

*May the
Word of God
Enlighten our lives*



A V E

MAY 2023



FEAST OF SAINTS

PHILIP & JAMES

May 3, 2021

“We have found the Messiah” - St. Philip, the Apostle

Our Lady
of
Fatima
Pray
for us....



13 May

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION

For church movements and groups

We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.

“Devotion to Mother Mary is not spiritual etiquette; it is a requirement of the Christian life,” says Pope Francis.

**HELP US TO
IMITATE YOU**

Stefan Kisku, SJ

Pope Pious XII promoted the pious practice of honouring Mother Mary in the Catholic Church. Mother Mary, Mother of Jesus and of the Church, plays an important role because she gave new life to the world when she gave birth to

our saviour Jesus Christ. She set a great example of committed “Yes” to the will of God and showed us the way to the Father through her son Jesus. Therefore, this month is precisely devoted to Mother Mary to honour, praise and revere for the significant role that she carried out in her life.

(EDITORIAL)

The three inspirations that we can imbibe and actualise from our Mother Mary are: i) “Yes” to the will of God: she said “Yes” to God’s salvific plan without knowing the consequence. It is a call for us to be open to the spirit of God and engage ourselves in the mission of God solely relying on divine providence. ii) Obedient to God’s word: she boldly carried out what was communicated to her by God and treasured everything in her heart. This shows her faithfulness to God and commitment till the end of her life, which in a way, invites us to be faithful in our work too. iii) Availability: When her cousin Elizabeth was gifted with a child in her womb, she knew that Elizabeth was favoured by God and placed herself at the service of her cousin. It invites us to give our lives to others in all circumstances. Let us ask our dear mother to bless us with these virtues of her as we recite our rosary every day.

The feast of St Joseph, the Worker was established by Pope Pius XII in 1955 to christianize the concept of labour and give all workers a model and protector. By the daily labour offered to God with patience and joy, St Joseph provided the necessities of his holy spouse and the Incarnate Son of God, thus becoming an example to all labourers.

01 MON (St Joseph, the Worker)

WORK OF HIS HANDS

Anugrah Joseph, CST

Gen1:26-2:3

Mt 13:54-58

“Isn’t he the carpenter’s son?”

In the first reading, we see God created the earth and with it all creatures and gave them to man and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, over every living creature that moves on the ground.” We are called to be stewards of nature. God created us and gave us authority over nature to fulfil the work of His hands.

In the Gospel, the people of Jesus’ hometown derided Jesus, saying: “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son?” They are not ready to accept Jesus because of His family background. For them, Jesus is only a son of a carpenter. How could the son of a carpenter become a prophet? Here we can see that Jesus was denied in the name of family background and His and His father’s work. People never saw the other side of His labour. Each job has its own dignity. And the one who does it deserves respect, and we must all work and show the same respect to all. In the epistle to Thessalonians, St Paul exhorts: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”

Pray and practise: Lord, help us to realise every work is important and worth dignity.

2 TUE

ETERNAL LIFE IN JESUS

Ashish Paul,SJ

Acts 11:19-26
Jn 10:22-30

"I know my sheep, and they follow me."

Today's Gospel reading speaks about eternal life. Eternal life is freely given by Jesus. And the relationship that Jesus has with us is like the relationship of the shepherd with his sheep. As the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd, we, the followers of Jesus, are called to listen to Him. The relationship of Jesus with His followers is strongly built on trust, as the sheep trust the shepherd. Therefore, we are called to go beyond outward signs and move closer to experiencing the loving intimacy of Jesus. We are called to listen to Jesus and not to question as the people gathered around Him. When we question God, we are looking for a rational answer. However, we are to trust and have faith in God. Through the same Gospel passage, we are reminded to hear the words of Jesus with our hearts and not merely with our hearing faculty.

At this point, we must also check our attitude and belief about how well we cope with 'not knowing Jesus'. In the Gospel, Jesus is questioned by Jews about His divinity and equality with God. As we look around, do we find people with faith or uncertainty? What works of ours testify that we listen to the voice of Jesus?

However, all of us have to respond to these questions on a personal level. Jesus appreciates our receptiveness to His voice – "hear my voice and follow me." Hence, our invitation is to listen to God and respond in faith.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us listening hearts for the words spoken to us through Your disciples.

The focus of today's reading is to know the Father in and through the person of Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life. But how can one know who the Father is? Jesus says, "If you know me, you will know my Father also."

Do we really know Jesus? Knowing Jesus is a gradual spiritual journey. Today Jesus Himself proclaims: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." What do these words mean to us today? Firstly, Jesus addresses our very human instinct to know where we are going before we start a journey. We are reminded to know and trust in Jesus daily and walk in faith that He is the way. Secondly, Jesus proclaims that He is the truth. Jesus can testify to the truth and teach the truth because He Himself is that truth. In Him, there is nothing false. Each of us is capable of knowing the truth. Lastly, Jesus speaks not about this life but the eternal life. This eternal life we can experience through Jesus here and now. When Jesus refers to Himself as the way, the truth, and the life, He is giving us a better way to live our lives through Him meaningfully.

Pray and Practise: Let us pray for the grace that we may have the interior knowledge of Jesus so that we know Him more interiorly, love Him more ardently and follow Him more closely.

03 WED (Sts Philip and James)

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

Raman Dalvi, SJ

1 Cor 15:1-8

Jn 14:6-14

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

**04 THU (St Jose
Rubio)
HAPPINESS IN THE
LORD**

Borson Hembrom, SJ
Acts 13: 13-25
Jn13:16-20

*“Whoever accepts me
accepts the one who
sent me.”*

In the Gospel reading, Jesus declares that blessed are those who are just and behave accordingly. Jesus indirectly tells His disciples to continue His ministry. Therefore, He emphasises the importance of serving each other. He says, “Whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me, and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.” By the words of God, we understand that it’s good to see ourselves as servants and messengers of God. However, the idea of being a servant is not that desirable and pleasing for us. In our practical life, none of us wants to be under somebody as a slave and be treated as objects or commodities, which is contrary to human dignity.

Jesus is inviting us to be His servants who will treat us with fairness, compassion and love as His true sons and daughters. Today people are searching for happiness in the wrong places with the wrong tolls. However, Jesus here teaches us that true happiness is not found outside but from the inside by lovingly serving others irrespective of caste and creed. It is in giving that we receive in return. Our giving must not only be limited to our own people who are related to us but also to those who are least and downtrodden.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, we know it’s good to be humble and do kind service to others, but we often fail to practice it. Remove our hearts of stone and fill us with the virtues of the Holy Spirit so that our eyes are open to see the reality of the world and serve them wholeheartedly.

Jesus comforts His disciples just hours before His betrayal and arrest. He exhorts them to remain hopeful even in the face of the most challenging situation in their lives. Jesus offers us inner peace, consolation and fortitude to face adverse situations in our lives.

05 FRI

**HOPE
HOPE**

AGAINST

Ivin Tomy, SJ

Acts 13: 26-33

Jn 14: 1-6

One of the most painful tasks in our life is to comfort those who are faced with an irreparable

“Believe in God, believe also in me.”

loss in their life. Imagine yourself in a situation wherein you are fully aware of your impending death and the troubles your friends will have to endure following your death. You cannot but offer them a ray of hope regardless of the dark clouds of gloom gathering in the sky. This is precisely what Jesus did before His passion. He does not want His disciple to remain troubled and anxious, and He gently reminds them of the “dwelling places” in His Father’s house. By identifying Himself as the ‘way, truth and life’, Jesus reminds us that God is made accessible through Him, and the one who accepts Him as such will not perish.

Jesus is fully aware of the heartaches and sufferings we endure in our day-to-day life. However, He is not deaf to our torments and predicaments. He is full of encouragement and hope. We may be tossed up and down in the storm of life but are not abandoned.

Pray and Practise: Lord, when our vision is blurred with pain and suffering, help us remember that Your loving gaze is always cast upon us and to look at our future with hope.

06 SAT

EXPERIENCING GOD

Jeeto Sabar

Acts 13:44-52

Jn 14: 7-14

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone.”

Jesus and the Father are One: that is why the Gospel passage begins with the following remark of Jesus: “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also”. In the first reading, we see that Paul and Barnabas are taking the initiative to proclaim the word of God among the Jews and the Gentiles. But we see that the hearts of people are filled with jealousy, and they fail to recognise the values of God.

In today’s Gospel, “to know” means having personal experiences and devotion to the almighty God who is always present with us. We gain experiential knowledge as we read and meditate on the word of God, and we see the works of Jesus in our lives. It is not only enough to know the word, but it accompanies by the experience of God, which enables us to know Him. Both these words help us in our journey to experience God.

The word jealousy, which we find in the first reading of today, could be considered a virus with tragic symptoms, which does not allow us to know Jesus and practice the Gospel values. This word takes us away from God as well as fellow human beings. So, whoever holds on to being jealous will never experience or know God.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, grant us Your grace to spread the word of God among the people where Your word has not yet reached. Pour your blessings upon us so that we do not feel jealous of others’ success but share happiness with them.

God loves us, and He has created us with a purpose. Our purpose is to proclaim the good news. As human beings, sometimes, we feel rejected and not wanted by others. However, God does not let us down. Often it happens that we cannot understand Him, but if we cooperate and have faith in Him, He can make us useful instruments in His hands. We need to trust Him and follow the path that He shows us.

**07 SUN (V SUNDAY
OF EASTER)
TRUST AND
CONFIDENCE**

John Lepcha, SJ

Acts 6: 1-7
1 Pt 2: 4-9
Jn 14:1-12

*"I am the way, the
truth, and the life."*

In today's Gospel, Jesus proclaims that He is the way, the truth, and the life. He assures us that if we follow Him, we will have eternal life. To gain this eternal life, we need to have faith in Jesus. We are called to have total trust and confidence in Him. The first reading tells us that Stephen and his friends were filled with faith and the Holy Spirit. Their faith was unshakable. They became useful instruments in proclaiming the Gospel in the world and were able to do the work that Jesus had done. However, they had to face the consequences of following Him. Therefore, it is challenging because it requires total commitment and focuses on Jesus. At the same time, it is a grace for us to be able to follow Him in faith.

Pray and Practise: Let us earnestly ask for God's blessing on us so that we, too, may believe in Jesus Christ, follow Him and live our lives in Him.

8 MON REAL LOVE

Sujit Minj, SJ

Acts 14: 5-8
Jn 14: 21-26

*“Those who love me
will keep my word.”*

The main theme of today’s Gospel is ‘love’. We all know that this love is also the central theme of the New Testament in contrast to the Old Testament, where ‘law’ is the dominant factor in the people’s lives. Jesus’ preaching is mostly focused on love.

The love about which Jesus talks is totally different from our normal understanding of love, where it is mostly self-centred. The love about which Jesus talks today demands action; as St Ignatius puts in his spiritual exercises, ‘love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words...’. It is not just a feeling or emotion, but it should be visible. In the Gospel, Jesus says that those who love Him will keep His commandments; it is not enough just to say that he/she loves Him. It is said that the more one loves someone, the more he/she learns about him/her. And the more one knows about the other, the more he/she comes to love him/her. Our deeper love for Jesus will bring deeper knowledge about Him which will help us to love Him more and more. And it is to these people that Jesus reveals Himself and not to the world, who just want to have mere knowledge about Him. Our love for Jesus is visible in how much we follow His loving commandments.

Pray and Practise: Almighty God, give us the grace to love Jesus more closely so that our love for Him may be seen in following His commandments.

The great challenge of the followers of Christ today is, on the one hand, not to be troubled by the temptations and persecutions of the world, and on the other hand, the greater challenge is to strengthen those troubled faithful. St. Paul, strengthened by experiencing the risen Lord, set himself on a mission to strengthen the troubled Christian community. He was a fearless and tireless warrior on his mission. In the first reading, St Paul is stoned by Jews and dragged out of the city, leaving wounded. But it is written that he got up and went on to the next city. This sounds ridiculous. But that is the immeasurable spirit of those who experience Jesus and proclaim the good news. Though in pain, St Paul continues to strengthen the souls of the disciples and encourage them.

In the Gospel passage, we experience the assurance of Jesus' peace to those who are troubled. He promises to give peace to everyone. In our world today, we are surrounded by enormous temptations and persecutions. We cannot get away with them, but face them daily and with love. Jesus promises us today such kind of inner strength and peace. As St. Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us." (Rom 8:31)

Pray and Practise: Dear loving Jesus, strengthen us to be messengers of peace in the world today. Fill us with Your peace and grace that we may witness Your loving presence and comfort those **afflicted** and troubled.

09 TUE THE CHALLENGE OF FOLLOWERS

N. Vidyasagar, SJ

Acts 14: 19-28

Jn 14: 27-31a

"Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

10 WED (St Damien of Molokai)

FIRMLY CONNECTED TO CHRIST

Ngonyi Dukru, SJ

Acts 15:1-6

Jn 15:1-8

*“...for apart from me,
you can do nothing.”*

remain closely connected to Christ every moment of our lives.

What kind of fruits that God wants us to produce? The fruit that God wants to produce can be found in the form of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. These fruits consist of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22–23). It is clear that if we separate ourselves from God, it is impossible to experience any of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Only when we are connected through the help of the Holy Spirit we do bear fruit. Today's Saint, Damien of Molokai, who dedicated his life to caring for the people of the island who were stricken by leprosy, is an inspiration for us. St Damien finally died of leprosy among the people of Molokai.

Pray and Practise: Loving Father, grant us the grace that we may ever remain connected to Your son Jesus to bear much fruits in our lives.

In today's Gospel, Jesus invites us to grow in love. Jesus expresses the deep relationship between the Father and the Son and how they love each other. Their love is mutual and unselfish. Trinitarian love teaches us to love everyone unconditionally. Love is not only to receive but also to give. We have to be the sharers of love. Jesus, through His life and mission, taught us to be models of unconditional love. Through His command, "love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12), He asked to love everyone equally.

11 THURSDAY DWELL IN LOVE

Nikhil Christopher,
CST

Acts 15: 7-21
Jn 15:9-11

"As the father has loved me so I have loved you."

As the Father and Son remain together, we also need to make efforts to remain one with God. Being one with God implies being with His people. It means being present in their joys, sorrows, and other realities of life. Through this process, we will grow in the love of God as well as the love for our neighbours. We can never love God without having love for our brothers and sisters. God created us in His image and likeness to love all. When we love and serve our neighbours, we do the same to our God. We are called to dwell in the love of God by serving others.

Pray and practise: Lord Jesus, help us to have love, compassion, and care for our neighbours and to see Your face when we approach them. Lord, give us the grace to love everyone as You would love them, irrespective of our caste, creed and ethnicity.

**12 FRI
REMAINING IN
LOVE**

RavibhushanKumar,
SJ

Acts 15:22-31
John 15:12-17

*“Love one another
as I have loved you.”*

The Gospel of today invites us to become friends with Jesus by loving one another as He has loved us. The Gospel of St John has many episodes where Jesus explicitly shows how we should love one another and asks His disciples to do the same in their daily life. Today we hear that Jesus repeats the same commandment and says that there is no greater love than dying for someone. We will be His friends if we do what Jesus has told us.

Jesus calls them friends because He has already told them about the Father, and they know the mind of Jesus. Jesus reminds them that they have been chosen to bear everlasting fruits because the Father will give them whatever they ask in Jesus' name.

When Jesus calls us to love one another, He wants us to approach love as a choice, not as a feeling. If Jesus' love was only a feeling, there would be no reason for Him to die for us on the cross. He chose to love us, although He might have had many reasons not to love us. As a follower of Christ, we should constantly choose to love one another. Our choices will make us remain in love. Therefore, it is up to us whether we want to remain in His love or reject it and go astray.

Pray and practise: Dear Lord, help us to love one another as You have shown and commanded us. May our love bear fruit, and may we ever remain united with You in love.

The world loves its own worldliness, evil and those who belong and are attached to the world, but the world hates all those who know and follow the truth and goodness. The world in today's reading doesn't mean the physical world but refers to people who have mistakenly made money, success, reputation and power their everything. In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches His disciples, "If the world hates you, know that it had hated me before it hated you." There is a visible contradiction between worldly values and the values encompassed by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Jesus tells us to live in the world and be detached from worldly things. Though it is difficult for many, and we need to make constant efforts to be attached to God. Jesus reminds all believers that they would be persecuted as He was persecuted. The recent attack on the Christians in Chhattisgarh reveals the authenticity of the words of Jesus.

Nobody in the world likes to be hated, but we are told and instructed not to expect an easy life in following Jesus. We are not promised that we will be successful in our ministry, but we have to stand for the truth. The struggle and suffering which we face are means to deepen our relationship with Lord. So, we should always be ready to face the challenges in the world.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, bless and strengthen the faith of the people who are being persecuted for following the Gospel values.

13 SAT

TRUST IN JESUS

**CHRIST Ravikant
Kumar**

Acts 16:1-10

Jn 15:18-21

*"Abide in His love
and truth."*

**14 SUN (VI SUNDAY
OF EASTER)
PROMISE FOR THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

Razeem Robert, SJ

Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17
1 Pt 3: 15-18
Jn 14: 15-21

*"I will ask the Father
and He will give you
another Advocate."*

We are in the Easter season. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit after His resurrection. Are we prepared to receive the Holy Spirit? How can we prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit? In the first reading, we see the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit. They received the Holy Spirit by listening eagerly to the word of God preached by the Apostles and by believing in Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus indicates the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. He, in His promise, highlights a special criterion to receive the Holy Spirit: Love. By loving one another, we can experience Him as well as the Holy Spirit.

We live in a modernised world. Science is at its best, and it continues to evolve. Communications systems are top-notch, and travelling has become faster. This is one side of the world. On the other hand, hatred is increasing in the world. Wars, hatred, persecution of minorities, untouchability and broken relationships in families are impacting the world. The reason for all this is the lack of love and trust. Hatred will disappear when we love just like our Master Jesus. Trust will increase when we forgive. It is the duty of every follower of Jesus to grow love and trust in our hearts and to teach others to do the same.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, make us a believing and loving community like the Samaritans so that we may receive the Holy Spirit and abide in You always.

We are still in the joy of Jesus' resurrection. Having spent about five weeks with His disciples since the resurrection, He is preparing them for life after His ascension. He foresees the coming persecution due to their faith in Him. Yet, He promises them the Spirit to keep them from falling from the truth.

15 MON TRUE WITNESSES OF CHRIST

Remo Shimray, SJ

Act 16:11-15
Jn 15:26-16:4a-28

"I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth."

In the Gospel, we read that Jesus is preparing the disciples to continue His mission. As we wait for the feast of the Ascension and the Pentecost, it is important to reflect on the cost of discipleship today and the role of the Holy Spirit when our faith is challenged by the forces that prevent us from proclaiming and practising our faith. The recent attacks on the Christians of Chhattisgarh reveal the reality of what has been foretold in today's Gospel. I am certain that the incident that happened to the Christians of Chhattisgarh strengthened their faith because they were not alone; Christ was very close to them. Christians all over the country were with them in prayer. Today, Christianity is the most persecuted religion across the world. Through the Gospel, Jesus is instructing us today never to stumble at times of persecution but rather become witnesses of the Good News to all.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, send us Your Spirit so that we may stand strong against the forces that prevent us from embracing You, and we may become Your true witnesses.

**16 TUE (SJ: St Andrew Bobola)
NEW SPIRIT, NEW LIFE**

Robert Rajshekhar R. SJ

Acts 16: 22-34
Jn 16: 5-11

"But now I am going to him who sent me."

In today's first reading, we see that St Paul and Silas do not escape despite having the opportunities to escape from the prison, but rather they stay back willingly despite the calamity and disorder. And this willingness to remain loyal to oneself changed the whole scenario. St Paul's moral behaviour converts the jailer. So may we also ask for the grace of God to make use of the calamities that have befallen us. According to the Gospel reading today, after going back to the Father, Jesus will send the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit will be present in them in a new way, and the disciples will be born anew.

In order to be born anew, we need to forget the past. The youthfulness fades away when we grow old. In a way, one must give up something old to get something new. The one who clings to the past and remains in the past, the door to the new ways remains closed. The one who forgets the past and learns the lessons from it sees new ways to the present and the future. Over the years, I realised that I am who I am because of all the lessons I learned from past experiences. Let us seek the divine grace to have a positive attitude in life.

Pray and practise: Dear Lord, help us seek Your divine grace to have a positive attitude in our lives and help us build our life on the kingdom values and practise it in our daily lives.

Today's first reading tells us that St Paul ends his sermon by announcing that the time of ignorance is over and calling for eschatological repentance. Now Paul's purpose is clear. He is not seeking to add a new God to the Athenians but rather seeking the Athenian's repentance. Just as God had made all the nations to inhabit the whole earth from one man, so God will judge the world through the one man whom God appointed. The sermon ends with God as the main actor: God overlooks, commands, rules the world and provides proof through the resurrection.

17 WED THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Ravi Soreng

Acts 17:15,22-18:1

John 16: 12-15

"When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you."

In the Gospel, we find that Jesus tells His disciples that there is much more for Him to say to them. However, Jesus realises that they are struggling to absorb and understand what He had been saying. He understood that, at this point in time, they couldn't absorb anything more. Jesus reminds them that when the spirit comes, the spirit will guide them to all the truth. He tells them that the spirit will speak to them about the things that will come in the future. Then Jesus not only foretells His departure, He says that in the future, He will return but in new and different ways. Jesus comes to us in the breaking of the bread. And when we, His followers, are gathered together, Jesus is with us and among us.

Pray and practise: Lord, give us the grace to realise our mistakes, repent, and send Your Spirit to guide us in our lives.

18 THU (St John) REMAIN FAITHFUL

Deepika Kindo, FMM

Acts 18:1-8

John 16:16-20

“For a little while, you will no longer see me...”

Corinthians believe in Christ and are baptised. We live among people of different faiths; do we feel free to profess our faith that Jesus is the Messiah and the saviour of all humanity without hurting others?

In the Gospel, we see the disciples are confused and wonder what Jesus means by saying, “For a little while you will not see me, but after a while, you will see me.” None of His disciples dares to ask where Jesus is going. Jesus foretells about His suffering and death. He means to say that He will no longer continue God’s mission directly, in his physical body, but through His disciples. The disciples don’t understand that Jesus indirectly appoints them to be the messengers who would carry His words and teachings to the world. Yes, we are not supernatural human beings; at times, we may not understand Jesus’s instructions to us, and we may get confused. But if we trust and hope in the Lord Jesus, His plan for us will unfold, and we will sense that Jesus is walking beside and guiding us.

Pray and practise: O Lord, be with us in our difficulties so that we too may remain faithful and obedient to Your call like St John.

It’s hard to move on and forget someone we really love, but it’s not impossible. In the first reading, St Paul is not respected and accepted by Jews because of his faith in Christ. For Paul, it is painful to say goodbye because they will be like sheep without a shepherd. He moves towards the gentiles and makes Christ known to them, and many of the

In today's first reading, St. Paul is assured of God's presence and a guarantee of divine help for the mission. The Gospel reading highlights one of the most unpleasant yet inseparable parts of human experience- pain and suffering. Our life experiences teach us that hardships and pains are the realities of life, and we can never completely avoid them. But aren't they so despairing? Isn't there any way out of this, we may wonder. From where do we get a ray of hope amidst the dark hours? The answer lies in the nature and in the promise of our Lord Jesus. To explain the temporality of suffering, Jesus uses the example of a woman in labour pain. A mother forgets all her pain due to the joy of having brought forth her child. Similarly, Jesus assures us that difficulties and hardships are not permanent. They cannot break us if we place our trust in the Lord and do our part perfectly. In the last sentence of today's Gospel, Jesus promises, "Very truly I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you" (Jn 16:23). This is the assurance that we hold on to, as we go on in our lives.

**19 FRI
HOPE: A WAY
THROUGH**

Roshan Gyan
Topno, SJ

Acts 18:9-18
Jn 16:20-23

"Your pain will turn into joy."

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, thank you for being our companion in our joys and sorrows, especially in difficult times. Lord, in times of despair and dejection, grant that we may hear Your assuring words that you are with us.

**20 SAT (St Bernardine
of Siena)
HIS ASSURANCE IS
EVERLASTING**

Varli Viju Dashmabhai,
SJ

Acts 18: 23-28
Jn 16: 23-28

*“Father himself loves
you.”*

In today's Gospel, Jesus is, in a way preparing His disciples for facing the impending troublesome period of their life and ministry. This preparation was necessary so that they may persevere during the time of persecution. Jesus is not only providing His words of assurance, but whatever He says, He means it and fulfils it. His assurances are everlasting. Along with His assurance, Jesus promises His intercession before the father. Jesus knew that disciples would fall on the way if they trusted in their ability alone. For perseverance in faith, the disciples need the powerful intercession of Jesus before the father. That is why He instructed the disciples to ask in His name so that they may receive abundantly.

We must remember that asking in the name of Jesus is not a magical formula or mantra or a mere ritual. We have to pray in accordance with the needs of the kingdom of God. Asking in prayer is not just for our material welfare and growth. Priorities of the Kingdom of God need to be kept in mind when we pray. Heavenly father is not to be thought of as Santa Claus to fulfil our wishes and needs. We should allow the Spirit who dwells in us to pray so that we may pray according to the will of the Father. As St. Paul tells us, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. God knows the human hearts.

Pray and practise: Lord Jesus, grant us the grace to pray more earnestly and do the will of the Father.

Today's readings tell us two stories of the same event by the same author Luke. The ascension of the Lord is an integral part of our Christian faith. This reminds us that we belong to God. We are created to live a heavenly life. We are marching towards heaven while we are on this earth.

The ascension of the Lord is not just the final act in the earthly ministry of Jesus, but it is about a new way of being here and now. St Augustine says, "To be with Jesus because where the head is, the body must also be." This image of Jesus rising through the clouds into heaven is the symbol of harmony, as Luke saw in his times with Paul. We must attend to the reality that the Son of God descended into the human world. He completed His mission by victory over death to life and freeing us from slavery to sin.

The ascension of Jesus is surrounded by rich symbolism that He will be coming at the end of time. It is an invitation for us to reflect on our life. Are we preparing ourselves to be in heaven with Him? Do we wish to be His witnesses on earth? St Paul says, 'we must lift our eyes from all the worries and anxieties of this earthly life to see Jesus seated at the right hand of God the Father.'

Pray and Practise: God, our loving Father, send us Your gift of the Holy Spirit upon us so that we may follow the right path that leads to heaven.

21 SUN (Ascension of the Lord) BE WITH JESUS

Vimal K Dhurwey, SJ

Acts 1: 1-11

Eph 1: 17-23

Mt 28: 16-20

"You will be my witnesses on earth."

22 May (St Rita of Cascia)
BE COURAGEOUS

Anugrah Joseph
Mathews, CST

Acts 19: 1-8
Jn 16: 29-33

"But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

Today we remember St Rita of Cascia. She is an Italian widow and an Augustinian nun. She joined an Augustinian community of religious sisters, where she was known for practising mortification of the flesh and the efficacy of her prayers. In her lifelong sufferings, she remained patient, cheerful, and in union with Christ through her prayers.

Today's Gospel gives us consolation that one must face the sufferings in the name of Jesus Christ. As humans, it is natural that we may run away from suffering. We may not really understand what is happening to us. But what is important during that time is to turn back to Christ. We must hold on to God whenever problems get out of our hands. We must not embrace the world and its pleasures replacing our Christ.

We indeed have to undergo suffering in the world when we follow Christ as many of His disciples. But the peace we will find in Christ when we follow Him is great. Christ has conquered the world. The Crucifixion is not a victory for those who are hostile to Jesus, nor should the sufferings or persecution suffered by the people be a sign of victory. Once we understand what has occurred in Christ's glorification, we will see them as evidence that Jesus has been victorious.

Pray and practise: Dear Lord, give us the grace to remain peaceful during suffering and help us hold on to You even if the worst situations occur.

The Gospel reading and the saint of the day teach us the social responsibility each should possess. The Gospel gives the beginning of the high priestly prayer of Jesus. The first part of the prayer reveals Jesus' deep communion with His Father. He asks His father to glorify Him by taking Him through death to the glory that He had with God before He took on human form. The second part of the prayer highlights His communion with His disciples. It is a wonderful thought that Jesus prayed for His disciples before they faced the challenges of the first Easter.

23 TUE (St John Baptist De Rossi) SERVICE

Vincent, SJ

Acts 20: 17-27

Jn 17:1-11a

"They may be one, as we are one."

The pain and danger, however, were not exclusively His. The path to the glory Jesus refers to will be one of division, fear, and uncertainty for this band of His followers too. As we draw closer to God in prayer, we should also draw closer to others to God through our prayers and exemplary life.

St. John Baptist De Rossi was a full-time confessor. Though hailed from a poor family his heart was rich with love for God and love for his neighbour. Despite his ill health, he took good care of the patients in the hospital and was compassionate towards orphans and the destitute. He built a new hospital for them. He showed us how our prayers must lead us to go beyond our self-centeredness to feel responsible for others and the society we live in. Are we ready to go beyond our comfort zone to serve others?

Pray and practise: Almighty God, give us the grace to serve You always, not only through our words but also through our deeds.

**24 WED
DO NOT BE
TEMPTED**

David Kujur, SJ

Acts 20:28-38

Jn 17:11-19

“Sanctify them in truth; your word is truth.”

In today's first reading, St Paul talks about sharing the teachings of Jesus after having a deep and personal experience of Jesus. Paul instructs the priests of Ephesus to be faithful to their duties. He wants them to keep watching the whole flock as good and true shepherds. He cautiously tells them, “After I leave, ruthless wolves will come among you and not spare the flock.” Hence,

Paul tells the priests to be careful and take care of the whole flock so that nobody can fall into the temptations of enemies.

In the Gospel, we find Jesus' great concern for His disciples as He leaves them to go to His father. Jesus did not want anyone to be destroyed. He wanted everyone to be protected by the grace of God. Jesus' heartfelt desire was that His disciples should remain one in this world and in heaven. Just as Jesus devoted Himself to the service of truth, even after His departure, His disciples should also dedicate themselves to the service of truth.

Through today's readings, Jesus is reminding us that as Christians, we must be united to God in prayer, and we must be together as His disciples to serve God and His people. He also reminds us that it is our duty to safeguard everyone from worldly temptations.

Pray and Practise: Lord, bless us with Your grace of truth and love so that we may be united with You and not be tempted by the enemies of this world.

It is true that even good people go through great suffering, pain and hardships in their lives. But the grace which God gives makes them go through and endure suffering and, at times, allows them to identify themselves with the suffering of Jesus. Because Jesus loved

25 THU TO BEAR WITNESS

Pascal Kujur, SG

Acts 22: 30; 23:6-11
John 17: 20-26

“Keep up your courage.”

us and suffered on our behalf for our salvation. In today's first reading, we see how Paul showed his love and faith in Jesus by boldly testifying to the resurrection of Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees accused Paul. They wanted to arrest and kill him but they found no wrong in him.

He found strength and courage in the Risen Jesus, who appeared to him in a vision to testify that Jesus Christ is the only master and author of our life. Eventually, this mission of proclaiming Christ crucified took him to Rome, meaning that he took the Gospel to the centre of the known world of his time.

In the Gospel, we see that Jesus prays for His followers, for unity and for the Father's abiding love for them. He is in Father and the Father in Him. His Father gave everything to establish the kingdom of God. We are all capable of promoting the kingdom of God here on earth by doing the will of God. Today let us reflect on how each of us, in our own ways, could contribute to this mission of proclaiming Christ and His Kingdom.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, send your Holy Spirit on us so that we may boldly proclaim You in our words and deeds.

26 FRI
DEEP CALLS TO
DEEP

V.A.Jeyasheela,
ICM

Acts 25:13b-21
John 21:15-19

“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”

a new creation, and a fisherman became a shepherd of God’s people.

In fact, if somebody asks the question, do you love me? The answer may differ from person to person as per the relationship they sustain with each other. The bond between Peter and Jesus was so deep. Therefore, the answer of Peter, “you know I love you”, lifted him from sin to righteousness. Peter must have wondered, ‘Where do I stand now?’ But Jesus showed him amazing grace and kindness, dispelling all doubts. Peter became

To be a disciple of Jesus is to be asked the question often, ‘Do you love me?’ It is not that Jesus doubts us, but He wants us to recognise who we are and what we are called to be. Hence, our love has to blow out from deep within for a greater commitment and fidelity to the risen Christ. Today’s first reading talks about the imprisonment of St Paul. His love for the risen Christ was burning deep within, and thus became who he was called to be, even at the cost of his life. The saint of the day, Philip Neri, also lived an extraordinary life outstanding in his love for God and his neighbour. Today if Jesus asks you this question, “Do you love me?”. What will come from the depth of our hearts?

Pray and Practise: Dear Lord, let Your love move our hearts to respond to these questions: ‘What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What will I do for Christ?’

Following Jesus calls for undivided attention and readiness from the part of the disciples. We must be on our guard to identify those elements within us that take us away from following the Lord.

27SAT(St Augustine of Canterbury) WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT

Ivin Tomy, SJ

Acts 28: 16-20, 30-31
Jn 21: 20-25

“O, beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on,” says Shakespeare in his famous play Othello. After receiving the mandate to ‘feed and tend’ the sheep from Jesus, Peter seems to be blinded by jealousy towards the ‘disciple whom Jesus loved’. However, Jesus firmly shows Peter his own place by gently reminding him to stay focused on his mission and follow Him wholeheartedly. There is no dearth of things in this world that distract us from our mission of following the Lord. Very often, we fall into the temptation of comparing ourselves with others. On the other hand, the ‘disciple whom Jesus loved’ comes before us as a perfect embodiment of discipleship; he is undeterred by distractions or ill-will for his fellow disciples. To love Jesus and to be loved by Jesus is the greatest privilege a disciple can ever imagine in his/her life. Just like the ‘beloved disciple’, we are also called to testify to the great things the Lord has done in our life. Today let us also reflect on these questions: In my life as a disciple, do I take my focus off Jesus and His kingdom? Do I worry about what others are up to and what they think of me?

Pray and practise: Dear Lord, help me to give myself wholeheartedly in following You and loving You always.

28 SUN (Pentecost Sunday)
PEACE BE WITH YOU

Razeem Robert, SJ

Acts 2: 1-11
1 Cor 12: 3b-7,12-13
Jn 20: 19-23

“Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Today we celebrate the Pentecost Sunday. In the first reading, we see the dramatic episode of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and its effects on the Apostles. In the second reading, St Paul tells how the varieties of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the common good. In the Gospel, Jesus strengthens the Apostles, who were frightened of the Jews, by greeting them with peace and by giving assurance of the Holy Spirit. He also asks the apostles to forgive the sins of others. The gifts of understanding, peace, willingness to forgive and seeking forgiveness are some of the graces we can ask from the Holy Spirit today.

As believers, we need the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is to build up the community and bring unity. It must not be used for selfish purposes or to bring glory to oneself because the varieties of gifts come from the same Holy Spirit.

Many countries in the world need peace. Violence in several parts of the world has brought chaos and confusion. In our own country, religious minorities live with fear and confusion because of the rising hate politics. Amidst these circumstances, when we celebrate the feast of Pentecost today, let us pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit may dwell among the people and let there be peace among us.

Pray and Practise: Dear Lord, may we experience the outpouring of Your Holy Spirit in our hearts so that we build human communities of love and peace.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. This feast is celebrated to remind us that Mary is not only the mother of Jesus but also of the faithful. Mary stands at the foot of the cross to be with her son, who is in agony. Jesus suffers not only physical pain but the pain that is inflicted by the abandonment of His own disciples. Mother Mary stands as a figure who stands by us in our painful moments. Above all, she stands by the Church in her difficult moments.

**29 May (BVM,
Mother of the
Church)
MOTHER
ENDURESPAIN**

John Lepcha, SJ
Gen 3:9-15, 20;
Or Act 1: 12-14
Jn 19:25b-34

*“And he said to his
mother “woman
behold your son.”*

Today’s Gospel manifests the unconditional love between Mother Mary and Jesus. Jesus tells His beloved disciple, pointing to His mother ‘here is your mother’ and to His mother, “here is your son.’ Jesus understood the sorrow of His Mother. He experienced the love of His mother. Mary was completely shattered to see her son being treated in such an inhuman way. It was beyond her capacity to bare such a barbarous, violent act done upon her son. She accompanies her son till the end. The tremendous courage to stand beside the cross was the great love Mary had for her son and for the whole world as a mother.

Pray and Practise: Today, we are called to have that undivided heart for Jesus to love Him always. Let us pray through the intercession of mother Mary that we, too, may have compassionate hearts for our suffering brothers and sisters.

30 TUE SACRIFICES

Sujit Minj, SJ

Sir 35:1-12
Mk 10:28-31

“Be generous when you worship the Lord.”

The central theme of today's reading is the sacrifices one should make in life.

The first reading invites us to be generous before God. When going to the house of God, one should never go empty-handed. While entering the house of God, our offerings should be the sacrifices we make in following Jesus in our daily life. This sacrifice in today's time indicates our faithfulness and true followers of Christ. Sacrifices and offerings make our worship meaningful.

The Gospel today challenges us profoundly. It demands our total surrender to God in following Christ. This passage is the follow-up of the story of the rich man who, though following all the commandments, could not follow Jesus because he was very much attached to his possessions. Following Jesus means leaving behind everything. Our attachment to the earthly things pulls us back towards the world and becomes a hindrance on our way to spiritual things or to Jesus. That is why the Gospel asks us to give up everything for the sake of Jesus and for the sake of the Good News. In His reply to Peter, Jesus is actually presenting before us the reward as well as the cost of discipleship. By following Jesus, one becomes part of His mission of serving human society and building the kingdom of God. Hence, we are united with all the people who follow Jesus, gaining a larger family.

Pray and practise: Lord Jesus, give us the grace that in following You, we may not look for a reward in return but enjoy being in the company of You.

Today, our Church commemorates the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin to her cousin Elizabeth. We hear in today's Gospel that Mary hastened to help Elizabeth, fully conscious of her new status as Mother of God. Yet she placed herself at the service not to magnify herself but God. Elizabeth was the chosen one, filled with the Holy Spirit, recognised and foretold the Mother of the Lord to the world. Only by abiding in God's Spirit and Will could they break the frontiers of Jewish traditions and culture.

31 Wed (Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary)
ADHERE,
ASSOCIATE,
APPRECIATE

V.A Jeyasheela, ICM

Rom 12:9-16b

Luke 1:39-56

"Let your love be genuine."

The two blessed women become for us stimulations of 3 As; ADHERE- Their faith led them to adhere to the Spirit within and moved to the other to exchange the joy of upholding God's will. ASSOCIATE- The meeting of holy women brings joy, love, peace, harmony, justice and freedom and impels them to proclaim God's reign here and now. APPRECIATE- Their words for each other are the supreme appreciation of God's mercy and eternal faithfulness. Thus, they lived their lives so faithfully and genuinely as part of the salvific act of God. Today at times, our love and goodness are fake, and hate is real. Things are more valued than human beings. Life is profit-driven, not people-driven. In today's first reading, St. Paul, through the letter to the Romans, advises us to imbibe the qualities to mark the true Christian and cooperate with God's will.

Pray and Practise: God of fidelity, help us to be ever faithful in our true Christian vocation and to rejoice with You at all times.

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