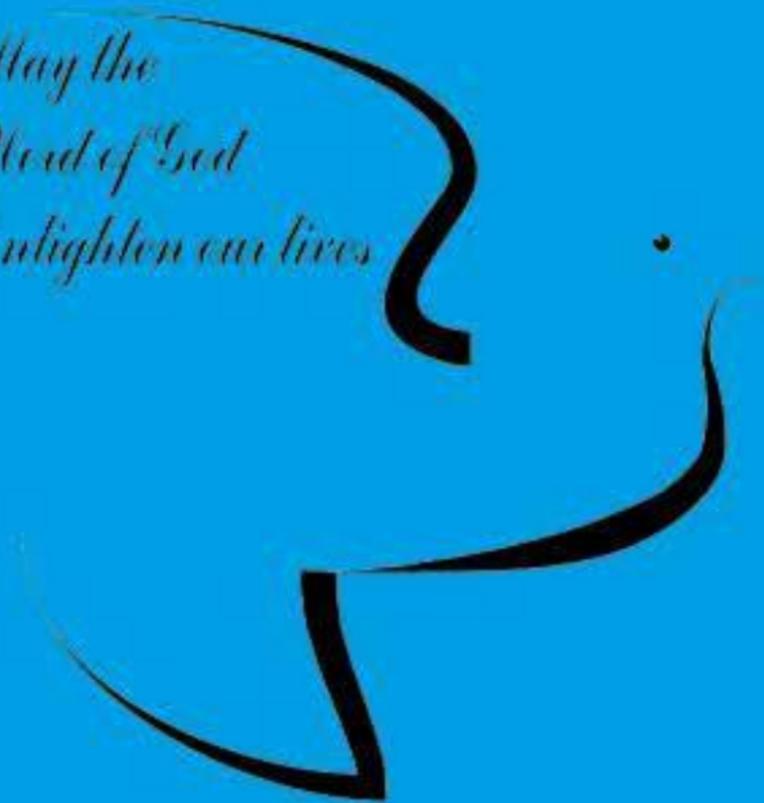
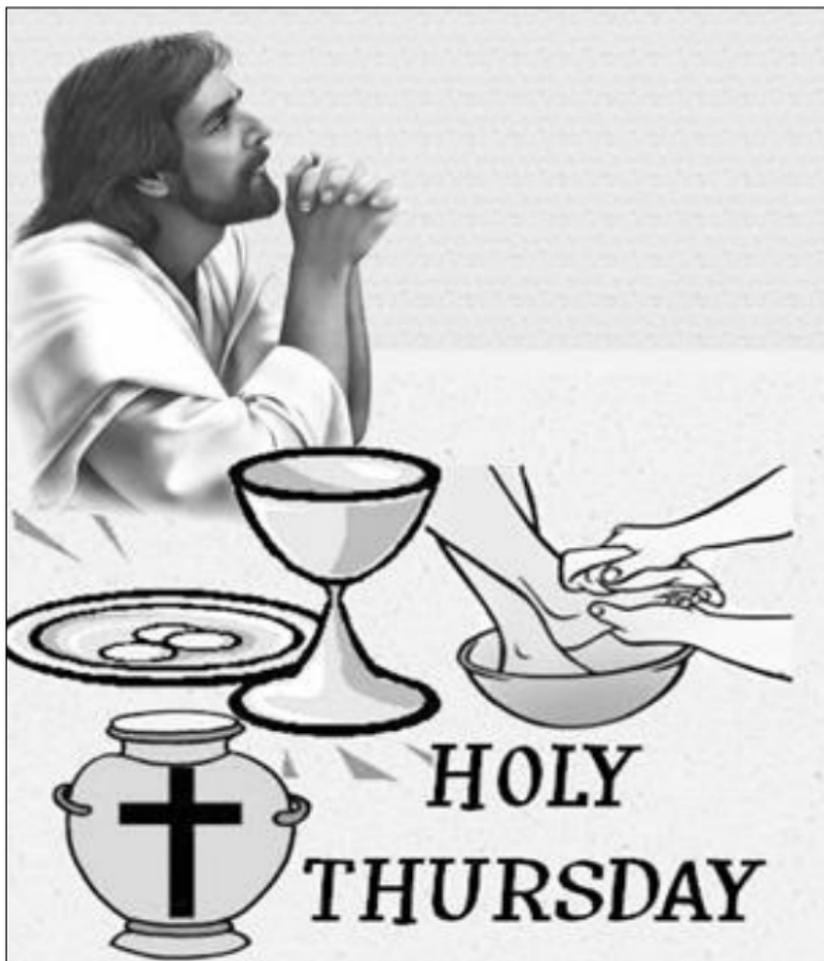


*May the
Word of God
Enlighten our lives*



A V E

APRIL 2022



“... this do in remembrance of me.” (Lk 22:19)”

POPE’S PRAYER INTENTION

Health Care Workers

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

**The Emmaus
Experience**

Dn. Valentine
Sinduria, SJ

(EDITORIAL)

The month of April brings the amalgamation of three seasons of the Catholic Liturgical Calendar, namely, the Lenten Season, the Holy Triduum and Easter season. The Lenten season and the Holy Triduum prepare the way for the joy of Easter. Easter brings the gifts of forgiveness, faith, reconciliation and

empowerment. Easter reminds us that “Jesus is risen from the dead!” Easter celebrates the victory of Jesus over death. It reminds us that “death is not the final word, life is.”

Easter experience is the experience of life in abundance and life in spirit. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the unfathomable gift of God the Father for humanity and the fulfillment of His promise. Easter bestows upon human beings the gift of the absence of fear. It bestows upon them the gifts of service, love, hope and peace in Christ.

Easter invites us to experience the joy and glory of resurrection of Jesus Christ. It invites us participate in the new creation inaugurated by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are called to walk on the Road to Emmaus where Jesus, the stranger, becomes the interpreter and revealer of the Scripture. The walk on the Road to Emmaus is accompaniment of the poor, the marginalized and the migrants. The process of accompaniment of these vulnerable people, who are defense-less, homeless, status-less and data-less, can become the starting point of the Emmaus experience for us. The Emmaus experience is the experience of being renewed and empowered in the spirit of the Risen Lord. The Emmaus experience is the spiritual experience

which encourages and inspires us to share the joy of resurrection and proclaim the Word of God. Let the Spirit of the Risen Lord empower us to share the joy of Easter! Alleluia!



“Easter is the event that brought radical news for every human being, for history and for the world: the triumph of life over death; it is the feast of reawakening and of rebirth. Let us allow our lives to be conquered and transformed by the Resurrection!” **Pope Francis**

01 FRI

PROPHETIC VOCATION

Alok Ekka, SJ

Wis 2: 1a, 12-22

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

"He who sent me is true."

This is what we find in both the readings, a conspiracy against the righteous. In the first reading, the ungodly men sound like everything is in their control and plan to do with away the righteous one. In the Gospel, Jesus is searched for in order that He be killed as He was becoming a threat to the scribes and Pharisees. However, towards the end of both the readings, God's providence is explicated; the righteous ones are saved at the brink of their death. There is a gradual movement from conspiracy and condemnation to God's intervention to rescue and vindicate the righteous.

Even today, we find many innocents who suffer unjustly. This takes me back to the arrest of Fr. Stan and how the antagonists fabricated the evidences to sue him until his death. His prophetic death and the legacy that he left behind invite us today to live our prophetic vocation fearlessly. How liberating would it be if we also partake in the salvific act of God by living the prophetic vocation? Let us remember that God keeps dying in us whenever we are too fearful to venture out of ourselves!

Pray and Practise: Lord, give me the courage to live my prophetic vocation such that I always bear witness to You fearlessly.

Both the readings of the day invite us to take efforts to 'know' the Lord. In the first reading, prophet Jeremiah experiences God as the one who judges righteously. He goes on to say that God made known to him wait patiently for the intervention of God. Similarly in the Gospel, Jesus makes himself known as 'the prophet to come'. That was recognized by the temple police and Nicodemus whereas the self-deceived Pharisees fail to recognize Jesus as 'the prophet to come.'

02 SAT (St. Francis of Paola)

TO KNOW THE LORD

Wilson Kujur, SJ

Jer 11: 18-20

Jn 7: 40-53

"This is really the prophet."

Often we also behave like the self-deceiving Pharisees. When we claim ourselves as knowing everything, our eyes and minds get closed that we fail to that we accept anything that others say. In spite of realizing our arrogance at some times, we continue doing what we do, thinking that others may demean us or look down on us. It is not too late to repent for such acts of ours. All that we need to do is to keep our minds and hearts open to what others say. This way, not only would we recognize God who keeps revealing Himself to us through others, but also we become friendly with others. Let us not always find fault with others, rather try to appreciate the good that the others do and live a positive life.

Pray and Practise: Lord, make us humble and open to the Spirit so that we may recognize You in others and thereby form a friendly and loving society.

03 SUN (V SUNDAY OF LENT)

WITNESSES OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Amit Lakra, SJ

Is 43: 16-21

Phil 3: 8-14

Jn 8: 1-11

“Go... and do not sin again.”

towards the goal of knowing Christ. Similarly in the Gospel, Jesus asks the woman caught in adultery to go from her burdensome past into liberating freedom.

In one or the other way, we are all in desperate longing for liberation and God's mercy. Unfortunately, we hardly recognize the mercy of God that is in front of us and as a result emulate Pharisees by accusing others. What we do forget is that when we accuse others, we stand accused. When all her accusers are left, the sinless Jesus stays to show the woman mercy and thereby he offers her a chance of liberation. In fact, the woman caught in adultery reflects each one of us. In her freedom, we see ourselves freed. We are adulterers and yet we have not been stoned. If that woman does not deserve forgiveness, then neither do we. Let us, hence, forego our sinful past and begin to live a life of holiness that pleases God.

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us live a life of holiness and not accuse others.

It is said, “Unanimity often endangers justice.” In both the readings of the day, we find the imperfection of human judgment. In the first reading, the two elders condemn Susanna and, in the Gospel, the Pharisees condemn Jesus. However, what encourages us is the faith of Susanna as she cried out to the lord and of Jesus as He believed that His Father always bears witness about Him. Yes! When unanimity trumps justice, God does intervene.

04 MON (St. Isidore)

THE NEED TO DISCERN WELL

Celestine Minj, SJ

Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62

Jn 8: 12-20

“If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

In the context of the ‘Synod on Synodality’, today’s readings bring home a fitting message that unanimity does not determine the truth. Even one person, like Daniel in the first reading, choosing to dissent can change the verdict of the assembly and reveal the truth. It only means that what we need is a proper discernment so that the innocents do not suffer because of our decisions. Today, weak, vulnerable women and children represent Susanna of our time. It is very painful to hear the news of victims of rape, sexual harassment and murder every day. We have a greater responsibility not to conform to the majority of the society, but to dissent and protect the ‘Susannas’ of our time.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, give us the strength to stand against injustice and listen to everyone before we decide so that we arrive at a decision that promotes the life of all, the oppressed in particular.

05 TUE (St. Vincent Ferrer)

GOSSIPING AND GRUMBLING

Nelson Minj, SJ

Num 21: 4-9

Jn 8: 21-30

“...everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.”

of their sin of grumbling against God, in the Gospel we see the Pharisees choosing death because of their sin of disbelief in Jesus. Yes! Gossiping and grumbling that most of us are got used to, symbolizes the venomous serpent that kills people.

Just like those who looked at the serpent made of bronze lived, we also are called to look at Jesus who is crucified for us so that we may live and let others live. By our gossiping and grumbling, we are killing many people. We kill their aspirations, their growth and eventually their very lives. Thus the readings of the day, tell us that it is not too late to befriend others such that they also get to live their lives peacefully and meaningfully.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, grant us the courage to look to You whenever we are bitten by our own sins of disbelief and gossiping so that we may live and let others live peacefully and joyously.

We have two imageries of serpents in the first reading of the day – one that takes life and one that gives life. The serpent that takes life is the venomous one which was the result of the Israelites’ grumbling against God and Moses. On the other hand, the serpent that gives life is the redeeming one which is the result of God’s mercy. While we see in the first reading the Israelites dying because

In today's Gospel, we perceive a contentious dialogue between Jesus and the Jews that portrays 'truth and freedom'. Jesus speaks of himself as the way to truth and freedom. However, the Jews did not understand Him as they were enslaved to sin. The Jews defend themselves as the descendants of Abraham and that they have never been slaves to anyone.

Nevertheless, the slavery Jesus speaks of is the slavery of sin and its hindrance to becoming a true disciple.

A true disciple requires truth and freedom to become a genuine believer of Christ. Many individuals fall into the hands of false leaders who lead them to evil ways. Mahatma Gandhi perceived Jesus as the way to truth and adopted *Satyagraha* as one of his life principles. His zeal for truth and freedom is reflected in his words and deeds. Today, false mesmerizing voices within Christianity also could woo us to live a life that is opposed to the ways of Christ. We could be enslaved by false voices that become a block to truly imitate, love and follow Christ. Lent offers us the time to examine and amend our lives according to the teachings of the Church and adopt the values of Christ. In this manner let us all grow in Him, and follow the truth.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us Your knowledge and wisdom to differentiate the true voices from the false ones and lead our lives according to Your values.

06 WED

TRUTH AND FREEDOM IN JESUS

Arockia Sasi, SJ

Dn 3: 14-21, 24/91-25/92,
28/95

Jn 8: 31-42

*"...the truth will make you
free."*

07 THU (St. John Baptist de la Salle)

PROMISE AND FAITH

Ignatius Tete, SJ

Gn 17: 3-9

Jn 8: 51-59

“Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.”

In today's first reading, God makes a covenant with Abram and changes his name from Abram to Abraham. He blesses Abraham as the father of a multitude of nations and promises the land of Canaan to him and his descendants. The change of name and the promises imply a special relationship between God and Abraham.

Yes! It is a covenantal relation, meaning it is perpetual. In the gospel, Jesus says that those who keep His word will not see death.

Death is universal and there are no exemptions. When such is the case, what does Jesus mean by saying 'will not see death'? What Jesus is speaking about is spiritual death. As we know, Jesus is a descendant of Abraham and yet was before him and still is; for God can never die. If that is so, then all those who firmly believe in Him and in His Word can never spiritually die. They will only have eternal life in Him.

The readings, thus, invite us to respond in faith to the promises of God. As it is, every promise also comes with a mission and commitment. God will reward every person according to how s/he responds. Let us, hence, ponder over our commitment to the mission of God and resolve to do our best to fulfil it.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us the grace to respond generously and committedly to the plans You have for us so that we may, in turn, become channels of Your blessing to others and the world.

In the first reading, we find Jeremiah being persecuted on account of his prophecy. It seems that not everybody wants to listen to him and mend their sinful ways; even his friends abandon him. He is stuck between an insistent God and a resistant people. However, his confidence in God's faithfulness and saving justice is admirable, one that all of us need to grow in as we face trials and temptations from our own people – be our family members or neighbours.

08 FRI

TRUST IN GOD

Anuranjan Tigga, SJ

Jer 20: 10-13

Jn 10: 31-42

“...the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”

In the Gospel, Jesus' adversaries want to stone Him as they accuse Him of blasphemy. Jesus does not run or hide, rather confronts them. This is the other lesson that we could learn from today's readings, i.e., to stand firm in our faith and confront those who confront us. Given the multi-religious context in India, it is highly possible that many of us face similar situations in our day-to-day lives. During such situations, while we have to behave prudently, we are also called to bear witness to our Lord by confronting our accusers. Only then, can we really bear fruits. Thus, the readings of the day invite the religious leaders to teach and proclaim the Word of God with courage and the laity to attentively pay heed to it and respond appropriately. This requires us to grow in our intimacy with God so that, like Jesus and Jeremiah, we could carry on God's works undeterred.

Pray and Practise: Lord, increase our faith such that we do Your works enthusiastically and without any fear.

09 SAT

CHILDREN OF GOD

Sanjay Tigga, SJ

Ez 37: 21-28

Jn 11: 45-57

“They shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

Our faith transcends languages, national boundaries and political differences and unites us all as citizens of the world of God. However, we continue to experience various kinds of discrimination that are social, religious and political in nature. We have become victims of greed, pride and jealousy which impede us from sharing our resources with others. Individualism has prevailed over

an egalitarian value-based life.

In the first reading, prophet Ezekiel bears the good news of the restoration of Israel, i.e., the Israelites, scattered in other nations, will be brought back to a united kingdom. The prophecy also echoes the covenant made to Noah and Abraham in perpetuity that ‘YHWH will be their God and they will be His people.’ Therefore, the good news calls for purification and cleansing of any infidelity among the people in respect to the covenant. In the Gospel, we see how the high priest Caiaphas prophesied the death of Jesus for the sake of the nation. The death of Jesus, however, is not only for one nation, but to bring into one-fold all the nations of the world as children of God. This is an all-inclusive project and as such, no one is outside the purview of salvation in Jesus. His death and resurrection unite us all into one nation under one God. Let us, therefore, treat others as our brothers and sisters and thereby bear witness to Jesus, our Lord.

Pray and Practise: Lord, grant us the grace to be effective witnesses of hope and fraternal love to all the nations of the world.

The Palm Sunday marks the Lord's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem and thereby the beginning of His Passion. Today's first reading from the book of Isaiah prophesizes that the chosen servant, the Messiah, would freely accept His sufferings and death; for, He knows that God would not put Him to shame. The second reading tells us how Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross and therefore God exalted him. The

10 SUN (PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION)

HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE

Suresh John Tirkey, SJ

Is 50: 4-7

Phil 2: 6-11

Lk 22: 14 -- 23: 56

"...yet, not my will but yours be done."

Gospel gives the account of Jesus' Passion.

By recalling Jesus' journey to the Cross, the prayers and scriptures in today's liturgy invite us to a deeper union with our Lord. They prepare us to meaningfully participate in the Passion of our Lord so that we understand how much Jesus suffered for all of us and that we remain faithful to His unconditional love that led Him to the Cross. Yes! What Jesus experienced in His passion is a manifestation of God's overwhelming love for you and me. As we begin the Holy Week, our focus is not only on what happened to Jesus but also, and more importantly, on what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did for our salvation. Let us walk with Jesus in His passion journey and be present to the emotions, the sorrow and the pain that He went through for our redemption.

Pray and Practise: Loving Jesus, help us resonate with You as we journey along with You in Your Passion for us all.

11 MON

RESONATING WITH JESUS

Arockia Raj, SJ

Is 42: 1-7

Jn 12: 1-11

“You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

Jesus raising Lazarus from his death is one of the main reasons, as told in the Gospel of John, for the crucifixion of Jesus. As we are in the Holy Week, the Church invites us to understand the interior movements of the mind and heart of Jesus who is on His way to Calvary. Today’s Gospel is one such reading wherein we are called to ‘look at and treat’ Jesus just as any other human being who is in great distress and who knows what is going to happen to Him in the near future. Yes! In today’s Gospel, we are looking at a Jesus who beckons His disciples and followers to start resonating with Him and understand what His ministry has been all about. In defending Mary by saying, “You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me,” Jesus is neither seeking self-glory nor devaluing the poor; rather, He is trying to emphasize what is more important between serving Him and serving the poor.

In this regard, one might ask, “Aren’t we serving God by serving the poor?” We are, indeed. However, we are not to keep aside the due importance to be given to God in the name of ‘serving the poor’. On the other hand, if we are able to resonate with the feelings of Christ, how much more efficient would our ministries of serving the poor be?

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us resonate with You so that we understand You better and do our ministries more efficiently than now.

As narrated in today's Gospel, all of Jesus' disciples are put to the test as Jesus prepares to make the final and ultimate sacrifice of His own life for their sake and for the sake of the entire world. What is the difference between the attitude of Peter and that of Judas in the test they underwent? Both of them, in a way, abandon Jesus. However, the difference between them lies in the development of their subsequent acts. While Judas deliberately betrays His Master and allows darkness to overcome him completely, Peter, in all his weakness and fear, denies Jesus. Yes! Judas' act was cold and premeditated while that of Peter was never in his mind. In fact, Peter wanted to follow Jesus even if it meant laying down his life for Jesus. Besides, upon realizing what they have done, Peter decided to repent while Judas decided to hang himself. After all, isn't the love of Jesus for us unconditional?

As we are called to intently resonate with Jesus during the Holy Week, let us ask ourselves, "Upon the realization of my sin, who do I feel more like? Like Peter or like Judas?" Let us remember: it takes more courage to accept one's mistake and repent for it than to simply give in to the consequences of what one has done.

Pray and Practise: Lord, give us the mental disposition and strength needed to accept our faults and repent for them lest we give in to the pressure of the world.

12 TUE

REPENT OR GIVE IN?

Simon Horo, SJ

Is 49: 1-6

Jn 13: 21-33, 36-38

"Now the Son of Man has been glorified and God has been glorified in him."

13 WED

**SPENDING TIME
WITH JESUS**

Wilson Kandulna, SJ

Is 50: 4-9a

Mt 26: 14-25

*“He took his place with
the twelve...”*

In the Gospel reading, we see the narration of the Passover meal that Jesus has with His disciples. The Passover meal is very important for the Jews since it is the recalling of the liberation of their ancestors from the bondage of the Egyptians. However, the Passover meal of Jesus is different from that of the traditional one. ‘The Last Supper’ signifies Jesus’ spiritual communion with His disciples.

The purpose of the meal is to bring the members together, share life and listen to one another. Traditionally, it is said that those who eat and dip hands in the same bowl will be faithful to each other and never betray one another; for, dipping hands together for eating creates a bond of companionship or discipleship. However, in the case of Judas, it is just the other way around. By dipping his hand into the bowl with Jesus, Judas throws away his communion with Jesus and goes on his way. He has come to consider wealth as something more important than his relationship with God.

We also, at times, behave like Judas, don’t we? We become so attached to wealth and gadgets, we hardly have time to think about or relate with God. As we are called to intently resonate with Jesus during the Holy Week, let us ask ourselves, “Between God and the gadgets that I regularly use, who is life-giving for me? Who do I spend more time with?”

Pray and Practise: Lord, help me overcome my inordinate attachments towards material things and spend more time with You.

Once upon a time, there were twin brothers. One of them was very notorious; he was involved in stealing things and fighting with others. The other, on the other hand, was a God-fearing man. One day, the notorious brother got into a dispute with a person and, in the process, killed him. When police chased him, he came to his twin brother and pleaded to save him. As a result of his love for his brother, the God-fearing innocent brother swapped his shirt for the blood-stained shirt of his notorious brother, handed himself over to the prosecutors and got hanged. If this sacrificial love of his innocent brother doesn't change the attitude of the notorious twin brother, nothing ever will. On the other hand, if the notorious brother decides to become a good person, then the shirt that he swapped with his loving brother will always remain as something that keeps reminding him of the sacrificial love of his brother and the need for him to live a good and moral life.

If we continue to live an immoral and sinful life, then the Eucharist that Jesus has instituted today is only a ritual. On the other hand, if we decide to live a morally good life, then the Eucharistic celebration is an ever-reminding Sacrament of God's sacrificial love for us. What is it going to be for us from today onwards?

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us understand the true meaning behind the Eucharistic celebration so that we participate in it meaningfully.

14 THU (MAUNDY THURSDAY)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF JESUS

Akhilesh Kumar, SJ

Ex 12: 1-8, 11-14

1 Cor 11: 23-26

Jn 13: 1-15

“Do this in remembrance of me.”

**15 FRI (GOOD
FRIDAY OF THE
LORD'S PASSION)**

**HEALED THROUGH
HIS WOUNDS**

Ajay Paulus Minz, SJ

Is 52: 13 -- 53: 12

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

Jn 18: 1 -- 19: 42

*"...by his bruises we
are healed."*

What does Good Friday mean to us today? When we look around us, we see families breaking apart, individualism invading society, religious fundamentalists terrorizing people in the name of religion, intellectuals and social activists being silenced, freedom of speech being denied and the cry of the poor and that of the marginalized for justice growing louder. Is Christ not being crucified in these people? The Good Friday calls us to witness the greatest ever sacrifice made in the history of humanity and moreover invites us to see the crucified Jesus in the people who are suffering regularly and in those who suffer unjustly. Yes! Our Lord Jesus is getting crucified every day in those who are persecuted because they raised their voices in support of the oppressed and did their best for the wellbeing of all. If only we also do our part in alleviating the suffering of such people, then the Good Friday serves its purpose. Otherwise, we also indirectly crucify Jesus.

As we are called to intently resonate with Jesus during the Holy Week, let us ask ourselves, "Are we going to stop people from getting crucified or are we going to crucify others?" What is it going to be from today onwards?

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us understand the true meaning of Your crucifixion lest we crucify others by means of our inactions when injustice is done to them.

Traditionally, Saturdays within the liturgical calendar of the Church are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This ancient tradition developed in part due to the belief that, as others were filled with fear and confusion, Mother Mary kept vigil on the first-ever Holy Saturday in prayerful anticipation of Jesus' resurrection. She knew her Son would rise. She had 'hope beyond hope' and her faith was certain. Her love kept her vigilant as she awaited the return of her Son.

16 SAT

**HOLY SATURDAY
WITH MOTHER
MARY**

For this reason, Holy Saturday is an ideal day to contemplate on the pondering heart of our Blessed Mother. There are several times in Sacred Scriptures where we are told that Mother Mary pondered the mysteries of her Son's life in her heart. 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. The Blessed Mother held His dead body in her arms and pondered where His spirit had gone. And today she keeps vigil, pondering His imminent return to her. Come! Let us go and keep vigil along with our Mother Mary.

Prayer: Dearest Mother Mary, on that first Holy Saturday, you kept vigil for your Son. You allowed the divine gift of hope to grow within you and you allowed that hope to be your strength in the midst of the horror of the Cross. Pray for me that I may ponder your beautiful heart this day so that I too maybe filled with hope as I endure the challenges of this earthly life. Give me a heart of joyful anticipation as I await the grace of new life our Lord so deeply desires to bestow upon me. Amen.

17 SUN (EASTER SUNDAY)

WITNESSES OF THE RISEN LORD

Alok Ekka, SJ

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43

Col 3:1-4 Or 1 Cor

5: 6b-8

Jn 20 :1-9

“...he saw and believed.”

In one of our mission stations where the Catholics are very few, a person of other faith asked a priest one day, “Father, what is this Easter that you celebrate? You claim that your God Jesus was killed and was raised from the dead! If you are convinced, then should you not tell others also, so that everyone could know of this great miraculous event? See, I have been your neighbour for almost 30 years and none of you talked to me about it!” In the world where the news spreads in a fraction of a second, how much are we to proclaim the Risen Christ?

As followers of Jesus, we have not completely done justice to our faith. For, we have not fully explained to the people the significance of the historical Jesus and His works and above all His resurrection. If not for the resurrection of Jesus, Christianity wouldn't be there today. If such is the importance of Jesus' resurrection, aren't we supposed to proclaim this Good News fearlessly to the whole of creation, to all the people of goodwill? Our response to this question relies on the fact how much we ourselves personally believe in the Resurrected Lord. Today, we are called to be the witnesses of the 'empty tomb'. If we could convincingly do that, then as told in the second reading, we will start seeking the things that are above.

Pray and Practise: Lord, help me revel in the fact that I bear witness to Your resurrection through my acts of faith.

As followers of Jesus, we believe that the resurrection of Jesus has brought us all a new life. It transforms everything in the world – everything that we come in contact with. In today's Gospel, however, we read otherwise. While the women disciples of Jesus get to witness firsthand the resurrection of Jesus and become the first ever evangelists

by proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus to His disciples, the Jewish authorities plot to destroy the truth about the resurrection of Jesus. While the Jewish community had ostracized women even from hearing the Word of God, women become the preachers of the greatest Good News ever heard of. For, unlike human beings, God looks at the heart of people and, through them, transforms the entire world. It seems strange, but that is how God goes about doing things.

This is just one example of how humanity, down the lane, has misconceived many things for centuries. It is high time that we see all things new in Christ Jesus. If we don't begin to rewrite the wrongs now, when are we going to do them? The resurrection of Jesus, thus, calls us to be the agents of transformation. If our experience of the resurrection of Jesus is true, then we would certainly do away with the things that have for so long oppressed many people unjustly and bring about life-promoting changes in the society that we live.

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us see everything new in Christ Jesus so that we pave the way for a better society that respects and treats all equally.

18 MON

AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION

Wilson Kujur, SJ

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

"Do not be afraid..."

19 TUE

LOVE WILL DECIDE EVERYTHING

Amit Juel Lakra, SJ

Acts 2: 36-41

Jn 20: 11-18

“I have seen the Lord and he has said these things to me.”

Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ, in his prayer ‘Fall in Love’ says, “What you are in love with will affect everything. It will decide... how you spend your weekends, ... what breaks your heart and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love and it will decide everything.” That is exactly what Mary Magdalene does in today’s Gospel. It was her love for Jesus that broke her heart when she realized that her Teacher was no longer there; it was her love for Jesus that decided that she should go early in the morning to check upon Jesus, her Lord and carry His body away; it was indeed her love for Jesus, though for a while made her mistake the Risen Lord for a gardener, that made her cling to Him once she realized who she was speaking with. It was that love for Jesus that amazed her with joy and gratitude. Finally, it was her love for Jesus that made her rush and announce to the disciples - and through them to the entire world – the resurrection of Jesus. If not for her proclamation of the greatest ever Good News, we know not what could have happened afterwards. Yes! Mary Magdalene fell in love, stayed in love and it decided everything for her.

Are we ready to fall in love with the resurrected Jesus?

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us fall in love with You and stay in it so that it (You) may decide everything for us.

What happened to the two Emmaus disciples happens to us all, all the time. Whenever we feel dejected and are at a total loss, Jesus is always there with us, accompanying us or following us from a distance. Yes! Just as Jesus disguised His true self in order to help the Emmaus disciples understand things about Himself, Jesus is coming to our aid all the time through very many persons whom we come in contact within our day-to-day lives. In and through them, Jesus is trying His best to make us understand Him. However, given to our human frailties, we fail to recognize Jesus and His help just like the Emmaus disciples. Nevertheless, Jesus doesn't easily give up on us. He keeps trying and eventually reveals Himself to us when our minds and hearts are no longer in a position to recognize Him.

20 WED

RECOGNIZING JESUS IN STRANGERS

Celestine Minj, SJ

Acts 3: 1-10

Lk 24: 13-35

"Were not our hearts burning within us...?"

The lesson, however, that we can learn from the Emmaus disciples is that in spite of their failure at recognizing Jesus, they had the compassionate heart to invite 'the stranger' to stay with them. How many of us would do that? Inviting a stranger to stay with us? If we had done such a thing earlier in our life, then we would have surely felt the revelation of God in that act. For, God reveals Himself to us in mysterious ways, and why not through strangers?

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, help us recognize You in the strangers through whom You keep accompanying us and thereby helping us live a loving life.

21 THU

RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Nelson Minj, SJ

Acts 3: 11-26

Lk 24: 35-48

“Repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be proclaimed in His name to all nations.”

when the disciples earnestly prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit, they performed miracles in the name of Jesus.

In today’s readings, the risen Lord appears to His disciples and explains about His passion, death and resurrection and promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit. Through the disciples, the Church has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the mission of the Church today is to share the gift of the Holy Spirit with others and offer them forgiveness and healing in Jesus’ name. In this regard,

Similarly, the Church today needs to earnestly pray to the Lord for the gift of the Holy Spirit. After receiving the Holy Spirit, the Church needs to reach out to those who are poor, sick and oppressed. Why does the Church need to reach out to them? It is because only in those people the Church receives the content for proclaiming repentance and forgiveness to all nations. In the Indian context, the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness is to work for reconciliation and justice. Therefore, let us commit ourselves to the service of the poor and the oppressed in order to proclaim repentance and forgiveness.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, help us receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in our day-to-day life so that we may become Your true disciples who proclaim repentance and forgiveness by working for reconciliation and justice.

In the Gospel, we see Peter and his companions going back to fishing as they had lost hope after the death of Jesus. However, the risen Christ meets them in the same place where they were called by Him earlier. He gives them new hope and reaffirms their faith in Him by sharing with them the joy of His victory over death. He prepares them

22 FRI

**TRUE WITNESSES
OF CHRIST**

Arockia Sasi, SJ

Acts 4: 1-12

Jn 21: 1-14

"It is the Lord!"

to be His committed witnesses to proclaim the coming of the Reign of God. In the first reading, Peter and John make their faith-proclamation to the Jewish community. It is because, they are empowered, enlightened and transformed by the Spirit to be witnesses of the risen Lord and to perform miracles in the name of Jesus. How do we recognize the risen Lord in our lives and become true witnesses of Christ?

We live in a context of religious and political discrimination, economic instability, and consumerism all of which affect the poor and the marginalised very badly. In this desperate situation, the risen Lord wants us to empower and strengthen them in order that they may face the situation with hope and faith. Besides, the apostles could recognize the risen Lord and believe in Him in the time of desolation. Do we recognize the risen Christ in our desolations and in our struggles? Or in serving the poor and the marginalised? If we could, then we also would become the true witnesses of the risen Christ.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, increase our faith so that we remain firm in our faith and get to recognize You even amidst the chaos.

23 SAT

FAITH IN RISEN CHRIST

Ignatius Tete, SJ

Acts 4: 13-21

Mk 16: 9-15

"...for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard."

In today's Gospel, the risen Lord appears to Mary Magdalene and two others. In both the instances, the disciples do not believe those who say that they have seen the risen Jesus and that He is alive. However, Mary Magdalene, the first proclaimer of the resurrection of Jesus, does not stop proclaiming the Good News. It is because she had a strong faith in Jesus. That is why Jesus appears to the disciples to confirm the profession of faith of Mary Magdalene and the other two disciples.

Today's Gospel is exhorting us to continue the mission of Mary Magdalene and the two disciples to whom Jesus had appeared. We need to focus on how effective we could communicate the Good News to others, not worrying much about whether people would believe it or not. For some, reading the consoling Word of God would be of great help. For others, our loving gestures would help. Whatever might be the way of communication, ultimately Jesus confirms our profession of faith done through our words and deeds. Do we draw inspiration from Mary Magdalene to bear witness to Christian life and to announce the Good News despite the hurdles that we may face? Do we have strong faith in Jesus like Mary Magdalene?

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus Christ, fill us with the gift of faith that we may be able to carry the message of the Good News of Your resurrection to all creation.

Today is commemorated as the Divine Mercy Sunday by the Church. The Divine Mercy image, as narrated in today's Gospel, depicts Jesus appearing to the disciples in the upper room, after the Resurrection, wherein He empowers them to forgive or retain sins. The main reason to have this feast is that when those who are about to perish under the weight of guilt would come and seek the Divine Mercy of Jesus, in order that they be purified and healed. What happened to St. Thomas in today's Gospel is a perfect example for us all in this regard.

While all the other disciples identified the glorified and resurrected Jesus, St. Thomas was trying to identify the glorified Jesus by feeling His brokenness – the wounds in His hands and in His side. Yes! It is by feeling one's brokenness, we get to identify the person and go on to identify ourselves with him/her. That is exactly what St. Thomas did. It is that identification that made him say one of the profound prayers of all time, "My Lord! My God!" Similarly, it is in identifying the brokenness of the world and doing our part to mend it just as St. Thomas did by coming to India, we also can profoundly proclaim Jesus as 'our Lord and God'.

Pray and Practise: Lord Jesus, help us be strong in our faith in times of chaos and turmoil so that we stand firm in doing Your mission of forgiving one another.

24 SUN (DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)

SEEKING FORGIVENESS

Anuranjan Tigga, SJ

Acts 5: 12-16

Rev 1: 9-13, 17-19

Jn 20: 19-31

"I died, and behold I am alive."

**25 MON (St. Mark,
the Evangelist)**

**HEALERS OF THE
SUFFERING**

Sanjay Tigga, SJ

1 Pt 5: 5b-14

Mk 16: 15-20

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

On the feast day of St. Mark, the evangelist, we are called to be the proclaimers of the Good News to the whole creation. In today's context, to be so is to be the healers of the suffering – both people and nature. Yes! Just as St. Mark has healed the souls of many through his Gospel, we are also called to heal the wounds of the people and of the nature that are caused by the oppressive and greedy social structure.

Creation is a manifestation of God's love and it reflects God's manifold gift to humanity. God created it out of nothing and gave humans the ability to create many things out of it. That is why St Ignatius of Loyola insists on seeing God as one who labours in nature and sustains it. This realization of God labouring in nature remains to be a mystery until humans become responsible and make proper use of nature. How do we do that? By finding nature as something worthy. When will we find nature as something worthy? As we read in the first reading, when we have total humility and commitment in our words and deeds. Thus, we will get to experience the manifestation of God's love in nature and thereby become His messengers of the Good News like St. Mark.

Pray and Practise: Lord, fill us with the virtue of humility that we may become the channels of Your manifestation of love.

In today's first reading, we hear that the early Christians lived united, with one heart and mind, openly and generously sharing their possessions with one another. In fact, one was so moved by all of this sharing that he sold a piece of property he owned and brought the money and put it at the feet of the apostles.

26 TUE

NEW LIFE

Suresh John Tirkey,
SJ

Acts 4: 32-37
Jn 3: 7b-15

"...that whoever believes in him has eternal life."

In today's Gospel reading, the interaction between Nicodemus and Jesus continues. Jesus tells Nicodemus that there is no logical explanation for "being born from above". Naturally, this does not mean that we will literally be born again. Rather, it is that we will be born anew. The new life that we will receive will be a spiritual gift. What is the spiritual gift you desire in this Easter season? What is the new life that you desire? After all, the Easter season is a time of miracles and new life. We can literally see this as we watch the trees and plants around us. They all are coming to life, blossoming and sharing their beauty with us. Let us, hence, trust that God will gift us a "new" life during this Easter season. While we may desire for something very ardently, God may choose to give us an unexpected gift that will bless us abundantly. Therefore, let us keep our minds, eyes and hearts open to receive the beauty and grace the gift of the Lord brings with it for each of us.

Pray and Practise: Lord, grant that all my thoughts, intentions, actions and responses may be directed solely to Your love and service this day and every day.

27 WED (SJ: St. Peter Canisius)

Arockia Raj, SJ

Acts 5: 17-26

Jn 3: 16-21

"...the light has come into the world..."

Through the Gospel of the day, the risen Lord asks us to examine whether or not we are walking in the light of God. If we are, then we must do what is true as the Lord tells us, "Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." That

is what the apostles also did as told to us in the first reading. The light of the risen Lord was so bright that the apostles couldn't have it all for themselves. They shared that light with all those around them and thereby witnessed to the risen Lord. The light that demanded them to speak the truth was so strong that they did not even worry about the consequences. Though they were arrested and later on set free by the Spirit, there is no fear in them to stand for the truth that they had witnessed. Today, as we see so many atrocities being done against the Church in India, we are reminded of that Spirit with which the apostles stood to express their faith.

St. Peter Canisius whom we venerate today stood against the false propaganda that was prevailing in his time. Thus, both the readings and the saint of the day call us to walk in the truth, which is Christ, the risen Lord.

Pray and Practise: Lord, bless us that we may bear You in our hearts and walk in the light of Your truth enthusiastically, fearing not the consequences.

The first reading narrates the experience of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin when they were accused of disobeying the council's orders. The Sanhedrin clearly made known to them that they should stop preaching in the name of Jesus, crucified, and alleged to be raised from the dead. Peter replies that they must give witness to the truth of God, by and through the power of the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. For Peter, obedience to God's command is more important than obeying the orders of mortals.

28 THU (Sts. Peter Chanel and Louis Grignion)

GOD IS TRUTH

Simon Horo, SJ

Acts 5: 27-33

Jn 3: 31-36

"We must obey God rather than any human authority."

In the Gospel, Jesus is aware that He is from "above" and that the Father has entrusted everything to Him. Jesus announces that the One "from above" can speak of His experience of God the Father as He has been with God. Not only did Jesus give witness to the love which God has for the people, but also the Holy Spirit gives witness to the eternal life which is the gift for all those who believe in Him. We are all called to believe in Him at all times; because when the apostles believed, they became fearless of the worldly powers and were spiritually renewed. Similarly, if we, in our limitations and weaknesses, believe in the providence of God, we will never lack anything in our lives. With this trust, we keep renewing our commitment to the Lord every day.

Pray and Practise: Lord, fill our hearts with Your love such that we hold on to our faith in You, come what may.

29 FRI (St. Catherine of Siena)

**SUFFERING
DISHONOUR**

Wilson Kandulna, SJ

Acts 5: 34-42

Jn 6: 1-15

"...they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor..."

The mental disposition of the apostles as narrated in the first reading of the day very much resembles that of Jesus as found in today's Gospel. Yes! Just as Jesus withdrew from the 'glory' of being a king as desired by the people, the apostles rejoiced at the fact that they were considered worthy to suffer 'dishonour' for the sake of the name.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, in his 'Spiritual Exercises' says, "We are to prefer humiliation over glory, illness over health and poverty over wealth." The human tendency, however, is not the same as we all know. When we have done something noteworthy, we expect that the others recognize us and appreciate us. For, we believe that we have earned their respect and appreciation and that we are only reaping the fruits of our hard work. Nevertheless, both Jesus and the apostles teach us that we are not to conform ourselves to the whims of the others. On the other hand, we must strive towards our mission and fulfil the Will of God. That is what St Catherine of Siena whose feast we celebrate today did. She committed her life to God and accomplished all the missions that were entrusted to her by God. It is, hence, only fitting that we also imitate the apostles and St. Catherine in finding joy by doing the Will of God.

Pray and Practise: Lord, help us find joy in doing Your Will and in suffering 'dishonour' for the sake of Your name.

In the first reading, we find Jesus' disciples giving importance to the preaching of the Word of God. As people called to serve, we always need to remember that unless we serve God, we cannot serve His people and His creation. The true channel always leads us to salvation and the true channel is Jesus Christ alone.

30 SAT (St. Pius V)

Akhilesh Kumar,
SJ

Acts 6: 1-7
Jn 6: 16-21

"It is I; do not be afraid."

In the Gospel, we see disciples looking at Jesus who is walking on the water and, as a result, getting frightened. However, when they heard His voice, they were reassured that it was no one but their Master. This reassurance of Jesus comforted them and enabled them to reach the shore. We also have many fears like, the fear of losing loved ones, losing job, fear of accident and sickness. Whenever we are engulfed with such fears, Jesus comes and visits us. If we are able to recognize Jesus, then He will take control of our life such that our burdens become light. With God's help, we can be successful in our efforts and bear abundant fruit. Today, the resurrected Jesus comes to us walking on the rough waters of COVID-19 pandemic. Let us, hence, open our hearts and hear His voice. No matter what the problem or the pain or the worry, He is going to take control of everything and help us reach the shore.

Pray and Practise: Lord, enkindle our heart and mind that we may recognize You and allow You to take control of our every situation; because in you, we have our redemption.

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(See Rule 8)

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F'r. John Kujur, S.J.

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