life of faith and proclaim You through our very lives.

In Today's Gospel, Jesus lays down the law of discipleship. Let us look at the three conditions of discipleship that Jesus puts forth here. 1) The disciples must deny themselves: If we do what we desire and go after it, we cannot be the disciples of Jesus. As Jesus did His Father's will, so must every Christian do Christ's will. Our wills are anchored to Christ and we have to do what He commands us to do and journey in the path that He has marked for us. 2) The disciples must take up their crosses: In the performance of our duties as Christians, the difficulties, the dangers and the inconveniences we encounter become the crosses we need to carry. We may be ridiculed for our beliefs, yet we need to practise and show our faith. While bearing our crosses, we must not be unduly enthusiastic in pulling down our crosses for ourselves, but rather accommodate ourselves to the crosses which God in His wisdom and mercy allow us. 3) The disciples must follow Christ: The disciples must not only bear their crosses but follow Christ. We must draw not only our direction from Christ but also our strength. Jesus goes before us bearing His cross. We only need to follow Him bearing our own crosses.

## 05 FRI (Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major) THE LAW OF DISCIPLESHIP

Stephan Masih, SCG

Nah 1:15; 2:2; 3:1-3,  
6-7

Mt 16:24-28

*"For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?"*

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us get rid of anxiety, laziness and fear to carry our crosses so that we may change our lifestyle and follow Your footsteps faithfully.

**06 SAT (The Transfiguration of the Lord)  
LISTEN**

Adesh Lakra, SJ

Dan 7: 9-10, 13-14  
2 Pt 1: 16-19  
Lk 9:28b-36

*"This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"*

Today, the Mother Church celebrates the feast of the 'Transfiguration of the Lord'. As we hear from today's Gospel, while Jesus gets transfigured, Moses and Elijah appear along with Him. While Moses represents the Torah (Law), Elijah represents the prophets. The appearance of both Moses and Elijah proves to the disciples that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophet of all prophets. It

means that, just like the disciples, we are also called to see in Jesus the fulfillment of the prophecy and thereby try to realize the Kingdom values. The realization of the Kingdom values will not happen if we, like St. Peter, want to keep staying on the mountain and 'enjoy' the God-experience. Rather, as Jesus tells us in the Gospel, the mountain or God-experience should lead us to the ground or plains where people live so that they also get to have God-experience. Only then, the Kingdom values can be realized and the Reign of God could be brought about.

Today, Pope Francis is talking about the Synodal Church, meaning we all are called to journey 'together'. Just like the transfiguration of Jesus, the Church is in need of this 'synodal-type' transfiguration. Hence, let us ask ourselves the following questions. "Are we ready to do our part in making it possible? How are we going to do that?"

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, grant us Your wisdom so that we don't get stuck with the mountain-experience, rather go down to the plains and make everybody have God-experience.

Readiness in following Christ and His values demands one's clear and right inner disposition of heart. Faithfulness is inevitable in discipleship. The responsibility of every Christian is to be the bearer of the Gospel. To be a bearer of the Gospel is to stand for the Gospel values viz justice, peace and charity. Faithfulness to the values of Christ is a commitment and is shown in our daily struggles. Yes! It is to be faithful to our conscience.

## 07 SUN (XIX SUNDAY OF THE YEAR) TO BE FAITHFUL SERVENTS OF CHRIST

Anish Raj, SJ

Wis 18: 6-9  
Heb 11: 1-2, 8-19  
Lk 12: 32-48

*"Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives."*

Our inner disposition gets reflected in our treatment towards the people at the periphery and the oppressed. From the Gospel reading, our call is to be like the faithful slave whom the master appoints to be in-charge of his fellow slaves and give the latter allowance of food at the proper time. As we are partakers of Jesus's mission, this call summons us with the responsibility of taking care of the poor and the oppressed and to stand for justice and peace at the right time. Our God in heaven will be abounding in love when He sees us being true to our call by taking care of the poor and the needy who are entrusted to us, forgoing our vested interests which lead us to selfishness and exploitation as it happened with the wicked and unfaithful slave.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, grant us the true conscience to stand with the less privileged and to work for justice and peace.

**08 MON (St. Dominic)  
BE JUST**

**Arockia Samy, SJ**

**Ez 1: 2-5, 24-28c  
Mt 17: 22-27**

*“...that we do not give offense to them...”*

“Be just as your heavenly Father is just.” As our heavenly Father judges in truth and fairness and be just to all human race, we also are invited to imitate Him in all aspects of our life. Today’s Gospel talks about being just in the social aspects where ‘just’ means behaving according to the laws, customs and obligations of the society. Going against them is like being unjust.

Thus, Jesus teaches us the greater responsibility of being just, truthful and fair through the small example of paying tax to temple priests. The fairness of Jesus, “that we may not offend them” is also reaffirmed in “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.” Thus, being just and obedient to the laws, customs and obligations of the society is essential and a requirement for establishing justice in a society. Jesus could have denied to pay the tax, but then it would have resulted in going against the values of justice, truthfulness and fairness.

The values of justice, truthfulness and fairness perfectly match the value-system of St. Dominic, today’s saint. He disassociated himself from money and material wealth. He sold all his property and fed the poor and the needy in Spain because they were dying of hunger. For he said to himself, “How can I enjoy the comforts of life while the poor die of hunger and thirst?” Are we disposed enough to do similar acts of love and charity such that justice is done to all?

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, grant us the grace to be just, truthful and fair in all aspects of our life.

Becoming ‘children-like’ in order to enter the Reign of God does not mean to become immature or naïve, but to become ‘little’ by cultivating inner humility and trust in God. While the immediate context refers to children, this phrase can be extended to all who are innocent or vulnerable. Jesus speaks here of guardian angels who watch over human persons from their conception to death. ‘Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life,’ taught St. Basil. God, the Father wills that every human person be saved and enjoy eternal life. Yes! Not one is excluded from His limitless love.

In line with the first reading, St. Gregory, the Great wrote about what the consumption of the scroll meant. He said: ‘The Holy Scriptures are food and drink to nourish us. We do not chew what we drink; when the teaching is clear, we swallow it whole, because we are in need of no further explanation.’ By eating the scroll, then, Ezekiel was taking in God’s Word so that he might communicate it correctly to God’s people. Aren’t we all expected to do what Ezekiel did? For all of us, through the Sacrament of Baptism, are called to partake in the ‘common priesthood’. Today’s saint, St. Teresa Benedicta, did that through her edifying Christian life and she would like that we do the same in our own context.

**Pray and Practise:** Jesus, grant us a childlike heart which is humble and honest so that we may practise what we preach at each moment of our lives.

**09 TUE (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)  
BECOMING  
CHILDREN-LIKE**

Ashwin Kujur, SJ

Ez 2: 8-- 3:4  
Mt 18: 1-5,10,12-14

*“...do not despise one of these little ones.”*

**10 WED (St.  
Lawrence)  
BE A CHEERFUL  
GIVER**

**Sanjay Bodra, SJ**

**2Cor 9:6-10  
Jn12:24-26**

*“... for God loves a  
cheerful giver.”*

Today, the Mother Church celebrates the feast of St. Lawrence, a deacon and martyr of the first century. As a deacon, he was given the responsibility of looking after the administration of the goods of the Church. Prior to his arrest, he gave the Church's belongings to the poor and the sick. He was roasted to death on a gridiron and, at this point

he said to the torturers, “I am cooked on that side; turn me over, and eat.” His true love for Christ affected many and, as a result, many were converted to Christianity.

In the first reading, St. Paul indicates that God is the source of all blessing. God loves a cheerful giver. Our Christian value is to love our neighbour as ourselves; but on the contrary, we accumulate many things and find it difficult to detach ourselves from them. Today, we are invited to be free from all our attachments and become a cheerful giver. St. Lawrence is the perfect example in this regard. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that the grain of wheat has to fall into the ground and must die so as to be transformed into a new plant and bare fruits. If we want to be like that grain of wheat, we need to have deep personal love for Christ, who surrendered himself in suffering and death on the cross and rose into new life.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, bless us with the spirit of St. Lawrence so that we may become more generous and cheerful givers in every way possible.

The world has become blind to values and moralities. It believes in the ‘tit for tat’ attitude. In today’s first reading, God speaks to Ezekiel saying, “You live in the midst of a rebellious people who have eyes to see but do not see; ears to hear but do not hear.” Because they don’t listen to God, they will end up in exile.

## 11 THU (St. Clare) LIVING OUT THE KINGDOM VALUES

David Ekka, SJ

Ez 12: 1-12  
Mt 18: 21 -- 19: 1

*“...have eyes to see but do not see, who have ears to hear but do not hear.”*

The Gospel reading focuses on two aspects - forgiveness and awareness. Jesus teaches us that we need to forgive the mistakes of others or the debt they may owe to us. However in reality, we usually don’t. If we treat others this way, surely, we will be treated back the same way. As Christians, we believe that on the last day, all of us will be judged according to our actions. Jesus is asking us not only to forgive, but also to keep our eyes and ears open like the fellow servants who were aware of the unjust happenings and acted against the injustice done to the servant. Today, most of us simply stand and witness the injustice being done; we don’t do anything about it. However, through today’s readings, God invites us to raise our voices against the injustice done to others and thereby expedite the coming of the Reign of God.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, give us the grace to see and hear what is happening around us and help us strive for justice.

**12 FRI (St. Jane  
Frances de Chantal)  
LOVING  
COMMITMENT**

David Kullu, SJ

Ez 16: 1-15, 60, 63  
Mt 19: 3-12

*“...the one who made  
them at the beginning  
‘made them male and  
female’...”*

Today's Gospel invites us to reflect upon our loving relationship with God and with our fellow human beings. God created us as humans in a very unique way. He made us male and female, to be united with one another and with God. Thus, we need to have a sense of deep commitment and be faithful to each other.

The response of Jesus on divorce takes us to the creation story. He reminds the Pharisees of the purpose of the existence of the humans. God created males and females to be co-creators, for which the deep union of love between the two is a must. The Church, hence, has made marriage a sacrament, as one instituted by God Himself. This is the bondage of love between two persons where both become one and experience the oneness of God. God allows them to live freely to care for each other. However, in course of time, the lack of commitment separates them from their unconditional love and unity. Today, Jesus invites us to reflect on our personal commitment to God and to our neighbours. The commitment we make will surely build a long-lasting relationship. Let us remember our relatives and friends that they may always remain faithful to God and their partners, even in times of difficulties and trials.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, instil in us the sense of strong commitment for one another that we may continue to experience Your loving union in our lives.

In the first reading, Ezekiel calls us to get a new heart and a new spirit. He tells us that repentance is not a matter of bearing guilt as a burden, nor is it the cultivation of remorse or regret. Instead, it is the first step toward transformation. Repentance is an active and deliberate step in a new direction. Therefore, God is open to human repentance and change.

**13 SAT (Sts. Pontian and Hippolytus)  
LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME**

**R. Gnana, SJ**

**Ez 18: 1-10, 13b, 30-32**

**Mt 19: 13-15**

***"Let the little children come to me..."***

In today's Gospel, loving parents wanted to bring their children to Jesus. For, if He would bless them, pray for them and place his hands on them, then surely those children would be protected, healed and blessed. Which parent wouldn't want to? For, they had seen the amazing things Jesus had done for others. In fact, Jesus himself had talked about letting children come to him. Then Why would the disciples of Jesus stop them? They might have felt that the Master's time will be wasted in talking to small children. However, Jesus rebuked His disciples for their attitude towards those children. He told the disciples that little children are what the Reign of God is all about.

In today's world, many of us do not allow children to participate in the Church's activities and sacraments. For we give more importance to worldly things and not heavenly. In this regard, the readings of the day tell us that we are responsible for evangelizing our children.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us help the young children walk in Your way and bless them with good health of mind and body.

**14 SUN (XX  
SUNDAY OF THE  
YEAR)  
TRUST IN DIVINE  
PROVIDENCE**

Oscar Daniel Raj, SJ

Jer 38: 4-6, 8-10

Heb 12: 1-4

Lk 12: 49-53

*"I came to bring fire  
to the earth, and how  
I wish it were already  
kindled!"*

We all might have heard the saying, "No pain, no gain." Following Jesus is not so simple. At times, it may lead us to face division, opposition, resistance and persecution. The world is wounded and broken because some raise their voice for the truth and do what is right. In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us of the consequences that we may have to go through in our lives if we stand for Gospel values. Jesus is the truth for us and it is

not easy to spread the message of God and purge the world's sin. For, the call of God is not career-based, but faith-related.

Fr. Stan Swamy who stood for the rights of the tribal people in Jharkhand endured the suffering, because his spirit was very much united with God. He wanted the truth to be heard by the people. As a result, he had to face death in prison. The world needs truth. The cost of living the truth and spreading it is reflected in today's readings. Jesus is the founder and perfecter of our faith. Let us continue to draw inspiration and imbibe the spirit of Jesus in our lives, too and He will give us the strength to go pass the hurdles thrown in front of us.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, bless us with Your grace so that we may be strengthened to proclaim Your Word through our edifying lives.

Today, the Mother Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption of the BVM. As we know, on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII declared the Assumption of the BVM, which the Church celebrates on 15th August. The dogma of the Assumption states that at the end of her life, Mother Mary was taken, body and soul, into heaven; the corruption of death and the grave did not touch her. Besides, as Indians, we celebrate our Independence Day today.

**15 MON (The Assumption of the BVM, Independence Day of India)  
BELIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE IS POSSIBLE**

Sr. Prerna Dhurwey,  
HCM  
Rv 11: 19a, 12: 1-6a,  
10ab  
1 Cor 15: 20-27  
Lk 1: 39-56

*"Blessed is she who believed..."*

The first reading describes Mary, the Mother of the triumphant Messiah as the one who surrendered herself totally to the salvific mission of God. In return, she is now enjoying eternal glory in heaven. The second reading proves that there is a life beyond the grave – an eternal life which Christ has won for us and which God planned for us from all eternity. If we live our lives according to the Will of God, then we also would inherit that eternal life. In the Gospel, we see an aged barren woman and a virgin giving birth to two great children of the human history. In and through them, God made possible what seemed impossible for the human mind and redeemed the whole world. Yes! When we surrender ourselves totally to the Will of God, God does wonders through us.

**Pray and Practise:** Mary, our Mother, help us totally surrender ourselves to the Will of God such that God may fulfil His salvific plan through us.

**16 TUE (St. Stephen  
of Hungary)  
TRUST IN GOD**

Pankaj Kerketta, SJ

Ez 28: 1-10  
Mt 19: 23-30

*"It will be hard for  
a rich person to  
enter the kingdom of  
heaven."*

One of the root causes for the fall of a human person is pride. As humans, we often succumb to temptations and forget that we are weak and vulnerable. Sometimes, we tend to compare ourselves with God who is the author of our life and know that we, humans, are merely mortals. We cannot but trust in God alone to be free from all kinds of riches and worldly temptations and live an authentic life.

Today's Gospel reminds us that to enter the kingdom of God, we need to detach ourselves from the material things of the world. For, these material things could become the stumbling blocks for us to reach the kingdom of God like the rich man in today's Gospel. We become so attached and entangled with the mundane things/realities in our lives, we lose our focus and go away from God in the process. We begin to trust in our riches and wealth rather than God. Slowly, this material wealth breeds in us the attitude of ego, pride and self-dependence. Thus, we eventually become slaves to earthly and worldly riches. Through today's readings, the Lord invites us to leave behind everything that may pull us away from Him and trust in Him alone so that we may follow Him single-heartedly and enter into His kingdom.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, give us the courage to place our trust in You alone so that we may experience inner peace, joy and tranquillity.

In the first reading, we come to know about the unfaithful shepherds who did not take care of their sheep properly. Prophet Ezekiel uses this metaphor of shepherds and sheep to indicate the kings of Judah and the Israelites. He condemns their kings saying that they were irresponsible shepherds who allowed their sheep to be scattered and to be lost. He goes on to us that Lord Yahweh is the good shepherd and that He will lead them on the right path. It is, thus, an invitation for all Church leaders to be the faithful shepherds of the Lord's sheep that are entrusted to them.

17 WED (St.  
Hyacinth)  
**THE GOOD  
SHEPHERD**

Raju Xalxo, IMS

Ez 34: 1-11  
Mt 20: 1-16

*"I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out."*

In the Gospel reading, Jesus speaks about the generosity of God, who bestows graces equally on everybody. However, we do not experience the same grace which another person is experiencing, because our hearts are not united with God. In the parable, the land owner gives payment equally to all labourers at the end of the day, though some of them worked only an hour. Yes! God is generous here and now and will be on the last day of judgment, too if we fully believe in Him. A person who believes and does the will of God during earthly life will surely get to experience the generosity of God not only here and now, but also in heaven.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, fill us with Your love and grace so that we may always remain faithful to You and get to experience Your generosity here and now.

**18 THU (St. Alberto Hurtado)  
RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL**

Vinod Kerketta, SJ

Ez 36: 23-28  
Mt 22: 1-14

*"Many are called, but few are chosen."*

The feast in today's Gospel readings symbolizes excellence, abundance and happiness that come from being in fellowship with God. Besides, the invitation is for all – the poor, the rich, the downtrodden, the underprivileged and the excluded. The only condition is that they must clothe themselves with love, peace, humility and obedience.

The Pharisees and some Israelites consider themselves as worthy to enter the kingdom of God first; hence, they turned a deaf ear to the Word of God preached by the prophets over the centuries. Thus, they eventually ended up last. Many of us hear the Gospel, but fail to notice the explicit command to respond to the invitation that is in Christ. Mere listening to the Gospel is not enough; one should live out the Gospel values and thereby help others also be united with God. Though the invitation of God is for all, only those who respond to it positively will eventually end up as the chosen and get to taste the fruit of God's salvation. Hence, it is the duty of all of us to listen to the call of God and respond to it in a way that may expedite the coming of the Reign of God. St. Alberto Hurtado, whose feast we celebrate today, did exactly the same when he was called by God. He served the poor until his death and helped them feel the unconditional love of God through his works.

**Prayer and Practise:** Lord, help us respond to Your call fruitfully.

Through today's Gospel, Jesus gives us the two most important commandments to be followed – to love God and to love one another. It is interesting to see how He mentions God as 'your' God rather than 'our' God. To love God with all our heart, mind and soul, we need to see Him as a personal God. He is not someone who is present somewhere high above. He is present in us and with us.

The God who is present in us and with us is also present in our neighbour. Loving God implies loving our neighbour as ourselves. Sometimes it is easier for us to donate some money or some groceries to a distant faceless poor than to love our own family member or a parishioner. Yes! Our neighbour is also one with whom we live in our own family. It is important because, given the kind of world we all live in today, to love and forgive people in our own family has become a herculean task. Our responsibility of loving and helping others doesn't end in providing the poor with some material help. It has to be concretized by showing our love through words and deeds to the people with whom we live. If we love God with all our heart, mind and soul it will naturally lead us to love our neighbours.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us love You and our neighbours with all our heart, mind and soul not only by words but also by deeds.

**19 FRI (St. John Eudes)**  
**THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**

Vivek Vinnarasan, SJ

Ez 37: 1- 14  
Mt 22: 34-40

*"Which commandment in the law is the greatest?"*

**20 SAT (St. Bernard)  
GOD WALKS  
AMIDST US**

Amal Jose, CST

Ez 43: 1-7  
Mt 23: 1-12

*"The glory of the Lord entered the temple..."*

Ezekiel sees a new and marvellous Jerusalem temple in his vision. Yet, it was never rebuilt quite as he saw. After the exile, the temple was reconstructed, but his vision was really about another day and another place of the temple. It's about the day when the LORD will manifest Himself through Christ and dwell with his people. For He will walk among them in the form of the flesh. He

will be called with one of the glorious names among the many prophets and his name will be 'Immanuel' which means "God with us."

In the event of incarnation, God reveals Himself as Jesus to us and identifies Himself with us taking on our sin and weakness. Thus, God continues to work through Jesus Christ on the earth. And after the death of Jesus, the mission continues through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that dwells within us fills us with the power of the Almighty God so that we may imitate Jesus in our lives. It, however, requires that we be open to listen to the prompting of the Spirit so that we may continue the work of God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is an invitation to examine our life whether it is guided by the Holy Spirit or the evil spirit. In order to contribute to the mission of Jesus, we need to follow the commandments of Jesus.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, give us the grace that we may always be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and do Your Will joyously.

In today's Gospel, Jesus is on His journey to Jerusalem. As He journeys, He teaches His disciples about the Reign of God wherein He narrates the necessity to enter through the narrow door. Jerusalem is the focus of Lukan gospel, because it is in Jerusalem the redemptive plan of God will be fully realized in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. The narrow door indicates how much genuine effort is required for the disciples of Christ to walk the path of Christ daily. Jesus himself is the narrow door that leads us to redemption. Walking the path of Christ and entering through the narrow door to participate in the kingdom celebration demand the divine chastisement as the author of the letter to Hebrews exhorts us in the second reading. Hence, let's not be tired of discipline; it only shapes us as sons and daughters of God.

The readings invite us to become God's Children as we are created to be. Prior to having the smell of the sheep, we need to familiarize ourselves with the smell of Christ. Otherwise, the words of the master of the house 'I do not know where you come from' would be the words uttered to us. Thus, it requires a strict follow-up of Christ's actions and thoughts in response to God's salvation that the Gospel promises us today.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, grant us the grace to become the bearers of Your thoughts and actions such that we may imitate You well in our daily lives.

**21 SUN (XXI  
SUNDAY OF THE  
YEAR)  
BEARERS  
OF CHRIST'S  
THOUGHTS**

Bony Mathew, CST

Is 66: 18-21  
Heb 12: 5-7, 11-13  
Lk 13: 22-30

*"Lord, will only a few be saved?"*

## **22 MON (The Queenship of the BVM) RELIGIOUS SELFISHNESS**

Arockia Carmel Raj,  
IMS

2 Thes 1: 1-5, 11-12  
Mt 23: 13-22

*"For which is greater,  
the gold or the  
sanctuary...?"*

In the first reading, St. Paul also prays for the Thessalonians that God may make them worthy of His calling. Just as the sculptor chisels out the unwanted pieces of a rock to discover the beautiful statue that is concealed in it, suffering and tribulations give us the opportunity to grow stronger in our faith. That is what St. Paul is trying to tell us through the first reading today. Whereas in the Gospel, we see Jesus

condemning the religious leaders for their hypocrisy. Jesus is upset with the fact that the religious leaders deny the common people, the children of God, their right to have access to God freely. The words of Jesus, thus, serve as a warning to all the religious leaders, including those of our time, that when they deny people access to God unnecessarily and unfairly, they will be doomed.

Posed with numerous choices, we all are usually tempted to choose the one that pleases us and comforts us more over the rest. Mother Mary, on the other hand, whose queenship we celebrate today, prioritizes her choice differently. She chooses the most difficult, yet the righteous path in the salvation history in order that we all may be saved. Yes! Her destiny could be our destiny if we could imitate her in prioritizing our choices.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, give us grace to hold on to our faith in the most difficult situations of our lives that we may give witness to our faith in persistence and endurance.

Today's readings invite us to examine oneself and one's outlook of the world. Many a time, we wish to change the world by being judgmental of what others do. We want the other to be truthful, just, kind and practising the laws to the extent of no exception. However, when it comes to oneself, we conveniently and easily justify our behaviour and actions according to our flexibility. It is in this context Jesus uses harsh words towards the Scribes and the Pharisees. Yes! We need to first purify our conscience and then try to purify that of our neighbour. If not, not only would we spoil the happiness of the other's life, but also that of ours. God loves us all and He wants all of us to be happy and just. Hence when Christ comes, let us be justified by our works and words and not by our finding fault with others.

God who comes to judge the world will do so with justice. "I am the Lord, who test the mind and heart; I give each man what his conduct deserves," says the Lord. Now is the time to stop practising hypocrisy and being a blind guide. If we could do that, then we can really start loving other people instead of being judgemental of them.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, forgive me for finding fault with others and in the process justifying my acts. Help me love others as You loved me and all of us.

**23 TUE (St. Rose of Lima)  
MY HAPPINESS IS IN THE LORD**

Manohar Kumar, IMS

2 Thes 2: 1-3a, 14-17  
Mt 23: 23-26

*"These you ought to have practised without neglecting the others."*

**24 WED (St. Bartholomew, the Apostle)  
GO BEYOND WHAT IS VISIBLE**

Pravin Jose, SJ

Rv 21: 9b-14  
Jn 1: 45-51

*“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”*

Have you ever made judgments about people based upon outward appearances alone? Have you ever avoided a person because s/he comes from a particular place, caste or creed? To these questions, we would all answer “Yes”; because, we all struggle with prejudiced ideas in one way or the other. Our environment and culture have a great say in this regard.

In today’s Gospel, Nathanael – also known as Bartholomew the Apostle, whose feast we celebrate today – is presented to us as someone who is quite prejudiced. The question, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” emerged out of his prejudice. He could not believe that Jesus is the promised Saviour as He hails from Nazareth, an insignificant land. Most of us, most of the time, are not different from Nathanael in similar situations. The stereotypes we’ve created in our minds over a period of time allow us not to think straight. However, Nathanael didn’t stop there; he took the extra step to go and see for himself Jesus and then decide. The encounter with Jesus brought a tremendous transformation in Nathanael.

Today, Jesus challenges us to go beyond what is visible to the eyes and to encounter the other without prejudice, to see the other the way God sees and to acknowledge and accept the differences of others. By doing so, we will be able to see greater things as promised by our Lord. Are we ready to get rid of the shackles of prejudice?

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, open our hearts and minds that we may be able to see You in all people.

When the opportunity of being the steward of the master's house was given to two different people, they both used the opportunity differently as seen in today's Gospel. As good and evil coexist in this universe, so do people of thesis and anti-thesis. It is in this regard, St. Paul invites us to be enriched by the Word of God, in all speech and knowledge such that every believer in Christ is given a call to be a saint. At the same time, Jesus calls us to be vigilant and ready at every moment of our lives.

## 25 THU (Sts. Louis and Joseph Calasanz) CALLED TO BE SAINTS

Marie John, ADL

1 Cor 1: 1-9  
Mt 24: 42-51

*"... he will put that one in charge of all his possessions."*

In this time of pandemic, how much are we enriched by the Word of God? Is our enrichment of the Word of God helping us to be both vigilant and available to the people in need? If we desire to be attentive to Jesus' presence throughout our life, we must train ourselves to be attentive to our personal and societal needs. Christian concept of salvation is not personal, rather it is about taking others also with us to the path of salvation. As the ardent followers and disciples of Jesus, we all are constantly invited to imitate Jesus in doing our bit to make it possible for the needy and the downtrodden live in a better world.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us get enriched by Your Words and put them into action such that all may live a dignified life.

**26 FRI**  
**ALWAYS BE  
READY**

Ankit John, BXR

1 Cor 1: 17-25  
Mt 25: 1-13

*“Look! Here is the  
bridegroom! Come  
out to meet him.”*

While the first reading speaks of the wisdom of God, the Gospel speaks about the preparedness or the readiness of the five wise virgins. One's preparedness and readiness would help him/her encounter Jesus even during unforeseen moments. We should act like those five wise virgins who prepared themselves for the coming of the Groom. Like the five wise virgins, we should be clear about the purpose for which we are sent. It, hence, means that we should foresee certain difficulties and be ready to counter them. We should strive to be ever more faithful and dedicated with each and every passing opportunity and do our best to be the worthy servants and disciples of the Lord. This way, in everything we say and do, we may glorify the Lord and praise Him always.

Jesus makes clear that there is a real possibility for some people not to be saved, due to their own choices and wishes. The most terrible thing that could happen to any person would be to hear those words from the Lord who created us and died to save us: “I do not know you.” He never forces our will. He never imposes himself on us. Rather, He invites us to make a free choice to respond to His love in obedience. Or otherwise, in the words of St. Augustine, “He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent.”

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us be always ready and prepared to meet You, whatever be the circumstance.

In the first reading, St. Paul counsels us to consider our calling in Christ Jesus. No matter who we are or what we are, everyone shares the same call and that call is to be a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ. The word “missionary” does not refer to only priests, nuns and religious, but to all who are baptized in Christ Jesus. All are missionary by their choice, by their work, by their values and by their very way of living.

## 27 SAT (St. Monica) BE A MISSIONARY

Jophin, GKP

1 Cor 1: 26-31  
Mt 25: 14-30

*“...he gave...to each according to his ability.”*

As it is told in the Parable of the Talents, we all receive grace according to our life situation and mission. The talents that we have may vary from person to person. The only danger is when we do not use it. We have a good example from the life of St. Monica whose feast we celebrate today. She was an ordinary wife and a mother with an extraordinary faith in prayer which, in course of time, turned to be her mission as she became the reason for the transformation of her husband and her son who became a saint later, St Augustine. If we could transform one’s life towards Jesus, then that would be a great missionary work. We only need an unwavering faith in God and go on to live a life based on the Gospel values to do that mission. Let us embrace our call to be a missionary.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us realize our mission and increase our faith that we could bring people to You and spread Your Reign.

**28 SUN (XXII  
SUNDAY OF THE  
YEAR)  
SYNODAL  
BANQUET**

Sr. Swarupa Rani,  
SCN  
Sir 3: 17-18, 20, 28-  
29  
Heb 12: 18-19, 22-  
24a  
Lk 14: 1, 7-14

*“When you give a  
banquet, invite the  
poor, the crippled, the  
lame and the blind.”*

The meals play an important role in any celebration or a banquet. For, a banquet is the place for sharing and nourishment. It is the place to meet all our old and new friends, to share our news and views and strengthen our social relationships with one another. It could also be the place wherein chaos arises due to the different and contradicting opinions expressed on various matters discussed. Most of the time, we end up stressing upon our own opinions rather than listening to those of others.

Generally, we choose to invite the dignitaries, relatives and friends from our own backgrounds according to our status and with whom we feel comfortable. This is the commonality we see everywhere in the society. In contrast to this commonality, today's Gospel passage is challenging us to have a synodal banquet and not to invite those who can repay us. We are called to invite those who cannot repay us as in the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind – the social unfortunates and the outcasts. We need a lot of humility and hospitality to call such people and allow them to speak fearlessly and relate with them freely. Luke's Gospel also advises us to follow the principle of “Nishkama Karma”, i.e., to give with no expectation of receiving in return.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, give us the grace and will to create a synodal society where we include everyone and dine together and accept the homage of the humble.

The Beheading of St. John, the Baptist reminds us that human beings can go to any extent in refusing to change. Oftentimes, we forget the intention behind an act and refuse to obey the message. It is our human tendency to shun whatever is not pleasing to the ears. The good news is always welcomed while the bad news is hated. King Herod perceives St. John, the Baptist as a threat since he was admonishing him to mend his ways. His sentiments are hurt, not the conscience. Thus, instead of being led by the Holy Spirit for a self-transformation, Herod embraces human follies and killed the messenger of God.

**29 MON**  
**(Beheading of St.  
John, the Baptist)**  
**IT TAKES  
COURAGE TO  
CHANGE**

Pelevito Patrick, SJ

1 Cor 2: 1-5  
Mk 6: 17-29

*“...so that your  
faith might rest not  
on human wisdom  
but on the power of  
God.”*

St. Paul, in the first reading, speaks about the primacy of God's power. This power is manifested through the Holy Spirit who guides and strengthens the faith of a believer. For its fulfilment, we need to be receptive. God's message comes in different forms and persons, but we refrain just like Herod because it requires endurance and pain. What better example than our independent India in this regard! Anyone who stands up and speaks for a just cause is silenced, because such information is not good to hear. It disturbs the entire system and exposes the faulty parts. On account of this disposition, we are no less than Herod in our attitude. Let us realize that our mission is to grow into the fullness of Christ, the crucified by changing our ways.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, prompt us to speak the truth and become courageous witnesses of Christ.

**30 TUE (St.  
Euphrasia)  
AUTHORITY WITH  
LOVE**

Oscar Daniel Raj,  
SJ

1 Cor 2: 10b-16  
Lk 4: 31-37

*“...with authority  
and power, he  
commands the  
unclean spirits and  
out they come!”*

In the Gospel, Jesus confronts the evil with authority and saves the person. The authority and power of Jesus stem from God's love. He is deeply rooted in God's love. God mediates His divinity to humanity through the person of Jesus. Jesus trusts His father, chases the evil and saves humanity from sin. Evil does exist in the world, but then evil should not be overestimated; for God is more powerful. It is not about knowing evil more, but trusting God a little deeper. God gives authority to spread the fragrance

of love and remove hatred. Jesus always exercised His authority to promote life in humanity.

All of us hold little authority in our life. How do we exercise it? Whenever the sick and the dying suffered due to the fluctuation of electricity in the city of Calcutta, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta simply walked inside the office of the government officers and demanded immediate help. The Government officers instantly rendered their service. She utilized her authority for service. Most of our words do not carry the weight of love and compassion, but power and position. Today, the world is torn into pieces due to the exercise of power and position for worldly things. Let us keep our authority in check by constantly asking ourselves, “Why do I do what I do?”

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us abide in Your love so that we may become more humane to one another.

In the first reading, St. Paul uses the symbolic language of labour to tell us that God is the ultimate labourer and we all participate in His labour. He puts forward the different ministries in proper perspective to the Corinthians who stand divided among themselves. We are all coworkers; each one has a different ministry to accomplish. The difference is not to contradict, but complement each other to fulfill the plan of God. The humility of St. Paul is highly exemplary when he says, "I planted, Apollos watered." Yes! Each ministry in itself is important. The reason for the division in the Corinthian Church is considering the ministry of Paul as superior to that of Apollos and some others accepting Apollos as superior to that of Paul. It is God who gives the growth, the direction; we are mere stewards and co-creators. Therefore, we cannot divide the grace and the ministry of the Church. If we divide, we divide God himself.

In the Gospel, Jesus integrates the ministries of preaching and healing into one, i.e., establishing the God's Reign. As Christians, we are all sent into the world by the risen Lord, commissioned at the time of Baptism with the divine mandate to preach the love of God in our own ways, as priests, religious, lay men and women, children, youth, teachers, doctors, etc so that we may bring about unity and not division. This way, we are all called to preach God's Reign, not ours.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, give us the grace to reconcile with each other and thereby promote unity.

### 31 WED COMMISSIONED TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS

Arockia Carmel Raj, IMS

1 Cor 3: 1-9  
Lk 4: 38-44

*"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."*



**24 August**

## **St Bartholomew, Apostle**

“Here is a true child of Israel. There is no guile in him.”

Bartholomew/Nathanael answered him :

“Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

**John 1:47-48**

## **COVER**

The Holy Spirit, the all pervading presence of God in Jesus Christ, is symbolised by the dove. The Spirit envelops the entire world with God's grace and action. May the Spirit guide us in our experience of the Divine, enlighten our lives through daily reflection on the Scriptures —



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