

# 2018 June

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Readings: 1Pet 4:7-13; Mk 11:11-26

The very common point in today's readings is prayer. Jesus is assuring us that, whatever we ask for in prayer if we believe that we have received it, it will be ours. We ask for so many things in our daily prayers, but when we don't get answers we easily get disappointed and start blaming God that he is not listening to our prayers. But Jesus is saying, "When you pray do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you." How to pray? And what is the main requirement for prayer? What kind of prayers will be answered by God? Everyone in the world prays to God for different blessings and favors. But are they genuine in their heart in their prayers? God doesn't see our actions, but he sees through the heart. The person who is praying must keep himself pure, in his heart, soul and mind. Whoever doesn't forgive his brother or sister is not worthy of the forgiveness of God. And God doesn't answer their prayers. St. Peter beautifully says, 'be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers.' So, let us seek God's forgiveness and his grace to love one another as Jesus himself loved us so that nothing can block our prayers from reaching God.

*Bandula Praveen csc*

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Readings: Jude 17: 20-25; Mk 11:27–33

It is very interesting to note that in the gospel reading for today, Jesus' response to the chief priests is sandwiched between their own questions. This particular passage reveals the true source of Jesus' authority. It is awesome to see that the chief priests could not beat Jesus in debate! He is not brought down by any challenge from his enemies. Instead of answering their questions, he dares them with another one and they are silenced! This is a tremendous exposure and an indictment. He lays bare their incoherence. They are cornered: they cannot prove the divine origin of John's baptism nor can they disapprove it. Caught in a fix, they retreat, feigning ignorance. They will not get an answer to their question either; they will not know with what authority Jesus acts. Hence, let us ask for the wisdom and grace for ourselves never to ignore the Word just because it disturbs our private agenda or challenges our self-interest.

*Jowelson Khongtani csc*

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Readings: Ex 24: 3-8; Heb 9:11 – 15; Mk 14: 12-16, 22-26

What is true love? If I am asked to choose one verse in the Bible with regard to true love, I would prefer John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” True love is not only saying “I love you” rather living and dying for the one we love. True love respects and accepts the reality of life and makes the new reality in giving one’s life totally. Today as we are celebrating the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, we are called to understand the true love of God for each one of us in wiping away our sins with his Son’s body and blood. He respected our freedom and accepted the way we lived out our freedom, but he proved to each one of us by his death that though we are not faithful he is always faithful. This feast gives us the proof that there is someone who loves us unconditionally in giving his body and blood to say “I still love you and you are mine.” This feast gives us the proof that, there is someone who waits for us in the tabernacle day and night to spend time with us. And this feast is the proof that the one whom we receive daily in the Eucharist is an extraordinary lover who can transform us into his likeness and image. St. Augustin said, “Become what you receive.” God is love and we receive him every day in the form of holy Eucharist, have we become like him? Are we **love**? And is there any likeness of God in us? This feast gives us a question, WHO ARE WE?

*Antony Cheliyan csc*

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Readings: 2Pet 1: 2-7, Mk 12: 1-12

St. Peter says, “This self-control, in turn, should lead to perseverance” (2 Pet 1:6). To grow and persevere in the life in the spirit, we must combine our perseverance with self-control. Perseverance is not a mysterious quality that just one day suddenly emerges. It is the result of faith, virtue, discernment, and self-control. Each one of us is graced with perseverance not only through self-control but also through afflictions suffered for love of Christ. Perseverance also brings trials, but we must vigilantly watch and pray so as not to fall into temptation (Mt 26:41).

The learning involves the presence of perseverance in it. Though it may be for the personal growth or spiritual growth, every growth must happen with perseverance. For our Spiritual growth, we accept the graces which lead to perseverance because of our love for God. Without perseverance, our lives are tragic, and even Jesus’ death is in vain for us. Jesus was a perfect example for perseverance and God speaks through St. Paul that “if we run the race of the Christian life but don’t cross the finish line, we have run the race in vain.” In our life too, every success involves perseverance in spite of all the trials and temptations. So today let us reflect upon our own perseverance and pray daily for the grace of perseverance in all our undertakings for the spiritual and personal growth during this new academic year.

*M.M. Martin csc*

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Readings: 2 Pet 3:12-15, 17; Mk 12:13-17

In the light of today's gospel let us reflect on our daily task. We see many billionaires in our country on one hand and hundreds of homeless on the other. It is very evident that the rich have stolen from the poor. There is no attitude of sharing, rather snatching from the other. Who bothers why there are so many poor people in our country? Each time I travel by train I encounter numerous beggars and I always think how I can teach them how to catch a fish rather than giving a fish. Then the image of St. Mother Theresa comes to me helping millions of poor people. She was not a millionaire, she had no personal bank deposit, but she had a great trust in God's providence and humility to beg from the other on behalf of the poor. How many of us can do such a work? There is a saying, 'pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you.' I believe St. Mother Theresa had this quality. Let us try to help the needy in our own way.

*Prasanta Basumatary csc*

Readings: 2 Tim 1:1-3, 6-12; Mk 12:18-27

Jesus came to give new life to us all and we believe that our God is the God of the living and not of the dead. We most often tend to imagine our life in heaven as we live here on earth. We think that as human beings we need to spread the word of God to people around and all have to believe in our religion as the only means of salvation.

In the Gospel reading we read that people come to Jesus to ask about the life after death with an example of a woman marrying many men. Jesus clearly tell us that we need to change our thinking of heaven. It is not the same way as we live here on earth thinking: my life, my happiness, my wealth, I have to become rich, I want power, and for all this we destroy people by our actions, words and deeds.

Jesus came to this earth to save us and lead us to God who is living and God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So let us live as heaven is here on earth and consider everyone as our own brothers and sisters and follow the greatest commandment that Jesus has given us “Love your neighbor as you love oneself.”

*Joel Glan Mendonca csc*

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Readings: 2 Tim 2:8-15, Mk 12:28-34

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is teaching us the two greatest commandments; first is the Love of God and the second is love of neighbor. Besides, we see a scribe seeking the way to enter the kingdom of God. And Jesus replies to him, keeping in mind the tradition as well as the will of God the Father. We also have our tradition and ritual practices, but we need to prioritize our traditional practices so as to enter the kingdom of God.

In the first reading we see St. Paul is preaching the tradition of risen Christ. He continues to assure the providence of Christ when we are faithful to God and follow his teaching. In our lives too, we have lots of doubts and chaotic situations. Do we really seek the help of God in such circumstances? If we seek his guidance as the scribe in the gospel reading, we will be provided with full understanding and get the wisdom of God to face such situations. These commandments are like two sides of the same coin; they are to be observed as one. We too hear at times the famous saying, 'if we cannot love the neighbor whom we see, we can't love God whom we have not seen.' So, we need to love one another and seek God's providence to do the will of God in all the circumstances of our lives. We pray for the grace that we may love God and our neighbors, and follow the tradition of risen Christ, and live life like true Christian.

*Lawrence S. csc*

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Readings: Hos 11: 1, 3-4, 8-9; Jn 19: 31-39

As we celebrate today, the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus - we are invited to be open and compassionate towards our brethren like Jesus was. The first reading of today invites us to reflect over the words of Yahweh – “I am compassionate because I am God not human.” This is the call for us today to acquire the quality of God - To love and to be more compassionate towards others. In the Gospel we see that the side of Jesus was pierced and immediately there came out blood and water. The Sacred Heart of Jesus shows the true love of God towards the humanity. May this feast make our hearts more compassionate and loving so that we may become one of his true disciples who follows him more closely, dearly and lovingly. And also let us surrender ourselves fully to him to make our hearts pure that we may not fall apart by the worldly pleasures.

*Manu Praveen csc*

Readings: Is 61:9-11; Lk 2:41-51

As usual, Jesus and his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Jesus' staying with the teachers and the elders clearly shows that he has grown up in knowledge of the Father. At the same time, we also know the love of the mother, who was worried in search of her beloved son. Through this incident, one should learn that Mary too, understands our every need and will always accompany us in every situation of our life. She wants us to stay close to her son, who comes in search of us when we go away from the love of Christ. Today, we celebrate the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which shows Mary's involvement in Jesus' redemptive work. As followers of Christ, one should know that Mary too, accompany us in our faith journey. She is our faithful mother, who will never let us go away from the love of God. Instead, if we only place our trust in her powerful intercession, we will be free from our sinful tendencies. Jesus always listens and fulfills his mother's request. May we be more devoted to our mother Mary, who understands our needs and our life's struggles that we may continue to place all our trust in her.

*Stephen Langsianmunga csc*

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Readings: Gen 3:9-15; 2Cor 4:13-5:1; Mk 3:20-35

Who are my mother and my brothers? In the gospel of the day Jesus, filled with Holy Spirit, talked about the requirements to be in his Father's family. Jesus extends his family though his mother and relatives try to confine him within their relationship. Jesus, centered on God's love with the mission, proclaimed gloriously to the generations to come that 'anyone who does the will of my Father belongs to my family.' In Matthew 7:21 it is said that 'It is not those who say to me 'Lord, Lord' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father.' The citizenship of heaven has a demand on each one of us in this world that is to listen to God's voice and act according to it. The same Jesus who turned water into wine can turn our hearts into a source of love where there is no love, where there is no peace and where there is no joy, if we listen to him as he listened to his Father.

*Wilfred Francis Dias csc*

Readings: Acts 11: 21-26, 13: 1-3; Mt 5: 1- 12

Today's readings, particularly the first reading, reveal to us how God inspires people to become an instrument for the purpose of spreading the Good News. In fact, it is GOD who takes initiative to send them out into the world at the right time. Over the centuries people were constantly searching for a better life and were worshiping gods that cannot give eternal life. After having understood such a situation God the Father took initiative to send people to give the Good News. Jesus Christ coming to this world and sacrificing his life in order to save the life of the people from their sins was a great sign that it is only our God who can give the true life. Thus, the Good News for the whole humanity is the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. Even today people look for life-giving words. People who suffer and find no place to stay accept the words of Jesus, for example the beatitudes, as words of nourishment. However, not all people have access to the Word of God. It is for such reason that God appoints and inspires people to take his Word all over the world. But, today many baptized Christians fail to understand their responsibility and do not listen to God's call. Therefore, both the readings invite the believers to be open to accept God's call for the purpose of taking his Word to the others who have not heard his words.

*John Kennedy A csc*

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Readings: 1 Kgs 17: 7-16; Mt 5: 13-16

Jesus told his disciples that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Today, the same Lord says to me that I am, as a Christian, called to be the salt of the earth and light of the world.

Salt and light do not stand by themselves. Salt adds flavour to every food and light illuminates the darkness. Both are for others and not for themselves. Both are essences which would give meaning to something else. Thus, the gospel is an invitation for me to share this essence with others. As a salt I have to bring Christian flavour to the world and as a light, it is my duty to illumine the darkness of sin and hatred in the world.

The gospel is also a reminder for me from the Lord, asking me not to lose the saltiness and continue to light up. The Word of God is the only element that can continue to give light to me, which I have to share with others and that is the only element that can help me to keep up the saltiness and add flavour to the lives of many.

Lord, let my heart continue to thirst for your Word so that your Word may burn my heart and produce more light to illumine the world.

*Siju Pappachan csc*

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Readings: 1 Kgs 18: 20-39; Mt 5: 17-19

Today's gospel reading speaks about the importance of God's law. Jesus makes clear to his disciples that the law of the Old Testament is still valid. But he says "do not imagine that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them." Today Jesus is not only challenging us to follow God's commandments sincerely but also reminding us that we have the moral responsibility for our neighbor who is living in darkness. Jesus is telling that we need to enter into a loving relationship with God in prayer and action. Today Jesus challenges all of us to enter into the law of God. The law of God is to love God and love our neighbor as one loves one's self. The scripture says in Romans 2:15 'the law of God is written in hearts of the humans'. It is our innate nature to love the other. But sometimes in life we live hypocritically. We say one thing and do another thing which is not appropriate to the gospel values. Every action that we do and every word we say has an impact on the other; sometimes we may be aware and sometimes we may not be. If we want to truly lead others towards Jesus by following his commandments we cannot simply follow the rules and say I am perfect. Instead we need to enter into God's love-relationship by helping the others. Our faith must be expressed in words and deeds.

*Bharath Babu Putti csc*

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Readings: 1 Kings 18:41-46; Mt 5:20-26

I have heard the following saying, "Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny". Today in the gospel Jesus speaks something similar. I am called to have a holistic approach to my relationship with God, oneself and others and with all the creation. As I quoted in the beginning, the cause of every disturbance and destruction begins with the very thought that we have about oneself, about the others, about nature, and about God. Jesus in the gospel invites us to look deep within us where no one has access except God. Here we are unmasked, and we can't pretend to be true. I am invited to introspect my innermost feelings, thoughts, and ambitions. If I am focused to do good from within then everything - like my words, my behavior and my response to the given situation - is centered on God and I can have the vision of God in my daily life.

*Joyson John Barboza csc*

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Readings: 1Kgs 19:9a, 11-16; Mt 5:27-32

In the first reading we see how Elijah encounters God, there was earthquake, whirlwind and at the end there was silence and there he found God, our God who remains in Silence. In silence we are able to speak to God and God will listen to us. In our life too same thing happens, when there are problems if we sit in silence and we are able to get answer for the questions. If there is disturbance we are not able to get the answer, or come out of the difficulties that we go through. In the reading we see how Elijah meets God in silence and God solves the problem of Elijah and he tells him to go forward. This reading is asking us to be in Silence so that we can encounter God and come closer to God. From the Gospel reading we see how when we commit sin we go away from God. If we take these words practically we may cut all our body parts because of the life which we live. This reading is a call for us to change our life from sinfulness, because sin takes us away from God and doesn't allow us to come closer to God. It is a block for us to go closer to God and if we are able to remove the block then we can approach God or encounter God face-to-face. Sin is like a poison which kills our body slowly, so we need to be aware of what we are doing. We need to try our best and ask blessings from the Lord to help us come out of it. When Lord is with us nobody can be against us.

*Vijith Joncy Mathias csc*

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Readings: 1Kgs 19:19-21; Mt 5:33-37

We see in today's gospel the newness that Jesus brings to us. The newness is in being true to one's word and being true to oneself and others. Unfortunately, many people do not practice the virtue of truth. God is the source of all truth and there is nothing false or deceitful in him. His word is true and his law is true. His truth liberates us from illusion, deceit, and hypocrisy. Jesus told his disciples that the truth will make them free. Why is it so hard to be truthful and to speak the truth? Truth demands commitment to live our lives sincerely and be faithful witnesses of the truth. Jesus teaches his disciples the unconditional love of truth. He speaks against bearing false witness and all forms of untruthfulness and swearing unnecessary oaths to God. As Christ's disciples, we are invited to imitate him in speaking and practicing truth. He knows our hearts and minds. Therefore, let us be truthful to ourselves, friends and community so that we may be a living witness to Christ through our lives.

*Anthoni Reddy csc*

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Readings: Ezek 17:22-24; 2 Cor 5:6-10; Mk 4:26-34

Today the liturgy of the word reminds me about the plan of God for me and for all about the kingdom of God. In today's gospel reading we can see two parables about seed. Very often in our life we do not recognize the presence of God; like the seed which grows though nobody knows how it grows. Many a time in my life there is sudden growth process in different fields. But I did not recognize it due to my weakness. This reading is a message for me that there is a person working behind me to make me a good person and to continue his mission about his kingdom.

Very often I hear people speak about kingdom of God. A question arose where this kingdom is. Those called by God according to his plan need not search kingdom of heaven in different places, but the kingdom of heaven is within us, it is in our society. But we are not able to recognize it due to our selfish motives and possessiveness. The reading invites us to see the kingdom within us which is hidden, so that we see the kingdom of heaven in others.

*Boneventure Lobo csc*

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Readings: 1Kgs 21:1-16; Mt 5: 38-42

“Give to anyone who asks of you anything” is the advice of Jesus to his disciples in the Gospel reading of the day. Looking at the life of Saint Andre Bessette this reading is very appropriate because he gave himself entirely to the people. His little help which appears less worth in the eyes of humans, counts much in the sight of God. It is true that often it is hard to practice the gift of generously giving my time, energy, and material help to neighbours, friends, fellow travelers and in the community. For me, today’s message is “Giving and Doing good” in whatever situation I will be, like Jesus who gave his life for my sake going through the trials and hardships of life for the cause of saving the whole humanity. As a matter of fact taking up challenges of life truthfully and willingly is the key to becoming what the Gospel wants me to be in my life by giving and doing generously and happily more than what is expected or demanded of me.

*Ruwnglal Friny Peter csc*

Readings: 1Kgs 21: 17-29; Mt 5: 43-48

Sin and its consequences are passed on from generation to generation. Sin of our first parents made us mortal and forced us to suffer and work for our survival in the world. Sin has also power to affect the lives of other people who are innocent. In this way, a person cannot commit sins and be punished alone, but it affects his descendants and society at large. We can also see it in the life of Ahab who committed the sin of killing Naboth, but disaster fell on his descendants.

In the current generation, we are facing the problem of global warming and other natural disasters due to the mistakes done by our forefathers.

On the other hand, God is generous and just. He is generous in forgiving the person who asks for forgiveness from him and is ready to change. He gives chance after chance so that we may become righteous and do well in his sight. He is also just in giving punishment to those who does wrong in his sight.

The word of God invites us to seek mercy and forgiveness from God for our sins and sins of the other people. We are also invited to think twice before committing any sin, which may affect the lives of others and coming generations.

*Peter Paul Dang csc*

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Readings: 2Kgs 2: 1, 6 – 14; Mt 6: 1 – 6, 16 – 18

Today through this reading Jesus is inviting me to be an honest man and do my duty without expecting any appreciation and reward from others. In this modern world we see people do a lot of things in order to get appreciation and recognition in the society. Jesus Christ is a perfect example for us to follow to lead an honest and sincere life. We see that throughout his life he was an ordinary Jew, but he was able to do many extraordinary things by his very way of life. His life teaches us that it is in doing our duty without expecting any reward that will lead us to live a happy life. This is what we see also in Hindu philosophy of the *nishkamakarma*: doing my duty without expecting any reward for the duty. Today Jesus is calling you and me to live a life of *nishkamakarma* and let us pray for the grace of God in order to live honest and sincere life.

*Jijo Philip csc*

Readings: Sir 48:1-14; Mt 6:7-15

Through the gospel reading of today, Jesus teaches us the meaning and power of prayer. Gentiles make their prayers when others see them. They want to be noticed, so they pray loudly and using many words while praying. But Jesus is telling us not to be like them and that our Father in heaven knows our needs; so, let our prayer be silent. In our religious life, we see people living without spending some time in prayer. Prayer gives strength to our soul and we need it in order to move forward in life. Here arises the question for my life, as a scholastic I go to prayer every day and I think all others those who were like me did the same; but what did prayer do to me today? I realize that it is my own eagerness and thirst for God that will lead me to be with God in prayer. And Jesus gave a short prayer which contains the whole life of a human being. And it is wake-up call for me to be in prayer and realize that prayer is powerful, and it is a personal chat with my Father, who is in heaven. We pray today that we may be what Jesus wants us to be.

*Manoj K. Rathinam csc*

Readings: 2Kgs 11:1-4, 9-18, 20; Mt 6:19-23

Today, the gospel reading highlights that we need to be detached from worldly things and be attached to God by placing our trust in His Providence. When was a child, I used to collect a lot of old coins and sometimes pictures of saints. I considered them as my greatest treasure. Now when I look back I have no idea where they are. As an adult, I feel that my greatest treasure is my faith, hope and love for Christ. I feel personally with the words of Jesus for my life, "Where your treasure is there also will your heart be." Today, Jesus asks me to detach from all that I consider as greater than his love for me because his love is greater than anything else. He died for me on the cross in order to save me from my sinful nature. I believe that if I am attached to the worldly things I will be automatically detached from God's presence and his love. Therefore, Jesus invites me to walk in the light of his Kingdom values and carry out his mission on earth.

*Jesu Manickam csc*

Readings: 2 Chron 24: 17-25; Mt 6:24-34

When we look carefully into our human life, we find that most of us spend more time thinking about food and drink, cloth and shelter and the needs of the body. We are busy thinking about all these needs and we forget to serve and trust in the Lord. We do not trust in God; that's why so many troubles and worries come into our life. We see in the first reading that the family of Israel left God and distrusted God. Therefore, Syria came for war with them and destroyed everything. Jesus said that we must serve only the true God and trust in him for everything - our food and drink, our clothes and shelter, because God can see and knows everything that we need, and he will fulfill our needs and desires.

*Lawrence Wanniang csc*

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Readings: Is 49:1-6; Acts 13:22-26; Lk 1: 57-66, 80

The readings of today speak about calling, naming and being sent. In the first reading we see the call narrative of Isaiah. He says that he was called when he was in his mother's womb and named before he was born and was given a mission by God. And in the Gospel reading, we have the birth narrative of John the Baptist, naming and the confusion about "what will this child be?" after the naming ceremony, and the wonder they have seen.

I was not called to be a rich man in the society. I am not called to be a great man among the public. I am not sent to the rich, well-to-do people. I am born to a simple and middle-class family, called to be a simple man and sent among the poor to serve them and bring them to the Lord. I accept I am human, born with some weaknesses; I am blessed with a lot of richness of talents and blessings. Knowing the weakness and the blessing here I am. Am I doing God's will in my life, in other words, the mission that I am entrusted with? Or am I taking for granted the gift that God has given me? This is the question to all who believe that their life is a gift from God and are blessed with God's grace in their life. We pray that the God who gave us this life may help us to realize our call and the mission we are entrusted with and may be with us in doing that mission to the people to whom we are sent.

*Arockiaraj csc*

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Readings: 1Kgs 17; 5-8, 13-15a 18; Mt 7:1-5

The gospel reading advises us to examine our own life before we find fault with others. We all seek attention either by showing off our talents or by pointing out the mistakes of the other in a public forum. In today's reading Lord Jesus asks us to come out of these attitudes to realize that none is perfect. We need to believe that everyone has a dark side in their life and there is always a light that shines even if we are unable to focus our attention to the light. We need to be confirmed that being born as human we are prone to err. Everyone is in the process of learning, everyone is born of God, and everyone has a right to live as a child of God. Condemning or judging the other person blocks our freedom to love others. We should examine our life and live with fraternal love for all.

*Roshan M D'Souza csc*

Readings: 2Kgs 19:9-1, 14-21, 31-35, 36; Mt 7:6, 12-14

The questions I often hear people asking me when I am traveling in the train are, what are you doing? Why do you want to be a priest? Are priests really not allowed to get married? Then why did you choose such difficult life?

I often sum up all these questions with one answer saying its Gods call and I know what I am doing.

Gospel is presenting to us the Golden rule of life that is “do to others whatever you would want others do to you.” If we follow this in life this world will be a heaven on earth.

In the gospel we also hear Jesus saying narrow is the gate that leads to life and Jesus is the perfect example that we have who walked this road. He did everything that the world considered stupid, useless; he traveled a road which no one wanted to walk, a road even to the Calvary. This same Jesus is inviting me to walk this road through the congregation of Holy Cross and to carry forward his work. As I travel this road, which is less travelled, my prayer is best expressed in the words of the formula for accepting the profession of vows: ‘may the Lord who started this good work in me bring it to completion.’

*Pretham Joy Menezes csc*

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Readings: 2 Kgs 22: 8-13, 23: 1-3; Mt 7: 15-20

Whenever someone speaks about being spiritual in action I usually don't lend my ears to them. I was thinking that it was okay to be casual at times. But today's readings tell me about the fruitfulness of action towards my faith. I understand that it is not okay to be casual in our faith. I always quote James 2: 17 and 26 *"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."* But I failed in practicing it. In the first reading, people of Judah and Jerusalem vow to God that they would never do anything against his will. And in the gospel Jesus warns about false self. If good tree can be found out by its good fruit, then why not produce one? This question struck me and inspired me to be faithful in my action. God may or may not cut down the tree; as for me let me be a good tree which produces good fruit.

*Philosan S. csc*

Readings: 2Kgs 24:8-17; Mt 7:21-29

Today's liturgy invites me to look deep into myself and tally my action with God's will. Jesus says that it is not just enough that I recite his name and follow the law; rather I should do his will. For Jesus God's will is more important than other things. So, he says in Mt 12:50 that 'anyone who does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.' By giving the parable of two builders Jesus affirms that God never mislead the faithful who walk in his way and does his will and one who does not walk in his way will end up in disaster. This we read in first reading where king Jehoiachin became slave to Nebuchadnezzar only because he was not with God. Today's gospel ends with saying 'the crowd were astounded at Jesus' teaching for he taught them with authority' because Jesus knew that he is with God and God is with him and whatever he was doing and saying was according to God's will, not his will.

*Arone Frederick Vas csc*

Readings: Acts 12: 1 – 11; Mt 16: 13 – 19

Who is Jesus? This is the question that I am called to reflect through today's liturgy of the word. The answer to this question, I believe, lies in the kind of relation one shares with the person of Jesus. The answer to this question definitely can't be the same for all who follow and believe in Jesus. We all stand at different levels in our understanding of Jesus's work and mission. The answer to this, I believe, primarily depends on the personal bond or experience that I share with Jesus.

For Peter, Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That's the ultimate truth proclaimed by Peter and is confirmed by Jesus as the revelation of his Father. Therefore, we see the loving presence of God in the life of Peter. God sends an angel to rescue Peter from the prison and also from the hands of Herod and Jews who plot to kill him.

The message for me is that God never abandons his faithful. God protects, redeems and makes us partners in his mission, like Peter. Let us continue to reflect: who is Jesus for me? Where do I stand in my faith and in my commitment to Jesus?

*Rajashekhar Gundiga csc*

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Readings: Lam 2:2, 10-14, 18-19; Mt 8:5-17

Today the church commemorates the death of the first martyrs of the church, who were burned, tortured and killed by Nero for their faith in Christ. The first reading laments the fall of Jerusalem through the instrumentality of Babylon. They were not destroyed by mere human powers but by God himself. He protected them, blessed them; but Israel would not listen to the prophecies of God and continued in its path of destruction. Israel has fallen and what can we compare its destruction to? The first reading concludes with the direction to cry to the Lord and approach him, so that, the Lord may have mercy on them.

The gospel reading portrays the healing of the centurion's servant. Jesus and the centurion recognize the pain of the sick man and would like the sick man to be healed. The centurion approaches Jesus with great faith and Jesus would himself want to come and heal the sick man. Faith in Jesus becomes a criterion to heal the sick. Great pain of the servant moves the centurion to approach Jesus in great faith. Let us look at Jesus in faith like the centurion so that we may be healed.

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