

# 2018 August

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Readings: Jer 15:10, 16-21; Mt 13:44-46

The first reading from the book of Jeremiah is a lamentation of the actual suffering of the prophet Jeremiah. He is accused by people for being the voice of God. He acknowledges that he was called by God, he loves the word of God and Lord God is his delight. Yet he suffers for being the voice of God. God's response to Jeremiah is to follow God and not the people. He promises Jeremiah that he will make him a strong fortified bronze wall. Through the first reading, God tells us that he himself will be with us to save and to deliver.

The gospel reading reveals what the kingdom of heaven is by relating it to the treasure hidden in the field. One does not lose the treasure that he has found but hides it again. The second imagery is a merchant trying to find a precious pearl. Upon finding it he too sells off his property to make this pearl his own. The two imageries compare the kingdom of heaven to a treasure which is invaluable. Today's gospel reading invites us to examine our treasures for which we spend our time, energy and wealth again and again. How can I make meaningful choices in my life to make the kingdom of God the treasure which is more valuable than anything?

*Balaraj K csc*

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Readings: Jer 18:1-6; Mt 13:47-53

In the first reading we see how a potter does a pot out of clay. The potter has the capacity to make the pot as he wants. Once a pot changes its shape he can't help it, but still he works to do a better pot. Our lives are similar, it depends upon us how we shape and mold it, like the potter.

Gospel reading invites me to reflect upon the good virtues and to give up the bad habits. We see in the passage good fishes were collected and bad were thrown out. In my life to I may have so many habits; but all the habits may not help me to grow in my life. So, the invitation for me is to give up my bad habits and keep only the good habits so that I become a good human. So the readings are inviting me to reflect about my life like the good and bad fish in the net. It is a clear invitation to remove my unwanted attitudes and to keep only the good attitudes like love, service, and forgiveness, because they can bring joy and happiness when people receive it.

*Boneventure Lobo csc*

Readings: Jer 26: 1-9; Mt 13: 54-58

Today's liturgy invites us to be authentic prophets in all circumstances. In the gospel reading we see that Christ was rejected in his own hometown for speaking the truth. Therefore, as followers of Jesus we too will face rejection in our own place when we stand for truth. Truth stabs the heart of evil doers. We are called to proclaim the truth and follow the ways of Jesus even when it brings sufferings and temptations. In the first reading we see that how Jeremiah was captured by the people for telling the truth and asking them to repent for their sins. Jeremiah was a great prophet of Old Testament who spoke to the people on behalf of God. He did not worry about what people would do to him if he spoke against them and directing them to be truthful to God. He was faithful to God and his words. Therefore, to become a true follower of Christ we need to accept the sufferings that come on our way in doing God's work. We should never become tired of doing God's work amidst all the people those who are against us. May the spirit of the Lord help us to be authentic and energetic prophets.

*Manu Praveen csc*

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Readings: Jer 26: 11 -16, 24; Mt 14: 5 -12

A person, who is convinced of something, stands for whatever s/he speaks or does. S/he is ready to do anything, even to die for it. We see it in the lives of John the Baptist and prophet Jeremiah in today's readings. They were convinced in themselves of whatever they spoke and did because they listened to God through their conscience and had confidence in him.

Jesus was convinced of his resurrection after his death and therefore he spoke to his disciples about his resurrection three times. And he did not hesitate to die on the cross for the sins of all and to liberate us. He also spoke to the Pharisees about his resurrection indirectly.

The readings of today invite me to become a person who is convinced within himself by listening to God through my conscience and actualizing them in my life, having confidence in him. Listening to our conscience is listening to God. Let us not suppress our conscience by not listening to or ignoring it.

*Peter Paul Dang csc*

Readings: Ex 16: 2-4, 12-15; Eph 4: 17-24; Jn 6: 24-35

Human as we are we take lots of effort in caring for our body and fail to take good care of our soul. We often neglect to nourish our soul in pursuit of wealth and pleasure of the ego. However, we must remember that soul is the only thing that will follow us through eternity, not the body. Last Sunday we heard Jesus was feeding a large crowd with just two fish and five loaves of bread. The same people today in the gospel reading went to Capernaum in search for Jesus. They took lots of efforts and struggle in searching for Jesus. They seek Jesus not because they believe that he is a Messiah the Son of the living God. However, they seek Jesus with the intention and expectation that Jesus will be feeding them again with bread. Jesus knew very well why they seek him. Jesus frankly said to them 'do not seek or long for physical food which perishes but the spiritual food that endures to eternal life.'

Today Jesus is speaking about the physical and spiritual food. Physical food satisfies the body whereas spiritual food satisfies the soul. Spiritual food would mean love, truth, peace and happiness. Do we hunger for or seek such spiritual food in our life that can satisfy us eternally? Do we feed our souls with such love, truth, peace and happiness? Only in Jesus we find the truth and discover the kind of love that conquers sin and death. Similarly, only in him we find eternal peace and happiness. Thus, to satisfy our souls, Jesus himself decided to dwell inside the small piece of bread of the Holy Eucharist with all his power to become a nourishment for our soul.

Today the Lord is asking us, when we go the church, that we seek only him who can satisfy our spiritual needs with the bread that nourishes and strengthen us spiritually.

*Vicky L. Gayang csc*

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Readings: Dan 7: 9-10, 13,14; 2Pet 1:16-19; Mk 9:2-10

The church commemorates the Transfiguration of the Lord. Peter talks about this glorious event with full conviction. He reminds us in the second reading to be attentive as a lamp shining in a dark place. It was in a way preparing Peter to face Jesus' passion with hope where others would find it hopeless. This is an invitation to keep moving as the reality seems hitting us disappointed. The first reading from the book of Daniel contains almost the same description as in the Gospel which says; "His clothing was white as snow and his hair on his head was as white as wool; one like a son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven." Readings are asking us to place faith in Jesus and that will shine more and more brightly in us too. There is another side of the coin equally important in our life: God's grace. At the transfiguration of the Son of Divine, God himself confirmed his grace saying, "This is my son with whom I am well pleased." How fortunate Jesus is! We all could be among the fortunate ones when we do witness the same Christ to others, show the productive light to those in the darkness of unluck. While reflecting this sweet event in a Christian's life, we do remember this day which marked with significance in the history as the HIROSHIMA DAY where a shadow of destructive light fell, killed many and blinded many more for the rest of their lives. God created everyone with the potency to bring light into the lives of people around us, the productive light. Therefore let's also be among the lucky ones who hear this as we become bearers of light - "This is my son/daughter, with whom I am well pleased."

*Jibin George csc*

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Readings: Jer 30: 1-2, 12-15, 18-22; Mt. 14: 22-36

God is faithful forever and he is present in every day of life. In the first reading we see, Jeremiah preaches that the sins, guilt and suffering of people is innumerable and tremendous. But God had compassion on them and promised to restore the fortunes for the people because he had called them as his own, “you shall be my people and I will be your God”. In the gospel, we see disciples were terrified with the storm and Jesus came to their rescue. But the disciples fail to see Jesus amidst the storm, thinking that he is a ghost. Life teaches us many lessons and we learn from our past experiences. We at times resemble the disciples and the people of Israel, living in fear of life and in sinfulness. Our God is faithful and is always with us, but we fail to see him especially when we are faced with difficulties and struggles and do not know what to do.

The readings invite us to trust in him because we have heard him in the Scriptures and experienced him in the Holy Eucharist. There are moments we test God’s Presence in our life like Peter, “Lord, if it is you, command me to walk on the water”. In spite of our little faith, God is always compassionate towards us that he will not let us down and he always extends a helping hand to come up in life. The noise of the world at times is a stumbling block to see Jesus present amidst us. Let us pray for the grace that we may be strengthened in our faith to see the presence of God in day-to-day life situations.

*Lawrence S. csc*

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

We see in the gospel reading the great faith of the women. When Jesus compared her to the dog she did not get offended and lose her hope and faith in the Lord. Most of us in life take things for granted and we believe that we have a right to receive the grace from the Lord. We have tremendous faith in Mother Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Saints etc, and we pray to them regularly. During any problem in life we also go for novenas thinking that God will answer our prayer and grant us whatever we ask for.

What happens to us when we don't get what we want? Most often we tend to lose faith in God. We go after *poojaris*, black magic etc. Today Jesus is challenging us to have faith in him, because it's only by having faith and prayer we can achieve whatever we want. Jesus said, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can move the mountain."

*Joel Glan Mendonca csc*

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

Today both the readings tell us that we are blessed and covered with grace to know God, to know him by ourselves, not from others. The crowds spoke about Jesus based on their knowledge which they got from the scripture. Whereas Peter spoke about Jesus based on his lived experience of Jesus as Messiah. In his simplicity Jesus bestowed upon Peter a special grace to know him as Messiah. Everyone tried to know and understand who Jesus really is. But they could not. The simplicity of Peter that became the rock made known to the world who is Jesus. He is the messiah.

Let us think about ourselves and ask who Jesus is for me? You and I have a different name for Jesus. We know him but many a times we fail to recognize his divine presence in our day-to-day lives. We all have the grace to know him but we always tends to deviate ourselves from that grace in knowing Jesus. Why? Because of our pride, we think that we as Christians we know Jesus very well, but actually we do not know him. Even though we fail to know who Jesus is, he knows us very well and even calls us by name. Let us draw ourselves to the spirit and attitude of Peter like those great bands of men and women who had gone before us and left the foot prints for us in following Christ. They did not trudge; they strode because they had experienced Christ as Messiah. They knew who Jesus was. Their simplicity broke the human limitation to attain divine nature. Simplicity allows God's graces to kick away our pride and put on the spirit of humility. We are privileged to have the grace to know Jesus. So let us allow this grace to lead, and guide us to know him each day in our lives in and through prayer.

*Shanborlang Mawrie csc*

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Readings: 2Cor 9: 6-10; Jn 12: 24-26

The readings of today invites us to look at our lives in terms of grain and its growth. The seed must die to bring forth a mighty tree. As children of God, we are called to bring forth new life in Christ. To live in Christ means to die in certain aspects of our life like selfishness, hatred, ego and all the behaviour which would restrict us from living our life for Christ. A candle gets honor only when it gives light. It has to sacrifice its life and only then it becomes useful to others. Whatever we let go for the sake of Christ we will have its reward, and the things that we try to hold on to will surely go away from us (wealth).

For Mother Mary doing the will of the Lord mattered a lot, so she surrendered to the Lord. For Zacchaeus possessing Christ in his life mattered a lot so he gave away his wealth. For the Lord the lost sheep was more precious and so he left the other 99 sheep in the wilderness and went in search of the lost, and found it. Usually our heart goes in search of something that matters a lot for us. Now we all are invited through these readings to examine ourselves to find out what matters a lot for us. Our heart will be where our treasure is. We should also remember that the treasures of this world would get rusted, consumed by moths or even stolen by thieves but nothing would happen to the treasure that is gathered in heaven.

*Amalraj A. csc*

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Readings: Hab 1: 12-2:4; Mt 17:14-20

When I meet the trials, difficulties and disappointments in my day-to-day life how do I respond? And why do I fall into the temptations (the trap of evil spirit)? These are the questions that popped up when I reflected upon the readings of the day and St. Clare, the saint of the day. The answer is very simple; it is because of my little faith in God (Mt 17:19). The readings of the day clearly depict the importance of having faith in God and its effect in and around me.

When I reflected upon my life, the trials and difficulties became more when I lost my constant touch with the Lord through my prayer. And I miss the essence of God's presence in my life when I begin to trust only my own understanding and talents. Today Jesus once again reminds me to increase my faith in him at least as small as the mustard seed (Mt 17:20 ) which is more than enough even to move the mountains (trials and difficulties). When we increase our faith in him by our constant prayer and good deeds we too can see and perform the glory of God just as he promised in the readings.

So, let this be as our prayer of the day: Heavenly Father help my unbelief. Increase my faith and trust in the saving power of your Son Jesus Christ. Give me confidence and perseverance, especially in prayer. And by your grace help me to bring your healing love and truth to those I meet. Amen.

*Martin MM csc*

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Readings: 1Kgs 19:4-8; Eph 4:30-5:2; Jn 6:41-51

In the first reading of the day we see that prophet Elijah was heading for mountain of God, Horeb. Elijah was fleeing from Jezebel, because his life was under threat. He was tired after a day's journey and he prayed that he might die. But God had a different plan for him. In his sleep the angel woke him up and gave him food that he could continue his journey to Mount Horeb. Elijah was very zealous for the Lord. The Israelites had forsaken the Lord's Covenant and killed the other prophets and Elijah was their next target. The path of the man who is zealous for the Lord and for his mission would be a difficult one. That would be a path of desert and suffering like that of Elijah. When the angel gave food to Elijah, the angel also said to him that the journey would be too long if he does not eat the food that was given to him. Elijah obeyed the commands and ate the food and reached the destiny.

In the Gospel of the day, Jesus says that he is the bread of life, the bread that comes down from heaven. So that one who eats of it will not die and he would leave forever. If Elijah was given cake and a jug of water in the desert for his survival, today we too are given the bread, the bread from Heaven, which is the holy Eucharist. The only difference is that the bread which is given to me by Jesus is his own body which is everlasting. Only this bread would give me the strength to be a zealous missionary. The question posed before me today by the scripture is: how prepared am I to receive this bread of life on a regular basis? And how much do I long to receive this bread which is the body of Christ?

Today we celebrate the international Youth Day. Through the second reading St. Paul gives a special message to the youth to be imitators of God, as beloved children and live in love. I pray that everyone become young in spirit with the zeal to serve the Lord, to share love all over the world, for which we would gain energy only from the Holy Eucharist.

*Siju Pappachan csc*

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Readings: Ezek 1:2-5, 24-28; Mt 17:22-27

‘To give what I am supposed give,’ is the call that I am receiving from today’s readings. Jesus knew his destiny, yet he offered his helping hand to the people. I am a foreigner on this earth because I belong to God. This gives me an opportunity to pay my rent to this world in the form of my service. I may not know what my future is. In spite of this I am called to give what I am supposed to give; nothing more or nothing less. Jesus did not focus on his glorification and forget the present. His focus on his mission never changed even when he was tested. I am called to follow the same way of Jesus. He offered the fruit of the earth back to earth. Therefore, I am not supposed to cling to the materials of the earth because I am not of this world but of God.

*Philosan S csc*

Readings: Ezek 2:8-3:4; Mt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14

Today Jesus invites me to trust in God and he will not leave me abandoned because for God each one of us is important. Jesus gives an example of a child to explain the trust which makes us to be closer to God and this trust is called faith. How will this trust or faith in God be developed? During my childhood days I used to think that there is no better person than my mother, she is like a 'perfect person' in the world. It is because of my tender love towards my mother and my trust in her. In the same manner, God should become everything in my life. I should be able to say that he is greater than any other person. This trust or faith is possible if I start loving God. As a child is eager to hear his or her mother's voice I should have same eagerness towards Word of God. In return, God is promising that he is always with me like Good Shepherd who is worried about each individual to lead towards eternal happiness.

*Arone Vas csc*

Readings: Rev 11: 19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1cor 15:20-27; Lk 1: 39-56

Today the Church celebrates the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today our country celebrates Independence Day. In the second reading we see Christ has risen from the dead and he brings resurrection to the Dead. In the Gospel reading we see Mary visits Elizabeth and she sings the most beautiful hymn, '*the Magnificat*'. We can see how deep a faith Mary had when angel Gabriel came to her. She accepted the message which was given to her, she could accept this just because of her faith. She believed in the words of the angel and she had faith in God that God can do wonders in her life. She was the true mother who took care of Jesus from his birth to death. There were many women during the time of Mary, but God chose Mary because God saw something different in Mary. She was a simple woman at that time, so we see in the *Magnificat* how God takes care of the little ones who are close to him. The reading invites us to have faith in God and in his words. If we have faith in him wonders can happen in our life, we just need to believe that God is with us and he is ready to help us if we accept his invitation. Most often we doubt ourselves and the word, we are not ready to accept the word which comes from God instead we try to find the excuses and go away from this word because our faith is not deep.

*Vijith Joncy Mathias csc*

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Readings: Ezek 12:1-12; Mt 18:21- 19: 1

Today's gospel invites us to take a look at our relationship with others. St. Paul says, "Love keeps no record of wrongs." This is also the heart of the gospel reading of today. Jesus shows limitless mercy and justice in responding to Peter's question on forgiveness. Through the parable of the unforgiving servant, he is teaching his disciples, and us, about how God's mercy and forgiveness work. God always looks at us with endless love and mercy. If we refuse to forgive others, we are closing our hearts to the grace which we receive from God. The prayer "Our Father" gets recited so often by us, during the day or in our prayers. We pray, "Forgive us our trespasses... as we forgive those who trespass against us." Even though the mercy of God is always made available for us, it can be truly received only if one is willing, generous and humble enough to "forgive" the faults of others. Forgiveness is a powerful weapon which may not change the past, but will surely transform the future. Let us, therefore, ask the Lord to grant us the grace so that, we may have the heart of openness and acceptance to forgive each other in our communities and work places.

*Anthoni Reddy csc*

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Readings: Ezek 16:1-15, 60, 63; Mt 19:3-12

The readings of the day are very much focused on covenant. Here we find two kinds of covenants, one is an everlasting covenant between God and man, and the second is marital covenant between man and woman. We read in the first reading how God reminds us about his faithfulness and steadfastness towards the covenant which he made with us. While the man fails in keeping the covenant sacred, again and again God comes forward to establish his covenant with us. Man is not faithful in keeping the oath which he made to God. In the gospel we see, the Pharisees came to Jesus with human perspective regarding man divorcing his wife. But in Jesus' answer he quoted Old Testament, when God created man and woman, he intended them to live together as one body. Since man is not being faithful to God and to himself, he finds ways to divorce his wife. Jesus clarifies that Moses had given the law of divorce, only on the issue of unchastity and marrying another. At the present time we see many couples get divorce just because of there is no time for each other. The love and care are missing in the relationships. Not only in the marital relationships but also in ordinary life too, people don't understand each other. That is why many relationships break. What we have to understand from today's readings is to have the heart of love and forgiveness. As God forgave the humanity every time they broke the covenant with him, he is inviting us to be like him in forgiving others and keep establishing good covenant with God and others.

*Praveen Bandula csc*

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Readings: Ezk 18:1-10,13b; Mt 19:13-15

“Create a pure heart for me, O God.” When we reflect on the gospel, the reading invites us to be like a child who reflects many necessary qualities of a human person: - qualities for one to be good and to spread goodness. A child portrays the qualities of innocence, humility, joy, and meekness. Society needs people who are rooted in human values. We also see St. Mathew speaking about beatitudes in his gospel (5:5,8). “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.” God doesn’t need a person who is rich materially, but people those who have goodness in heart as their wealth.

Jesus loved the unloved, sick and those who were downtrodden. We may also suppress and reject our fellow workers. But Jesus, through today’s gospel, invites everyone to be a hope for the hopeless and an encouragement for those who are discouraged; and it can be fulfilled through a life based on human values.

Let us ask ourselves, Are we ready to consider all equal? Do we really reflect the value of meekness, love, joy, humility, etc. in our life? Do we really encourage others or do we try to make ourselves superior to others? What do we really do for the downtrodden in our surroundings?

*Nibin K Cyriac csc*

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Readings: Pro 9:1-6; Eph 5: 15-20; Jn 6:51-58

The readings of the day remind me of the importance of the Holy Eucharist which I partake every day. It is a guideline to my Christian life when I begin each day. Today, I am called to introspect my life and see how I approach this sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in my daily participation. I believe that it is life-giving and consoling to me at times when I take part sincerely and genuinely. I do experience and have witnessed many happenings while partaking in this Eucharist. Apart from this what I find most difficult is to live my life by carrying out the message of Christ in my interactions and dealing with people around me. It is not enough to say I participate in the Eucharist and live opposite life. I need to ask myself, 'do I remember and reflect on the words of Jesus who says, "I am the bread of life, whoever eats and drinks my blood will live forever"? So, I am also called to have a strong faith in what I do and participate sincerely in the Holy Eucharist. I am inspired to draw my attention to the second reading where St. Paul writes to the Ephesians saying be careful about the sort of life you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people. If I partake in the Eucharist and not live a worthy life it would be senseless and useless. It calls me forth for transformation and change of attitude as a person who participates in this sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. So, today through the scriptures, the Lord is inviting me to place my faith in the Eucharist and draw life from it so that it will be reflected in my daily thinking, speaking, and deeds. Lastly, I realized that fullness of life is in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, I am called to strive forward to find meaning and purpose in my daily participation in the most Holy Eucharist.

*Ruwnglal Friny Peter csc*

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Readings: Ezek 24:15-24, Mt 19:16-22

“If you wish to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, follow me.”

This is one of the Bible quotes that challenged me a lot because the story of the rich young man has a lot of similarities with my own personal life. As a religious I too become like this rich man, thinking that I follow all the rules and regulations and follow the commandment perfectly but at times fail to look into my own self, my selfishness and greed for things and possessions in life which become a block for my following of Christ. It is nice to act as though I am perfect in this world but only when I turn to myself and look into myself then only truly I understand how hard it is for me to give up my greed and name and fame that I have in the society. Jesus says ‘sell your possessions and give the money to the poor.’ In order to sell my possessions first of all I should have a heart of generosity and this generosity of heart will help me to share my talents, my abilities and my gifts with others whom I am called to serve. When I am able to do these things then I will become a true follower of Christ.

*Jijo Philip csc*

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Readings: Ezek 28: 1-10; Mt 19: 23-30

‘Am I worthy to enter the kingdom of God?’ Today’s liturgy invites you and me to ask this question to oneself and reflect on our life, whether I am worthy or not. Jesus, in the Gospel reading, tells it will be harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Richness means not only wealth but also all that prevent us from moving forward in life, like selfishness, ego, etc. We may think, ‘how is it not possible for me to enter the kingdom of heaven since I have left my family, near and dear ones and ready to give myself in the service of Christ, like the disciples?’ Yes, we might have sacrificed our family and relatives but if we have a heart of selfishness in the community living, unforgivable moments in the community, our egocentric life would stop us from entering into the kingdom of heaven. Maybe sometimes I show a smiling face and when others see I do everything happily; but inside me, there are bad feelings, but I don’t like that. Selfishness or unforgiving heart comes when one is not able to open up and listen to others. As we see in the Gospel, Peter is justifying himself saying that ‘we left everything and came to follow you, what are we to have, then?’ In the same way, we too may be saying many things to justify our other faults. But it is the will of God and our good deeds that would help us to enjoy the heavenly bliss.

*Manoj K. Rathinam csc*

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Readings: Ezek 34: 1-11; Mt 20: 1-16

One fine morning God the Father sent Jesus to hire workers for the kingdom of heaven. As he walked by the Sea of Galilee he hired Peter and said to him to take care of vineyard. As he went out from there to Jericho he found Zacchaecus and asked him to work in it and he worked in it without any hesitation. At noon when he went out he saw Andre friend of the sick and invited him to work in his vineyard and he humbly worked. When the time came, God the Father called all of them and gave them their pay of eternal bliss beginning with last and going to the first. No one claimed that they have to be paid more or others less but accepted whatever is right.

It is an imaginary story, yet it teaches us a lesson. As we celebrate the Queenship of Mary she invites all her children to enter into the eternal paradise. I firmly believe that God has granted innate talents in us like great teachers, speakers and doctors to strive for eternal kingdom. Interestingly our proficiency diverted us to live as we wished instead of helping us to march towards eternal life. On this auspicious day let us make a first move towards the kingdom of heaven.

*Aldo Branden Vibi csc*

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Readings: Ezek 36:23-28; Mt 22:1-14

God called us in many ways. In one way, we have our own vocation to choose. Some are called to become doctors, engineers, teachers, priests and nuns and so on. But within that, God has the same call for all of us that is, a call to holiness and faithfulness to his word and promises. In the first reading we heard that God himself is holy therefore, what we need to do is to recognize that holiness in him. God gathered all the people from all foreign countries to come and experience his holiness and love that he has for all of us. In the same way we heard from the Gospel reading that God invites all people from foreign countries, regardless of people, culture and language. All are invited to dine with him in the banquet that he has prepared. But some rejected his invitation, some killed those ambassadors of God. In spite of that God gave a chance to all to join with him. But ultimately God called only those who are already prepared and those who listen to his call and live a life of holiness. What I need to do is to recognize the call of God in my daily activities, by being faithful to what is entrusted to me; allow God to work in me through different people and appreciate the goodness that others have; learn to work well with others. If I am able to work and co-operate well with others, I am already part of his holiness and dine with him in his banquet.

*Lawrence Wanniang csc*

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Readings: Rev 21:9-14; Jn 1:45-51

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Bartholomew, the apostle of the church. He believed in God and he became an instrument to spread the good news to the people. The reading invites each one of us to believe in God, in whom we experience compassion and love. As human beings we are limited in our senses; so we cannot see God with our eyes but we can feel his presence. We believe in Jesus and so we are blessed and his precious people, for we did not see him yet we believe. We know that belief is the first step to reach God the almighty.

Where does belief come from? And who is Jesus? These are the questions that arise in us when we are children. As we grow older our knowledge increases and we come to know about Jesus and our beliefs by the help of our parents, teachers and elders, etc... We too recognize that when we lose our faith in Jesus we doubt the very existence of God and begin to make life miserable. But if we believe in Jesus then we enjoy the life with him and feel his presence in us.

*Pravin S csc*

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Readings: Ezek 43: 1 – 7; Mt 23: 1 - 12

The reading invites us to focus on servant leadership. One who faithfully serves others is a servant. Whatever service we render to others, it is not because of our selfish motivation but because Gods work in us. One who humbles himself can be a good servant. One of the best examples for a servant is St. Theresa of Calcutta. Whatever the service she rendered to others, she humbled herself and served with love. We may think that call to be a servant leader is only among Catholics. It is not true. We all know many people who do service better than Catholics.

In the gospel Jesus asks each one of us, don't be like Pharisees or scribes. Because they do not practice what they teach. They are not able to humble themselves. During my past formation period, I had experienced this. One day my superior told me to arrange things in a particular way, the next day he himself did not arrange that way. This happened repeatedly, this incident led me to unhappiness. I shared this problem with one of our priests. He told me that what you want to become is your choice not other's choice. Don't follow what they are doing or speaking, the superior cannot be exemplary in everything. You take from him what you think is good.

*Sharon Piuse csc*

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Readings: Josh 24:1-2, 15-17, 18; Eph 5:21-32; Jn 6:60-69

Christian persecution, speaking ill about Jesus, and leaving the church are on the rise, in the present world. It is simply because people fail to understand the teachings of Jesus Christ. Similar situation we find in the Gospel. Many stopped following Jesus because they fail to understand him and his teachings. But Gospel also presents to us Peter who knew Jesus very closely and could relate his teaching in his life and who says in his faith statement “Lord to whom shall I go? You have the words of eternal life.”

Before joining religious life many people wondered, ‘why you want to be a priest? It is very hard life, you will find it difficult etc.’ But my mother, like Peter in today’s Gospel, told me “if he has called you don’t worry he will take care of you; keep faith in him” and I am happy religious today.

To follow Jesus is to walk forward in faith because the one whom we are following has the words of eternal life. We pray that Lord may give us enough strength to be faithful witness of his teachings.

*Pretham Joy Menezes csc*

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

The liturgy is inviting us to 'examine our exercise of responsibility' in life. The gospel reading throws light on the reality of social living where ordinary people are made to believe in laws and responsibility of leaders. The Pharisees, Scribes and teachers of the law in the gospel, were in observance of merely the law than the purpose that it entails. They failed to see the end purpose of the laws and regulations. The value of priority seemed to be compromised as they were in governing positions. It is similar to the contemporary world where the leaders of our nations are garlanding the convicted and supporting those who lynch, fuel hikes, etc. They are signs of falling and failure to be responsible for their actions as they take pride in their positions as rulers.

The set of questions raised by Jesus to the so-called leaders or teachers of the law in the gospel are applicable for us too. As followers of Jesus, we take pride in our responsibilities as educators, preachers, and church leaders; but do we assume responsibility for what is valuable? Or do we take pride in pharisaic attitude compromising the end purpose of our mission, service and life? If our exercise of responsibility does not address the reality of social life, then we would be called as actors (Greek term for Hypocrites).

*Anthony Jayaraj csc*

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

In today's gospel Jesus seems to be angry at the people and so he uses the words like "Woe to you". He is angry because of the attitude of the people of that time. The people who were supposed to be the leaders and guides to all seem to be more worried about the law and regulations but not seem to be giving importance to the people whom they are supposed to be guiding as God wanted. Jesus says to them that 'you are the people who clean the cup from outside and not inside of it.'

What does this passage have to do with us today? I am born a leader as I am born Christian; by the very fact that I am baptized I share priesthood of Christ which means a leader or a guide. Very often I am like the teachers of the law who are more worried about keeping the law than relating with people. Here is a call for me as I am called to be a leader, 'where am I drawing my strength from, and who do I take as my example to teach or to guide the people?' This is also inviting me to see deep into myself how I am living: am I living as an example of love for all? Am I teaching the people about the truth and leading them to live a life of truth to God and to the people with whom they live?

*Arockia Raj csc*

Readings: Jer 1: 17-19; Mk 6: 17-29

Today the church celebrates the feast of St. John the Baptist. The gospel passage of the day narrates the story of beheading of St. John the Baptist by Herod. St. John the Baptist was the one sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. St. John the Baptist, by accepting the work entrusted to him, stood for the justice, bore witness to the truth, and condemned the wrongdoings in others no matter who it was. He suffered for proclaiming about the Kingdom of God fearlessly. He was thrown into prison, eventually beheaded because he fearlessly condemned Herod's unlawful marriage to his brother's wife. St. John the Baptist remains a vital role model for all of us to be fearless in our life and to stand for the truth and justice.

When I reflect on my life, most often it is difficult for me to tell the truth about others because the truth hurts, and I choose to speak the words that please others. At times, I find it difficult to express my views to my friends when they go wrong because of the fear of rejection and do not want to lose their friendship. Today, St. John the Baptist is inviting me to think differently. His life was set apart from the others and his death fulfilled the mission he was called to accomplish and did not fear the opinion of the others about him and was truthful till the end. This act of St. John the Baptist sets an example for me to be a faithful follower of Christ. We are also called to come out of our familiar and comfortable zones to live a fearless life no matter what suffering and hardships come on the way. We are called to die for the mission before we die and St. John the Baptist is the example through his death.

*Vimal Wilbert csc*

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

Theme of today readings is the importance of holiness in our life now. Many of us think that we can become holy later. Jesus said, "Stay awake!" We must stay awake against evil spirits who steal our holiness. St. Paul reminds us that we thank God for the gift of holiness. We safeguard our gifts like birthdays, anniversaries etc. Similarly, let us safeguard our gift of holiness from God. It is not easy to safeguard this gift because this is an invisible gift whereas other gifts are visible gifts which can be easily safeguarded. Sacraments help us to see this invisible gift; therefore, we can safeguard this gift. Without sacraments, we will lose this gift from God. So, we can use sacraments now in order to keep our holiness. Keeping holiness later means evil spirits steal our gift of holiness due to not staying awake. Regular use of sacraments helps us to stay awake and safeguard our gift of holiness from the evil spirits. Sadly, sacraments are inaccessible to most Deaf Catholics in India. We are trying to remove this inaccessibility by providing sacraments in sign language to them. Eventually, we let them safeguard their holiness by receiving sacraments regularly.

*Joseph Thermadam csc*

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

The gospel reading invites us to prepare ourselves for the kingdom of God. We don't know the end of time, and we don't know when we will be judged. We are busy in our own world, doing a limited thing which satisfies us or our own motives. We spend very less time to actually think about what we need for our eternal life. We have a lot of things that can distract us from loving God or to do what God wills. We are at sleep in our own world, knowing nothing of God's coming or the judgment. And today Jesus wakes us up and reminds us what we need to long for or desire for. He shows his concern by asking us to be ready at any time to enter into the kingdom of God. He also says that waiting for the last moment will only end our life in mourning and weeping. For having not thought of it when we actually should have would worry us and disappoint us.

*Roshan Minin D'Souza csc*