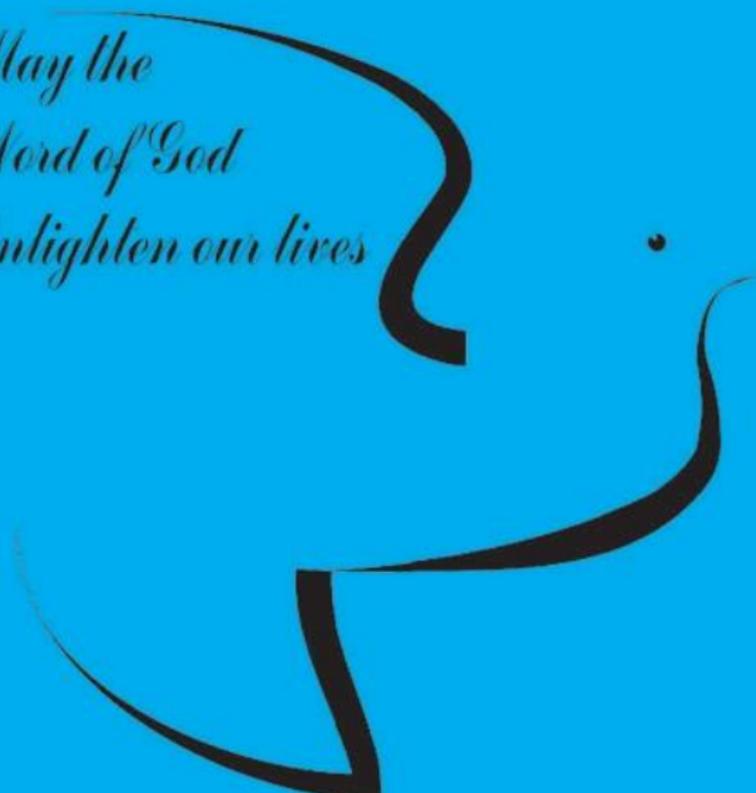
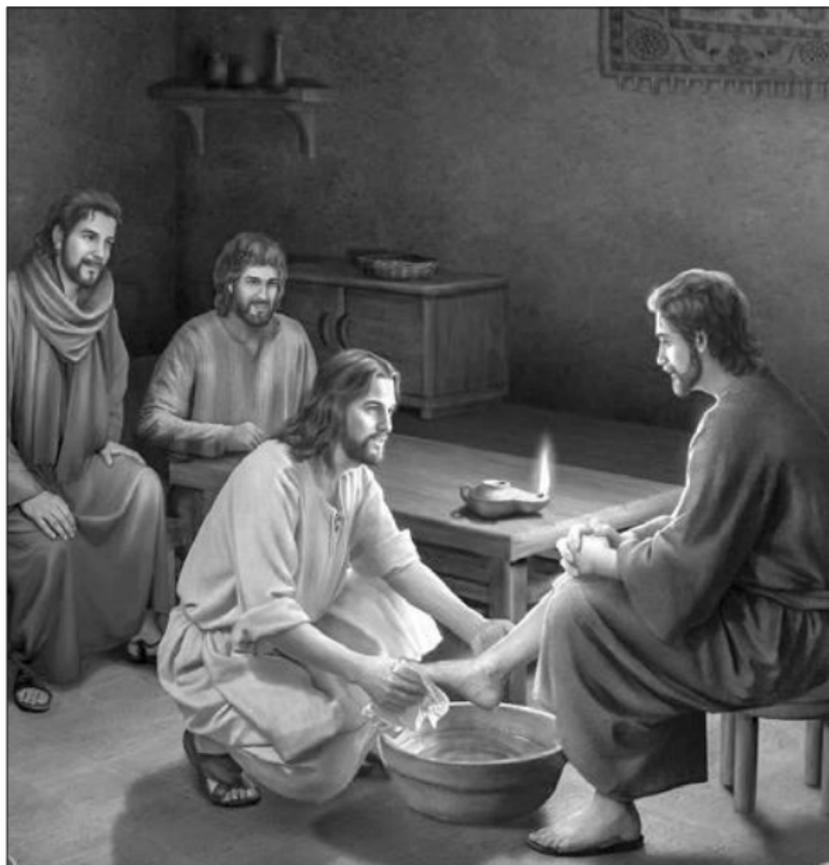


*May the
Word of God
Enlighten our lives*



A V E

APRIL 2021



Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. - 1 Peter 4:10

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION

Universal Intention - Fundamental Rights

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

New Life and Prophetic Witness

M. I. RAJ SJ

(EDITORIAL)

April this year begins with the Paschal Triduum, followed by Easter Sunday. The first four days of the month highlight the Paschal Mystery, the very heart of our Christian faith. St. Paul in Rom 6:3-11 explains this mystery and weaves it as part and parcel of our life. First, he talks about Jesus in v.10: "The death he died, he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God." Then he addresses us in v.11: "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." In other words, if you die to your old self (cf. v.6) which is the same as denying your false self (cf. Mk 8:34), then (God in) Christ will live in and through you (cf. Gal 2:20).

Paschal Mystery has a direct bearing on Holy Father's intention for the month of April: "We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis." Historically, as it could be seen from the synoptic narratives, Jesus died a prophet's death, like the Hebrew prophets, which has a deep theological meaning. A prophet not only spoke, but acted on behalf of God; his concerns were the concerns of God, which, in turn, were the concerns of those people whose fundamental rights are denied. It is in this light, we must understand those men and women who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights. Their courage comes from a vision of life which is broader and deeper than just the physical life. We pray, not just for these men and women, but for ourselves that we live the paschal mystery in terms of dying to the narrow and false sense of our 'self' and living to our original and authentic self as the "image of God" and have the courage of dying for the defence of the fundamental rights of the weaker sections of the society and enjoy eternal life.

Tonight, we begin the Holy Triduum, the three most important days in the liturgical year of the Church and on this day the Church celebrates the institution of the Holy Eucharist and Priesthood. Eucharist is the spiritual food that God has made available for us. According to Pope Francis, "the Eucharist is not just a

weekly way of celebrating our faith but radically affects our relationship with others, especially with those most in need."

Today as we celebrate the institution of the Holy Eucharist, we all are reminded to look back on our relationship with others, not only with our friends near and dear ones and with our own family members but our relationship with those who hate us, oppose and criticize us because Eucharist is about breaking oneself and giving away in love for others. We see this in the Gospel where Christ in all His humility chose to wash the feet of the disciples. Jesus washed the feet of Judas who betrayed him, he washed the feet of Peter who denied him. He also washed the feet of the rest of the apostles who fled and deserted him. This gesture being the quintessence of a total emptying of His Godliness to become a servant, we are called to empty of all the ego and become like Him an everyday Eucharist that breaks and dissolves itself to give life to even those who have no regard for our love; serve not only one's families and friends but those who betray us.

Pray and Practise: Lord, may we practise the humility to wash one another's feet as we let go of our ego and serve others with the love you have for us.

01 THU (Holy Thursday)

BREAKING FOR LOVE

Amardeep Tirkey

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

1Cor 11:23-26

Jn 13:1-15

"You should do as I have done"

02 FRI (Good Friday)

LIFE THROUGH DEATH

Amardeep Tirkey

Is 52:13-53:12

Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Jn 18:1-19:42

“one of the soldiers thrust a lance into His side and immediately there flowed out blood and water”

Today we relive the passion and death of our Savior whose sacrifice brought redemption for us. Going through the suffering as a human being, Jesus sets an example before us by fulfilling His Father’s will and showing His love towards human beings on the cross. Jesus did not look at his suffering and death on a cross negatively but he looks at the humanity filled with sins and gives himself off with love on the cross for the salvation of humanity. He suffers and dies for our sins, to save us from evil. He accepts the will of his Father with love and therefore, he was resurrected. Thus, he showed us that death is not the end but the beginning of new life with God.

However, due to our pain and suffering, we sometimes become like one of the thieves who was hanging beside Jesus, who curses Him and demands to show the sign. We forget the other thief who believed in Jesus till the last point of his death and received the eternal reward from Jesus. Jesus showed us through the cross that becoming a grain of wheat and destroying the self completely in painful abandonment is essential for resurrection into a newer way of life. Love always demands sacrifice. Therefore, if we wish to become another Christ, the process has to begin with abandoning oneself, then loving others to a point of giving away one’s own life for them in and through the daily crosses such a conviction would demand of us.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, give us the courage to accept the suffering that comes in our way of loving others just as you loved.

Holy Saturday is the day we remember Jesus' descent into the heart of darkness and death. It confronts us with the difficulty of God's silence. A prayerful silence observed in between Christ's agony on the cross and his resurrection in triumph. Perhaps the experience of silence in Holy Saturday is not so different from every other day in our worldly experience. In pandemic, death, disease, injustice, and in many human struggles we often experience the silence of God. Today Church waits at the Lords' tomb, meditating upon His passion, death, and descent into the hell, awaiting, in prayer and fasting, his resurrection. Holy Saturday reminds us that the silence of God often we encounter in our life is momentary. Even in that silence, there is an expectation, the assurance of resurrection.

3 SAT (Holy Saturday)

BE VIGILANT FOR THE LORD

Asish, CST

Mk 16:1-7

"Who will roll away the stone for us from the..."

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a perfect example for us today. As others were filled with fear and confusion, Mother Mary kept vigil on Holy Saturday in prayerful anticipation of Jesus' resurrection. She knew her Son would rise. She had hoped beyond hope. Her faith was certain. Her love kept her vigilant as she awaited the return of her Son. She was one of the few who stood by Him in His agony and death. She stood before the Cross and prayerfully pondered His perfect sacrifice. And today she keeps vigil, pondering His imminent return to her.

Pray and Practise: Let Mother Mary be our model and guide in our confusion and despair.

4 SUN (Easter Sunday)

WITH THE RISEN LORD

Asish, CST

Act 10:34, 37-43

Col 3:1-4

Jn 20:1-9

"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb..."

doubt, nor that of death. Instead, we are expected to live a joyful and peaceful life, constantly experiencing the real presence of the Risen Lord in all the events of our lives.

Resurrection is Good News, but at the same time, it's painful because it involves death. Before the power of the Resurrection can take hold in our own lives, we're called to die to sin, to die to self. We may even have to die to our dreams so that God can do what He wants to do with our lives. Resurrection is about seeing our world in a new way. Early that Easter morning, Mary Magdalene did not find what she was looking for. The empty tomb would have been a painful experience for her. But even from that emptiness, she found the Risen Jesus. Encountering Jesus in the empty tomb is the experience of Easter. Chaos and painful experience can become opportunities for us to encounter the Risen Lord. This we have to aspire as well for those who diligently seek the Lord will find the Lord.

Pray and Practise: Lord, help me to live in the experience of Resurrection in and through my love, mercy, compassion, and self-sacrificing service; let me share the joy of Easter with everyone!

Galilee was the womb of God Experience; because it was there everything began and the mystery of God began to unfold through the ministry of Jesus. It was there the fishermen became disciples, Andrew and his companion received the invitation “come and see”, the sick were healed, and the poor received the Good News. Mary Magdalene and the disciples at the tomb receive another call to go back to Galilee (the womb of God experience). In a way, Risen Jesus invites them to re-read everything from the new framework of Resurrection to encounter God in the person of Jesus as the Lord who walked on the Shore of Galilean Sea as ordinary as they were.

05 MON

DO NOT BE AFRAID

Aswin Dony D.

Acts 2:14, 22-33
Mt 28:8-15

“Do not be afraid; go and tell...”

Risen Jesus commands Mary “Go and tell” that Jesus is the LORD whom she worshipped for the first time after the Resurrection is the fulfilment of the first invitation to Andrew “come and see”. If Galilean seashore was the beginning, Calvary and the tomb of Jerusalem become the fulfilment of God experience in Risen Jesus. Where is our Galilee? Perhaps, it would be our every day of life, where Risen Jesus constantly accompanies us but our distracted, busy life, fear and uncertainties, blind us to see His accompaniment. Today we need to ‘go back to Galilees’. Was he not there when we wanted someone to listen to problems? Was he/she not Jesus when we experienced darkness all around when someone came and consoled and comforted us?

Pray and Practise: Loving father, may your resurrection transform us to encounter you in our day-to-day activities. May we find our own Galilees and experience the closeness of the Lord!

06 TUE

**BELIEVE IN THE
RISEN LORD**

Aswin Dony D.

Acts 2:36-41

Jn 20:11-18

"I have seen the Lord..."

Today's readings speak about the first converts and the first witness. The first converts 'heard' the Kerygma and believed Jesus as the Lord, and the first witness Mary heard the voice of the Risen Jesus and recognized Jesus as the Lord. Secondly, Mary is still weeping outside the tomb, while Peter and the other disciple (John) are returning to their homes from the tomb. Interestingly the faith of the other disciple who 'saw and believed' did not inspire her to 'hear' from his faith experience at the tomb, rather she remains weeping, overcome by distress. She was concerned about the physicality of Jesus, but what she 'heard' when Jesus was with her that 'He will rise on the third day' did not come to her aid to believe that Jesus has risen.

For the first converts 'sin' was a block to recognize Jesus as the Lord, but for Mary, her concern for the body of Jesus prevented her from entering into the mystery of Resurrection. For Peter to preach the Risen Jesus tomb was a means to encounter God, but for Mary, it was a moment of misunderstanding the divine encounter. Similarly, for many of us tombs of our lives can be a moment of God experience; at the same time, it can cripple us to weep over the tombs of our life like Mary.

Pray and Practise: Risen Jesus, we thank you for the tombs in our lives, help us to rise above the tombs of our lives, to say, "I have seen the Lord".

Beggars have always and everywhere been found at the entrance to a house of prayer, a good place to practice their profession. Giving money to beggars was considered praiseworthy in the Jewish religion. So, the beggar wisely placed himself where pious people might see him on their way to worship at the temple. The lame, the blind and the pagan were not allowed inside the temple. At the beautiful gate, Peter and John meet the lame man. Note well that his joy was so much greater when he was allowed inside the temple after his cure. He was cured in the name of the Risen Lord.

07 WED (St John Baptist De La Salle)

RECOGNIZING CHRIST

Girish Kumar Karo

Acts 3:1-10
Lk 24:13-35

“And their eyes were opened and they recognised Him.”

In the Gospel passage of today, two of the disciples of Jesus came to know him by the Scripture and Eucharist. To know that the Scripture opens to us the mystery of God and to participate in the Holy Eucharistic celebration helps us to experience the Risen Lord in our daily life. Here are disciples who, like us, have heard of the Risen Christ, but have not seen him. On the road on which they are walking, they are led to encounter him in the Word and the Bread. The relationship which is established with the Risen Christ is not one of the senses, of seeing or touching, but of hearing the Word and of sacramental eating. Do we recognize Him in the Word and the Holy Mass daily?

Pray and Practise: Help us to see you and to recognize your gentle and still voice. Give us the eyes of faith to see you present in the Most Holy Eucharist.

08 THU

KNOWING HIM

Girish Kumar Karo

Acts 3:11-26

Lk 24:35-48

*“Opened their minds
to understand the
Scriptures”*

The main theme of the message that is emphasized by St. Peter were who Jesus is, how the Jews had rejected Jesus, why their rejection was fatal and what they must do to change their lives. Through the message of St. Peter, the number of converts grew to five thousand. Gospel passage of the day is giving an assurance to our faith that Jesus has truly risen. All of a sudden, Jesus stands in the midst of his apostles. Jesus' body was not just the appearance of a ghost, the Disciples touched Him and He ate in front of them. What He showed them was his body that has been given up for them in sacrifice. It is the body they will share in memory of Him.

The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, entire Old Testament points to the Messiah. For example, Jesus' role as prophet was foretold in Deuteronomy, his sufferings and resurrection were prophesied in Psalms and Isaiah. All that was said about Him by the prophets in the law and in the Psalms is now fulfilled. Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to understand the Scriptures. Today, we are invited to know Resurrected Jesus better through the Scriptures, praying and allowing the Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus.

Pray and Practise: Lord, grant me the blessing to be a faithful disciple in believing the Word of God and that I may be a light shining upon all who are in darkness.

In today's Gospel, we read that the Lord again appeared before the apostles by the seashore of Tiberius. Jesus instructed them to lower their net. They did lower their net in obedience to Jesus. They caught a lot of fish even though they were not certain who he was that asked them to lower their nets on the

other side for a catch. John, however, recognized him and said, almost under his breath, 'It is the Lord'. This expression by John shows that he had a deep experience of Jesus and now of the risen Lord. A few of the disciples encountered the Lord personally too, but they were still in a dilemma. Therefore, they were ready to go back to their previous profession of fishing.

Let us admit that often we too go through the same dilemma. We participate in the Holy Eucharist every day. We also take part in other spiritual exercises, but we still wrestle with the ground reality of our faith. We are not able to love and forgive our enemies in the way Jesus instructed us and while on the cross was able to pray for those who put him to death, "Father, forgive them for they do not what they do." Instead, we show disrespect, discriminate and use demeaning words for people who rub us the wrong way, make life difficult for us. All these disparaging, belittling expressions and thoughts, indicate the depth of our faith and commitment we have towards the Risen Lord who makes all things new.

Pray and Practise: Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of the things not seen.

09 FRI

IT IS THE LORD!

Mankuwar Toppo, IMS

Acts 4: 1-12

Jn 21: 1-14

That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

10 SAT

ENCOUNTERING THE RISEN LORD

Mankuwar Toppo, IMS

Acts 4: 13-21

Mk 16: 9-15

“Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation...”

Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and it was enough to testify that Jesus rose from the dead. Later we find Jesus himself appeared to the disciples and told them not to be slow to believe. Then, Jesus commanded them to spread the Good News to the whole world. The mission given to the disciples was to proclaim the Good News and to baptize everyone. Today, through this Gospel reading, we all are encouraged to proclaim the Good News and to witness the Risen Christ. Sometimes we tend to think that to proclaim the Good News and to witness Christ is not our job. It is the task cut out for priests, sisters and lay volunteers. But it is the duty of every Christian. It is possible to proclaim Christ only when we ourselves believe firmly. It then comes from a lived experience. We need to first believe. Jesus appeared to his disciples and told them first to believe. Unless and until we believe in Christ, we cannot witness and proclaim.

Later, Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were at the table. He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe. They had encountered him after he had risen from the dead. Like the disciples, it may happen to us also if we also lack faith. We may do many charitable works and engage ourselves in spiritual activities but still, we may be wanting in faith. Today's readings remind us of the need to encounter the Risen Christ every day through the Holy Eucharist and through our prayer to keep the faith alive and active.

Pray and Practise: Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of God. May we hear Him and listen to Him in our daily lives.

Today the church celebrates the Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope John Paul II quotes St. Faustina's diary, "Humanity will never find peace until it turns with trust to Divine Mercy". In describing this feast, St. John Paul II says, "Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ, a gift which is offered

11 SUN (Divine Mercy)

TRUST IN GOD'S MERCY

Robin M., IMS

Acts 4:32-35

1Jn 5:1-6

Jn 20:19-31

"Jesus, I Trust in You"

to all humanity." The message of Divine Mercy is that God loves us. He wants us to approach Him in constant prayer, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and the whole world. He wants us to receive His mercy and to spread it throughout the world through our actions and love for others.

In the first reading, we are reminded to extend mercy to all by sharing and helping those in need and in the second reading we are called to have complete trust in Jesus Christ, the son of God. In the gospel we see Jesus appearing to Thomas. The experience of St. Thomas and the messages of Divine Mercy through St. Faustina both point to the call to trust in the Lord, to seek the mercy of God and show mercy to others in our daily lives.

It is in trusting the Lord we will have the courage to cry, 'My Lord, and My God'. It is a confession of surrender to God, in hope of His mercy upon us. It's only in the reception of mercy in one's life that we will be able to share it with others with great empathy and forgiveness.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us the grace to have complete trust in you, to share your mercy with the whole world.

12 MON

CHURNED BY THE SPIRIT

Robin M., IMS

Acts 4:23-31

Jn 3:1-8

"We must be born again"

In today's Gospel, Nicodemus comes to visit Jesus under the cover of darkness to find out who Jesus is. Nicodemus praises by words but Jesus counters him saying that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born from above. Nicodemus understand Jesus words literally. His misunderstanding gives Jesus an opportunity to lead

Nicodemus to a deeper understanding of what Jesus meant. To be born again is to be born from above, of "water and the Spirit". Flesh only produces flesh but the Spirit gives birth to life and that is the second birth we all need to undergo.

Once we are reborn in the Spirit, we will be led by Him. The wind blows where it wills. The 'wind', 'breath' of the Holy Spirit is the sole guide for our lives. Once we are guided by the Spirit, we surrender ourselves totally to God. Nicodemus is asked to surrender himself to the Lord. He must be ready to move in a different direction once he is guided by the Spirit. Wherever we may be right now, we must be ready for God, through his Spirit, to call us in a new direction and to follow in his footsteps. An openness to the Spirit demands greatly from us; to forgo our old ways and chart out the new. It will never be an easy task but one that will unsettle our usual ways and disturb our comfortable spaces. Hence, when disturbed it is good to discern for ourselves if the spirit is taking us to newer lands to work wonders.

Pray and Practise: Lord, we surrender totally to you and may our lives be guided daily by your Holy Spirit.

Jesus says to Nicodemus: "You can hear, feel, and see the effects of the wind, but you do not know where it comes from. Similarly, you can see the effects of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those whom the Spirit touches." Jesus also explains to Nicodemus the necessity of the crucifixion and resurrection by analogy with Moses and the bronze serpent in the desert.

The bronze serpent points to the cross of Christ which defeats sin and death and obtains everlasting life for those who believe. The result of Jesus "being lifted on the cross" and his rising and exaltation to the Father's right hand in heaven is our "new birth in the Spirit" and adoption as sons and daughters of God. God not only redeems us, but he fills us also with his own divine life and power that we might share in his glory.

Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit that we may have the power to be His witnesses and to spread and defend the Gospel by word and action, and to never be ashamed of Christ's Cross. The Holy Spirit gives us his seven-fold gifts of wisdom and understanding, right judgment and courage, knowledge and reverence for God and his ways that we may live God's way of life and serve in the power of his strength. Today we need to ask ourselves whether the effects of Spirit are visible in my life or not? If not, then we need to be born in Spirit and that is only possible through prayer and reconciliation.

Pray and Practise: "Lord, grant that all my thoughts, intentions, actions and responses may be inspired by your Holy Spirit this day and every day."

13 TUE (St. Martin)

REBORN IN THE SPIRIT

Suhail Joseph

Acts 4:32-37

Jn 3:7-15

"Whoever believes in Him may have eternal life"

14 WED

**GOD'S
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE**

Suhail Joseph

Acts 5:17-26
Jn 3:16-21

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...”

When we fall into jealousy we tend to give importance to our pride and forget our moral responsibility to love and care for the other. The Sadducees were respected people in the society but they were filled with pride and self-glorification when they saw the apostles were able to pull the people towards Christ this filled them with jealousy and

they were not able to see the Godly ‘Acts’ of the Apostles. The work of the apostles was an invitation for people to leave the life of sin and darkness and live a life renewed in Spirit.

God sent His only Son to save us from sin. If God’s own Son has come for us then our fears are redundant. We tend to behave like Sadducees at times who were filled with jealousy and because of this, we fail to admire the goodness in our fellow human beings and ultimately fail to experience God’s grace. To be able to receive God’s grace and experience His saving power, we need to shed our jealousy, pride, evil thoughts and actions. Sometimes these things we utilize to put others down and fall into self-glorification, therefore we need to admire the talents and goodness of others and love them as our own families, communities. Then only we will be able to overcome our fears and anxieties to love God and all His creation.

Pray and Practise: “Lord Jesus Christ, your love is better than life itself. May your love consume and transform my life to love and treat everyone equally.

In the first reading, Peter and other disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit and they are ready to give witness to the Lord. When Peter experienced the Risen Lord in his life he was renewed. Our life is transformed when we experience God. They are courageous and ready to give their lives for the sake of Jesus. No one could stop them because they were passionate about preaching the word of God. We should have a similar experience as Peter had because all of us are called to give witness and to share the risen Lord with others.

15 THU

TRUE EXPERIENCE GOD

Vijay Prashanth
D'souza, IMS

Acts 5:27-33

Jn 3:31-36

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life"

In today's Gospel, there is a reciprocal love between Father and Son. The Father knows the Son and loves Him unconditionally. The Father is deeply compassionate and tender at heart that he provides everything to the Son. Jesus says "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe". We believe in Jesus because all of us have some or other experience of Jesus. Jesus tells his disciples that they can believe the words He speaks because God the Father has poured his spirit on him in full measure without keeping anything back. Jesus is the word of God and he gives us his Holy Spirit so that we can recognize his truth and live according to it. We are called to proclaim the Gospel by our words and more importantly, by our deeds. Let us always strive to proclaim the word of God and to share our faith with others.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us the courage to always believe in your name, and to never be shaken in our faith.

16 FRI

EMPATHY SEEKS NO REWARD

Vijay Prashanth
D'souza, IMS

Acts 5:34-42
Jn 6:1-15

"This is really the prophet, he who is to come into the world"

In the first reading, the apostles are ready to suffer for Jesus. The Sanhedrin wanted to kill the apostles. However, Gamaliel stops them with his words of wisdom. He said to the Sanhedrin "if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God you will not be able to overthrow them." We know that God wanted to carry his mission to the whole world. No

one could stop His mission because God has entrusted His mission to each one of us to preach His words and deeds. The apostles rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of his name, in their sufferings they participated in the suffering of Jesus. There were tremendous change and transformation in apostles after the death and resurrection of Jesus. They grew strong in their faith and were ready to give their lives for Jesus.

In the Gospel, Jesus is feeding five thousand people. He was deeply empathetic towards the large crowds that He felt the need to feed them because they were with him and were hungry. The disciples did not believe in Jesus as they could not understand the deeds He performed in their presence. He did many signs and wonders but they were not open to the Spirit. After the miracles, the people were praising him but He withdrew from them. Jesus did not expect any appreciations from them because He was doing the will of his Father. Empathy, therefore calls for an action that does not seek reward.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give me the grace to become more compassionate and sensitive to others.

When a child is in his mother's womb, he is never afraid of anything because he feels safe, nurtured and enjoys the small world in the womb. But when the child is delivered, he cries because he loses the security of his mother's womb where he found himself protected. We see something similar in today's

Gospel, When Jesus was with the disciples, they felt safe and nurtured spiritually but when they felt that Jesus was away from them, they started to lose hope and were gripped by fear of the storm and wind in the sea. But when they see Jesus, they wanted to take him in their boat but immediately the boat reached the shore toward which they were going.

When we lose the presence of Jesus in our lives, we too face problems and hurdles. We are doomed and are afraid of the difficulties which come in the sea of our life. Our boat of life starts sinking in the world of evil. Though Jesus was always with the disciples they did not recognize His presence. In the same way, Jesus is always with us but we don't feel His presence in our lives. We forget that Jesus who is omnipotent, who controls even the wind and the sea, is with us. He can take away the chaos, problems and difficulties of our lives. Surrender to His care and it will make all the difference.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us the spiritual strength to face the problems of our lives and bless us with the Holy Spirit to guide us always to have faith in your holy name. Amen.

17 SAT

SURRENDER TO HIS CARE

Xavier Lawrence

Acts 6:1-7

Jn 6:16-21

"It is I, don't be afraid"

18 SUN (II SUNDAY OF EASTER)

EXPRESS THE DOUBT

Xavier Lawrence

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

1 Jn 2:1-5

Lk 24:35-48

“My Lord and My God”

On the third Sunday of Easter, we are invited to accept the living Christ as our helper and advocate. All the three readings of this Sunday have the relationship between ignorance and faith in common. Jews were waiting for the messiah, but when He came, they become ignorant and rejected him. It is very well interlinked with the second reading where St. Paul says “Anyone who says I know him and does not keep his commandments is a liar refusing to admit the truth.” Many a time, it happens to us that we also become ignorant, we become liars, by not recognizing Jesus in our fellow friends, on the sick people and the stranger, on the poor and outcast. At the same time, we will be waiting for the grace of God but when grace comes through these people we tend to reject like Jewish Leaders.

Today’s Gospel presents Thomas who doubted the resurrection of Christ. Thomas indeed doubted but at the same time he expressed his doubt and became a believer by saying “My Lord and my God.” We may also doubt like Thomas but may never express our doubts; pretending to believe while never truly believing. We may receive the sacrament of confession but not believe in the forgiveness of sins or participate in the Holy Eucharist but not believe that Jesus is present to us. Therefore, we must recognise our limitations and seek Christ to be our faith and strength.

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us to recognise our lack of faith and trust in You and seek your grace to make us full.

In today's first reading we hear that Stephen a man full of God's grace and power performs great wonders and signs among the people. Jesus also spoke about the work of God that we must be doing, if we believe in the son of God, whom He has sent into the world. To 'believe in' involves a total commitment of the whole vision of life that he proposes.

19 MON

**FOOD
ENDURES**

THAT

Boniface, IMS

Acts 6:8-15

Jn 6:22-29

"Believe in him whom he has sent."

As Jesus says, "Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life," because real bread is found in Jesus. It is a different task to live out in society today. It seems at times everything and everyone tries to pull us in directions that take us away from the truth. Good acts seem to cause so much humiliation what God calls us to do that inspires us to leads us to the truth. But we do not do accordingly; it seems that selfish, prideful acts are praised in the majority of society. It's a great blessing when we find people who have a positive way of life lead us to the truth.

Pray and Practise: Lord give us the strength to remain faithful to you. Grant us the courage to say the words of Peter, "Lord, to whom we shall go? You have the words of eternal life." Only God can satisfy the hunger of our heart and soul.

20 TUE

JESUS IS THE TRUE BREAD

Boniface, IMS

Acts 7:51-8:1

Jn 6:30-35

“I am the bread of life”

The Bread of Life Discourse is one of the most important discourses in the life of Jesus while teaching the people. The title “Bread of Life” given to Jesus because Jesus alone is the true bread of life who came down from heaven for the deliverance of the whole sinful humanity. In the Christological context, the use of the ‘Bread of Life’ title is similar to the ‘Light of the World’ title. Jesus explained to His disciples that the bread He was talking about was Himself: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”.

On the other hand, the fact of life is that the ‘Truth’ is always bitter. In the first reading, we come across Stephen who stood up in the court to witness Christ saying that they are all pretty cold-hearted people. Even some of their ancestors did not listen to the prophets when they spoke to them. They have a long history of being close-minded. The court officials do not like the truth of what was being said. They are so cruel that they take him out of the city and stone him to death. Just before his death he prays and forgives his murderers.

Pray and Practise: Let us pray today that we may truly believe and witness that Jesus Christ is the one and only ‘true Bread of life’ and that which never perishes.

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Anselm. He was a Benedictine monk, Archbishop and Doctor of the Church. He was a great Philosopher and Theologian. He developed a method of reasoning which prepared the way for the great thinkers that followed in his footsteps. He is known for his great devotion to Mother Mary.

21 WED (St Anselm)

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Akhilesh Lucas
Soreng, IMS

Acts 8:1b-8
Jn 6:35-40

“Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life”

In today's Gospel Jesus revealed himself as the bread of life. We need to take the first important step of coming to Jesus and to experience for ourselves his incomprehensible and ineffable goodness and love. There is a hunger deep within each one of us, an innate hunger, put there by God himself. It is a hunger for God. Jesus alone can fully satisfy that 'inner hunger'. The Samaritan woman was, convinced that Jesus was not a mere prophet but the Messiah. Her insatiable hunger for life would be fulfilled in Him alone. Once she realized it, she began to spread the news of what Jesus had done in her life. How do we seek to satisfy our hunger? All that seems to us as delightful will only enhance our hunger. Jesus, the Bread of Life, whom we receive through the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist, will satisfy our innate restlessness and hunger. "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Him", says St. Augustine.

Pray and Practise: God Almighty, you are the giver of life and Master of all, help me to recognize you in the day-to-day events of my life. Bless me abundantly that I may be able to experience your love, peace, joy in my life.

22 THU (Mary, Mother of the Society of Jesus)

GOD HAS PLANS FOR YOU

Akhilesh
Soreng, IMS

Lucas

Acts 8:26-40
Jn 6:44-51

“whoever believes has eternal Life”

“No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me,” said Jesus. In this modern and very fast-moving world, we human beings have drawn up elaborate plans for our life. All kinds of evil thoughts and attitudes leading to unwholesome behaviour patterns emerge from within one’s hearts. These thoughts and plans are from our daily life experiences. They cannot

have a lasting impact on our life or that of people around us. All this requires time for the discernment of spirits, without which our decisions can lead us away from the only One who can satisfy our innate desire, to actions that will eventually draw us away from God. A proper discernment brings lasting fruit, ultimately, Eternal life, given by Jesus.

Jesus said, “I am the living bread come down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever.” However, the manna that the people of Israel ate in the desert, died eventually. For the bread that Jesus gives us is his Flesh, the life of the world. Therefore, our hearts and minds must be renewed from within so that I can say with St. Paul, “It’s no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.”

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us to remain in your love so that our every thought and plan may always begin from you and through you be happily ended. Help us to walk with you through the brightest day and darkest night.

The conversion of Saul from a fanatical persecutor of Christians to an ardent lover of Christ is notable in the history of Christianity. While he was on the way to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Why are you persecuting me?" This incident brings a profound transformation to Saul and becomes Paul. This event made

23 FRI (St. George)

CONVERSION OF HEART

Manjit Indwar, IMS

Acts 9:1-20
Jn 6:52-59

"Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

him open his inner heart and mind and confess his evil works. And then he goes for preaching that Jesus is the son of God. The incident of Saul invites us to look deep down in our hearts and minds and examine, that what are the obstacles within me which block me to encounter Jesus.

Jesus says "very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." The people did not understand what Jesus was talking about they wondered what he meant about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Eating his flesh and drinking blood is the means of union with the Father and Jesus his Son. Generally, we eat and drink with whom we are closely associated. And Jesus says, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me" (Jn.4:34). As the Son lives by the Father so those who are united to the Son will have eternal life. It is an inward and spiritual act of the heart; it has nothing to do with the blood.

Pray and Practise: Lord Guide us with your true wisdom and knowledge to know and follow you closely in our daily life.

24 SAT

LIFE IN THE WORDS

Manjit Indwar IMS

Acts 9:31-42

Jn 6:60-69

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

Peter through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ had started curing people. Many witnessed his teaching and healing; thus, the numbers were increasing. We are instruments of God to manifest His glory through our deeds and words. Through us, people come to know our values system and the motivation behind our action. Peter sets an example before us. Jesus is the ultimate giver of life who also works with the guidance of His Father.

Jesus says no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father. Hearing this, many of them turn away from him but disciple stick to Him because they knew only in Jesus there is fullness of life. Words of Jesus are alive and it should affect us. Jesus himself says that Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. There is no force in love. Jesus does not regret it even if some people unfollow Him. Those who have not found meaning in the life of Christ easily turn away from God. Even in our times, in our modern world, we cannot tell anyone to remain in our life; simply we let them be free. If they have known your value, they will stand with you in all circumstances.

Pray and Practise: Pray for the grace that our faith might be deepened in Christ who is the source of life and may we become His witnesses through our words and deeds.

The Gospel of John is a unique Gospel where he presents himself as a beloved disciple. St John understood Jesus closely; he understood Jesus' mission on earth to love one another. Why did He love us? We read in 1 John 3:8 that, 'God is love'. God is love and so Jesus loves everyone to save us all from sins. He took up the cross to redeem us from our sinful ways.

'No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father' (Jn. 10:18). Jesus's whole life was an act of obedience to his Father and His commandments. Jesus chose to surrender Himself to the will of the Father and cross was a consequence of that total surrender. It is told that in the First World War there was a young French soldier who was seriously wounded. His arm was so badly smashed that it had to be amputated. The surgeon was grieved that he must go through life maimed. So, he waited beside his bedside to tell him the bad news about his arm. When he recovered his consciousness and opened his eyes surgeon told him that he could not be able to save his arm but to the surgeon's surprise, the soldier replied, 'I give it up for France'. Jesus did not lose his life, but He gave it up. The cross was not forced upon him, He willingly accepted it for us.

Pray and Practise: Let us pray that we may also learn to take up crosses that come along the way of loving our neighbours.

25 SUN (IV SUNDAY OF EASTER / Vocation Sunday)

CROSS IN LOVE

Rakesh Kumar, IMS

Acts 4:8-12

1Jn 3:1-2

Jn 10:11-18

"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved"

26 MON

GOOD SHEPHERDS

Rakesh Kumar,
IMS

Acts 11:1-18
Jn 10:1-10

"I am the good shepherd"

Just as God was close to the poor one can see His deepest concern for the shepherd community of Israel. From receiving the first offering of Abel, God showed Himself as gracious to them. Good News of Jesus was first proclaimed to the shepherds (Lk. 2:8-12). With the shepherd's crook, he could catch and pull back any sheep which was straying away. His staff was the weapon with which he defended himself and his flock against marauding beasts and robbers. It is from the fruits that we know who the shepherd is and who is the thief. In the Gospel, we see Jesus comparing Himself to a shepherd to show us how deeply related God is to His flocks.

Do we recognize the voice of the shepherd in our lives? Today let us pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, that many will be inspired to show true love, to the point of sacrificing many other attractive options to become priests of Jesus or to follow him in religious life. In our times as in the time of Prophet Ezekiel, people are given over to pillage and are food for every wild beast. May Jesus the Good Shepherd raise many shepherds after His own heart to lay down their lives and carry His sheep on their shoulders. Similarly, it is also important that we pray for those who have chosen to follow the path of God in the priesthood and religious life that they may be guided and accompanied by the guiding hands of the Eternal Shepherd.

Pray and Practise: Jesus the good shepherd, guide and protect all those who have consecrated themselves to You and inspire many more to follow that path.

The readings of today talk about two categories of people: the traditionalists and liberals. Traditionalists are against the change that Jesus is bringing in and the liberals are open to adaptation without losing its links to the Law. We are invited to be liberal in bringing the 'Good News' to the world. In the 1st reading, Stephan's martyrdom serves to catapult Christianity far and wide. Further, we read, a group of Jewish community preaches Jesus not only to Jews but beyond the borders of the Hellenists to the Gentiles. Being a follower of Christ, it is our task to go beyond the traditional, cultural and social barriers to preach the Gospel to the unloved, uncared, and unwanted, even at the cost of imprisonment, nay, even to the point of death.

27 TUE (St Peter Canisius)

MESSIAH QUESTION IN

Roshan T.

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

"The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me."

In the Gospel, Jesus is being questioned regarding the 'Messiah'. Indeed, Jesus answered their question through his words and deeds which affirms that he is from God. Knowing the truth, they failed to accept Jesus as 'the Son of God' due to their rigidity and traditionalist mentality. They questioned Jesus not to follow or to know the truth but to prove their supremacy over Jesus' teaching. We are no better. We do the same to promote our ideas, concepts, traditions and mislead the Lord's sheep.

Pray and Practise: Lord, fill us with your Spirit of love, peace, justice and mercy. So that we may go beyond our cultural, traditional, social background to bring the Good News to all of creation.

28 WED (Sts Louis de Montfort & Peter Chanel)

BELIEVING IS LIVING

Roshan T.

Acts 12:24-13:5

Jn 12:44-50

“Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in Him who sent me.”

Jesus is the light of the world who came into this world to show the way to the Father. He did not come of his own accord but rather to do the will of the Father. “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me.” Teaching, preaching and healing, whatever he did; was on behalf of his Heavenly Father. Nothing was done on his own. “I always do the things that please my Father”, said Jesus. The Father’s will was and is only to save humanity from the clutches of sin. By becoming the light of the world, He taught us to walk in freedom without fear.

To inherit Eternal life, one has to accept and believe in Him as a Messiah because he is the Face of his Heavenly Father. Thus, Jesus could say; “Whoever believes and sees me, believes and sees him who sent me.” Jesus, the Saviour condemns no one due to faithlessness but, if one denies his teaching and prefers to be in darkness, then he/she has to be accountable for his wrongdoings on the day of Judgment. As Christians, it is our responsibility to do God’s will in our lives, to accomplish Christ’s mission of serving humanity, thus the Word of God continues to advance and gain adherents. Let us repent and believe in His words.

Pray and Practise: Let us become the light of the world through our words and deeds, by believing in Him who was sent into this world to free us from our enslavement to sin.

The first reading of today communicates to us that the Lord our God protected our ancestors in the wilderness and gave them the land which he had promised them. God accompanied them through His Judges, Prophets, Kings and finally through His own Son. In the first reading, St. Paul and St. Barnabas become the mediators and remind the people, how God helped their ancestors in the wilderness and thus to stay steadfast in following the Lord.

29 THU (St. Catherine of Siena)

SERVANT LIKE THE MASTER

Stephan Masih

Acts 13:13-25

Jn 13:16-20

"I have come to serve, not to be served"

The Gospel presents that no slave is greater than the master; no messenger outranks the one who sent him/her. By narrating all these, Jesus advises His followers to serve each other in the same way as He, their Lord and master, served them by washing their feet. Jesus wants His disciples to continue His ministry and His desires by serving one another, even if it is to wash each other's feet. Today, Jesus Christ invites us to serve. Being a servant of others is not that easy, because we have to become humble, we have to transform our lives to see God in others. Serving is a blessing even in situations when we do not have sufficient things but out of love, we share our things with others, who have nothing. Love helps us to transform the world and our hearts too. So, the question for us today will be if we want to serve one another or be served? Let's examine ourselves.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, help me this day to imitate you as a humble servant of all. Inflammate my heart with a great zeal for the souls every movement of my life; I may bring your love to your people.

30 FRI (St. Pius V)
ONE IN LOVE

Stephan Masih

Acts 13:26-33

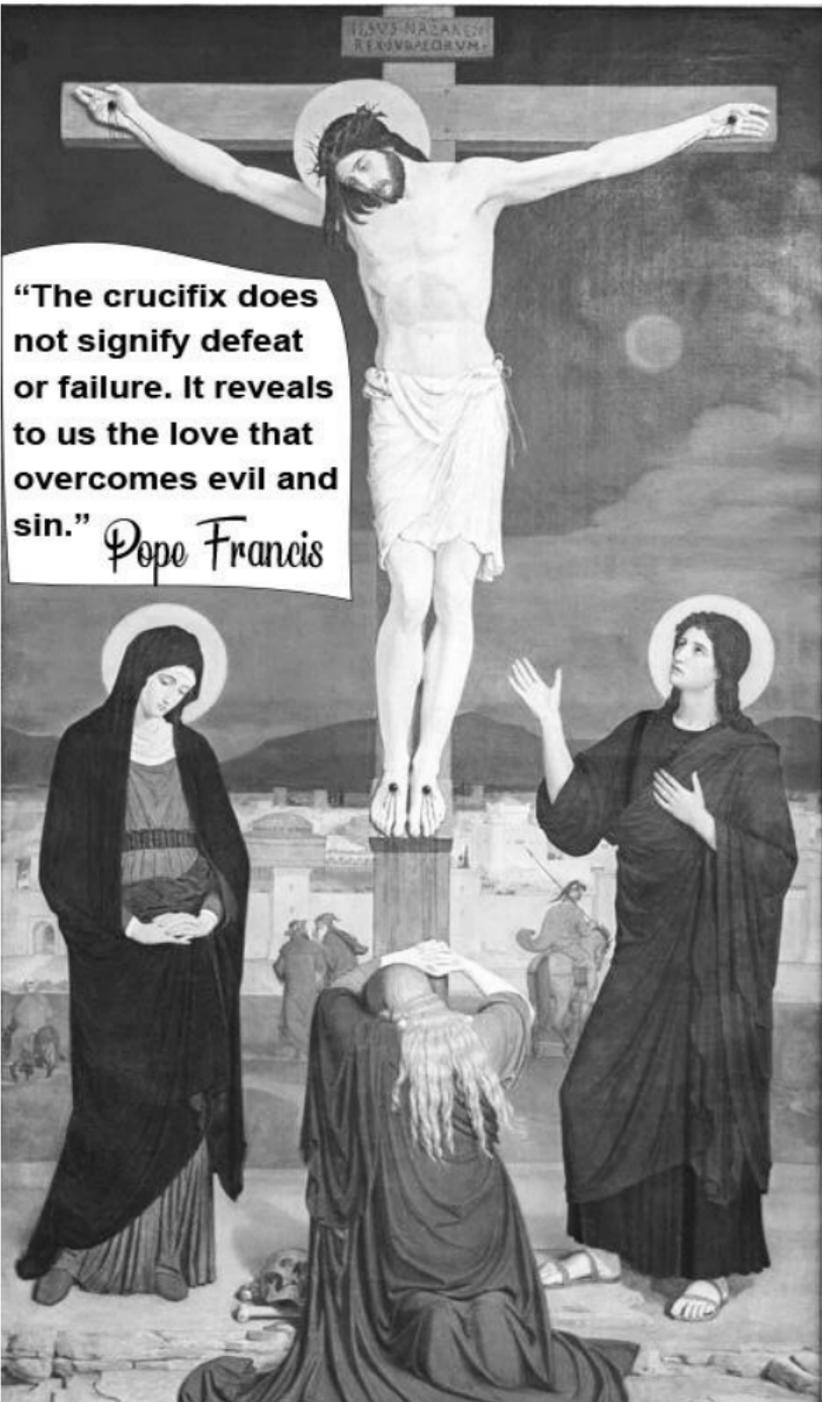
Jn 14:1-6

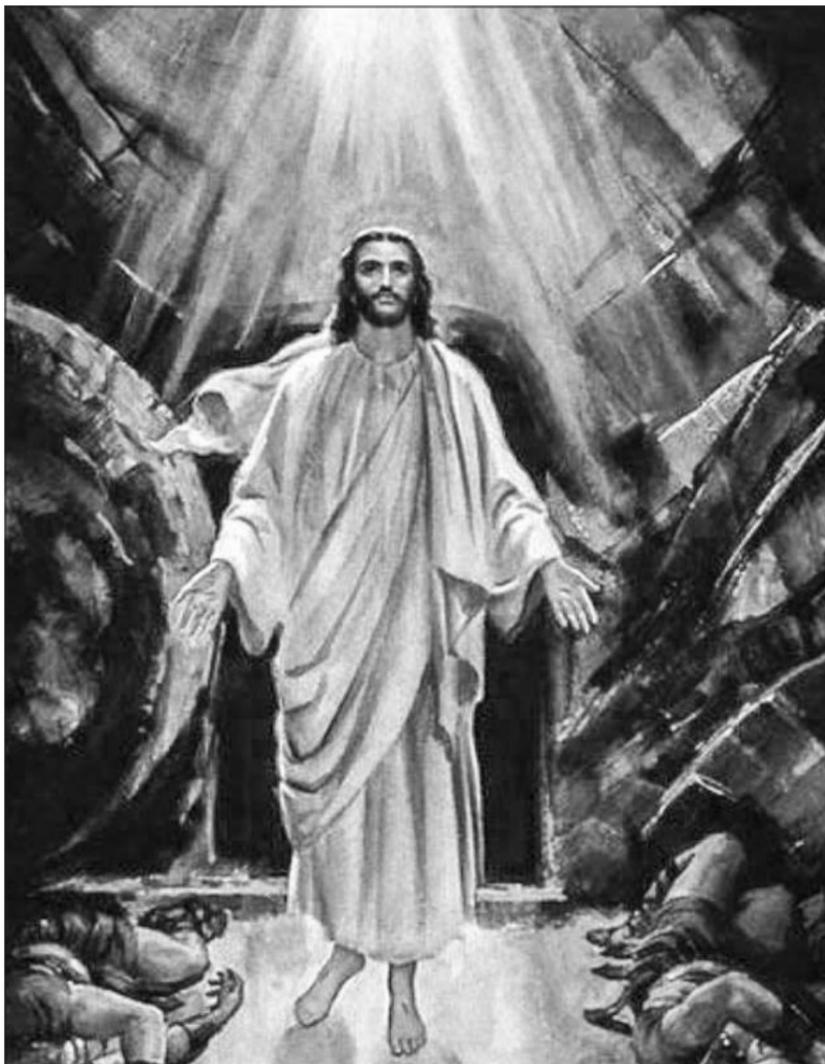
*“Believe me that I am
in the Father and the
Father in me”*

In the first reading of today, St. Paul makes it clear that Jerusalem’s leader and the people of the city failed to recognize the true identity of Jesus as the Messiah. St. Paul and St. Barnabas proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ whom God raised from the dead and made Him the protector of all human beings.

In the Gospel, St. John highlights that Jesus is the way to the father. We believe in a God who is invisible; we believe in His love, though we have never seen His form; we are conscious of His care, though we have never touched the hand that guides and protects. In the same way, we need to believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God who is ever ready to help us in all of the dangers. Today Jesus tells us to have faith in God and also in Him. Those who see Jesus see the Father. ‘He lives in me and I in him.’ Jesus longs for us to come to Him and have a deep personal relationship with Him. He calls us to be in communion with Him. Jesus strengthens us by saying to open our minds and hearts to Him and His presence. Today let’s take all our troubles and fears to Jesus. He will walk with us and help us to face them and he will gladden our hearts because Jesus truly is our way, truth and life. Strengthened in this relationship, we will be able to reach out to others in ways Jesus would want us.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, help us to believe in you, the beloved who never leaves us alone in our day today life and thus become that love for others.





“We ask the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace. Yes Christ is our peace, and through him to implore peace for all the world.”

- Pope Francis

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 the 'AVE'.



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