



HOPE
IN THE FUTURE

'GIVE 10 MINUTES TO GOD'

WEEKLY PRAYER REFLECTIONS FOR USE BEFORE MEETINGS

7th October 2018 – 29th September 2019 (Year B/Year C)

Each parish community is encouraged to start all meetings and activities with a short prayer reflection based on the upcoming Sunday Scripture. The discussion points are designed to encourage discussion and fellowship. It is a reminder that God must be at the centre of all that we do and that in God's Word we find inspiration for our Missionary efforts.

A suggested way of working with Scripture:

- One reader reads the passage.
- Listen to it, without reading the passage.
- After a short pause, share any words/phrases/images that strike you. This is not a time for discussion but sharing.
- Then hear the passage read again and share your thoughts on the questions.
- Conclude by saying the prayer together.

Sunday 7th October – 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 10:2-16

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' 'Moses allowed us' they said 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.' Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Do I have a childlike faith and trust in God?
- What are we doing as a parish to promote the vocation of marriage and support families?
- Do we allow children to come to Jesus? Are they actively welcomed and encouraged to contribute to parish life?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, be with my family. Grant us your peace and harmony, an end to conflict and division. Gift us with compassion to better understand each other, wisdom and love to assist each other, and trust and patience to live peacefully together. Grant that through the intercession of your mother, Mary, and St. Joseph, our family may become a holy family accepting each other, working together in unity, selflessly dedicated to one other and to you. Amen.

Sunday 14th October – 28th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 10:17-27

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one another 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- What is holding me back from fully giving my life to Jesus?
- Could we give more time or money to support those in need in our community?

Prayer

Jesus, teach us, like you taught the rich young man, what is coming between us and you. Give us the courage and grace to remove it from our lives and follow you so we can find true happiness and fullness of life. Amen.

Sunday 21st October – 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus. 'Master,' they said to him 'we want you to do us a favour.' He said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.' 'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?' They replied, 'We can.' Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted.'

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers

lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Do I have a servant's heart or do I expect praise for my good works?
- Am I grateful to Jesus, the servant king, who gave his life so that I could live?
- In what ways are we a serving parish?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, teach us to be more like you, and less like the world around us. Help us to put aside our selfish desires and vain ambition. Teach us to be true servants in both word and deed. Give us a servant's heart, just like Jesus. Amen.

Sunday 28th October – 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 10:46-52

As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to say, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me.' And many of them scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, 'Son of David, have pity on me.' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him here.' So they called the blind man. 'Courage,' they said 'get up; he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, 'What do you want me to do for you?' 'Rabbuni,' the blind man said to him 'Master, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you.' And immediately his sight returned and he followed him along the road.

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- What do you want Jesus to do for you?
- Has Jesus brought healing to you in your life? Do you need healing for any other parts of your life?
- How do we, as a parish, offer new sight to others?

Prayer

Lord, look upon me with eyes of mercy, may your healing hand rest upon me, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of my body and into the depths of my soul, cleansing, purifying, restoring me to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. Amen.

Sunday 4th November – 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and put a question to him, 'Which is the first of all the commandments?' Jesus replied, 'This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.' The scribe said to him, 'Well spoken, Master; what you have said is true: that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.' Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' And after that no one dared to question him any more.

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Do I love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength or do I allow other things to take his place?
- How can we as a parish love our neighbours more?

Prayer

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbour as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Sunday 11th November – 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 12:38-44

In his teaching Jesus said, 'Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.'

He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Am I humble in my good deeds and prayer?
- Does everyone in the parish give generously of their time and finances to the building up of the parish? If not, how can we help engage people to do so?

Prayer

Jesus we thank you for humbling yourself to share in our humanity and showing us the way of service to one another. May we always be ready to serve others, especially those most in need. Help us to remain humble and not strive for wealth and power but service. Amen

Sunday 18th November – 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

Scripture

Mark 13:24-32

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Am I prepared if Jesus was to call me home tomorrow?
- As a parish, how do we help families during times of bereavement?

Prayer

Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing make you afraid. All things are passing. God alone never changes. Patience gains all things. If you have God you will want for nothing. God alone suffices.

Sunday 25th November – Christ the King (B)

Scripture

John 18:33-37

'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked. Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.' 'So you are a king then?' said Pilate. 'It is you who say it' answered Jesus. 'Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Is Jesus the King of my Heart?
- Do we believe that 'we came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth'?

Prayer

God the Father, you will all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of your truth. Send workers into your great harvest that the gospel may be preached to every creature and your people, gathered together by the Word of life and strengthened by the power of the Sacraments may advance in the way of salvation and love. Amen.

Sunday 2nd December – First Sunday of Advent (C)

Scripture

Gospel

Luke 21:25-28,34-36

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Am I ready to welcome Jesus into my life this Christmas?
- Do I need to change part of my life to make room for him?
- How are we reaching out to the vulnerable in our parish this Christmas time?

Prayer

Mary, you said yes to God and fulfilled his plan to bring Jesus to our broken world. Help us to say yes and welcome Jesus anew this year so we can be transformed to bring his light to our world. Give us the courage to share our faith this advent and serve others in love. Amen.

Sunday 9th December – Second Sunday of Advent (C)

Scripture

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley will be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- What are the internal obstacles that impede the path of the saviour on his journey to our hearts?
- How are we as a parish helping to prepare a way for Jesus in our community?

Prayer

Merciful God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of your Son, Jesus. In this season of Advent, help us to prepare for his coming as well. Help us to use this time of waiting to make positive changes in our lives and the lives of others around the world. Amen.

Sunday 16th December – Third Sunday of Advent (C)

Scripture

Luke 3:10-18

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- What are we doing as a parish to share our resources with those in need around us?
- Are we a people of Joy? How do we show it?

Prayer

Joy-filled Giver of Life, let the anticipation of your birth fill us with overflowing joy. May our excitement and anticipation be a sign to the world that you are always near. Amen.

Sunday 23rd December – Fourth Sunday of Advent (C)

Scripture

Luke 1:39-44

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- Do I trust in God's plan for my life?
- Do we regularly give thanks to God for all he has done for us?

Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, who, while the Blessed Virgin Mary was carrying your Son in her womb, inspired her to visit Elizabeth, grant us, we pray, that, faithful to the promptings of the Spirit, we may magnify your greatness with the Virgin Mary at all times. Amen

Sunday 30th December – The Feast of the Holy Family (C)

Scripture

Luke 2:41-52

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.'

'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority.

His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

Reflection

Some questions to reflect on and discuss –

- How can my family home be more like the home of the Holy family at Nazareth?
- Is our parish a family where we know each other's names and needs and do we hold each other in prayer?

Prayer (Official World Meeting of Families Prayer)

God, our Father, we are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son, one family, in the Spirit of your love. Bless us with the joy of love. Make us patient and kind, gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need. Help us to live your forgiveness and peace. Protect all families with your loving care. Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, keep us safe in your love, and make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share. This we ask, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Sunday 6th January 2019 – The Epiphany of the Lord (C)

Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel.'*

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward, and halted over the place where the child

was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Reflection

Like the three wise men, we should have the courage to follow the light of the star we have seen, however hazardous the journey. Like the three wise men, we should be so strong that we are able to see and recognise our Lord and Ruler in however unexpected a way he may present himself to us. Like the three wise men, having recognized him, we should bow down and adore him, offering him our total loyalty.

Prayer

Jesus you are the light of the world which the darkness can never over power. Shine brightly through us today and always so we can bring hope to our world today. Father in heaven, guide us to your perfect light, your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sunday 13th January 2019 – The Baptism of the Lord (C)

Scripture

Luke 3:15-16,21-22

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

Reflection

- Do you know the date of your baptism? This is the day your sins were forgiven and you were welcomed into the family of God.
- Reflect on the words of your Father and creator speaking to you, 'this is my son/daughter, with whom I am well pleased.'

Prayer

Almighty, ever-living God, when Christ was baptized in the river Jordan the Holy Spirit came upon him and your voice proclaimed from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son.' Grant that we, who by water and the Holy Spirit are your adopted children, may continue steadfast in your love. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Sunday 20th January 2019 – 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

John 2:1-11

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water', and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now' he told them 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from – only the servants who had drawn the

water knew – the steward called the bridegroom and said, ‘People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now.’

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection

- Is there an area of my life/parish which has run out of ‘wine’? Do I trust that Jesus can turn my ‘water into wine’?
- Do we sometimes turn ‘wine into water’ by our negativity, apathy or complaining?

Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, who govern all things, both in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the pleading of your people and bestow your peace on our times. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Sunday 27th January 2019 – 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’

Reflection

The above Gospel is central to our evangelisation efforts. At baptism and confirmation ‘the Spirit of the Lord has been given to us.’ ‘He has sent us to bring the good news to the poor.’ How is our parish being a beacon of hope to the local community?

Prayer

Loving Father, you so loved the world that you sent us your only Son, that we might believe in him and have eternal life. May we encounter Jesus Christ anew this day and live the Good News with joy. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to “go out to the whole world and proclaim” our faith with confidence. Give us the courage to witness to the Joy of the Gospel by our words and actions. Help our parish to become more welcoming and missionary, so that you may be known and loved by all people. Amen.

Sunday 3rd February 2019 – 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 4:21-30

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue: 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?'

But he replied, 'No doubt you will quote me the saying, "Physician, heal yourself" and tell me, "We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside."'

And he went on, 'I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.

'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.'

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

Reflection

Familiarity can breeds contempt. Is there someone in our parish doing amazing work and we under appreciate them? Is there someone in our parish who could take on a leadership role but we don't ask them because they 'part of the furniture' of the parish?

Prayer

Lord, may we never take for granted the people around us. May we always appreciate the gifts and talents they bring to our community. Amen.

Sunday 10th February 2019 – 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon's – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' 'Master,' Simon replied, 'we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.' Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

Reflection

Jesus is giving us a similar invitation, 'put out into deep water and put out your nets for a catch.' Do we trust in Jesus or do it or say 'Lord, we have been trying for years and it's too difficult?'

Prayer

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Sunday 17th February 2019 – 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 6:17,20-26

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said:

'How happy are you who are poor: yours is the kingdom of God.

Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied.

Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh.

Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.

'But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now.

Alas for you who have your fill now: you shall go hungry.

Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep.

'Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.'

Reflection

In the beatitudes Jesus gives us the roadmap to happiness and holiness. It is the mission statement for the Kingdom of Heaven, one which is very different to a worldly mission statement. In the Kingdom the poor are rich, the weak are strong and the humble are exalted. How can our parish be closer to the Kingdom of Heaven?

Prayer

Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace. Amen.

Sunday 24th February 2019 – 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 6:27-38

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon,

and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.'

Reflection

- How do you feel about this week's difficult message?
- Do we take Jesus seriously when he tells us to love our enemies?

Prayer

For the times we fail to love and turn the other cheek we say –

O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again. Amen.

Sunday 3rd March 2019 – 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 6:39-45

Jesus told a parable to his disciples: 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye.

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

Reflection

- Do I sometimes judge others and forget about my own faults?
- How can we improve our lifestyles and so produce better fruit?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen

Sunday 10th March 2019 – 1st Sunday of Lent (C)

Scripture

Luke 4:1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.' But Jesus replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.'

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' But Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said to him 'throw yourself down from here, for scripture says:

He will put his angels in charge of you
to guard you,

and again:

They will hold you up on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

Reflection

We are encouraged during Lent to deepen our prayer life. Prayer is simply a conversation with the one who loves and made us. The more we do it the more we hear what God wants from our lives and the more things makes sense. This lent let us make a commitment to real, humble, heartfelt prayer to God.

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to appreciate the food we have and remember those who don't have. These forty days of Lent when we make small sacrifices remind us the forty days and nights you fasted, may we gain the same strength you received from self-denial so we no longer take what we have for granted.
Amen.

Sunday 17th March 2019 – 2nd Sunday of Lent (C)

Scripture

Luke 9:28-36

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.' And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

Reflection

Peter, James and John had their special encounter with Jesus when they took time out from their daily concerns. Take some extra time this week, not just to say prayers, but to stop and ponder the people who reflect the light of God's goodness to you, then find an opportunity to talk to someone about that experience.

Prayer

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. Amen.

Sunday 24th March 2019 – 3rd Sunday of Lent (C)

Scripture

Luke 13:1-9

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.'

He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."

Reflection

- Are there groups, ministries or ways of working in the parish which are not bearing fruit?
- Should we give these groups more time or think about trying something different?

Prayer

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Amen.

Sunday 31st March 2019 – 4th Sunday of Lent (C)

Scripture

John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.'

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

Reflection

In a moment of silence ask God to heal you from any physical, emotional or spiritual illness you or a loved one may have.

Prayer

Jesus, I invite you to enter my heart and touch all those life experiences which need to be healed. Lord, you know me much better than I know myself. Help me to reach out to you in faith and pour your love into my heart. Amen

Sunday 7th April 2019 – 5th Sunday of Lent (C)

Scripture

John 8:1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and do not sin any more.'

Reflection

In sharp contrast to her accusers, who demand that she be stoned to death, Jesus shows mercy and compassion. It is truly a beautiful encounter, one of the most moving in the whole of the scriptures, capturing powerfully the mercy of God. We are called to put into practice this kind of mercy in our own lives.

Prayer

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Sunday 14th April 2019 – Palm Sunday (C)

Scripture

Philippians 2:6-11

His state was divine,
yet Christ Jesus did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Reflection

Imagine how Jesus must have felt. He had been betrayed by one of his inner circle friends, Judas, for 30 pieces of silver, his apostles had fallen asleep when he needed them and he knew he had to face a horrific death on the Cross. The agonies he suffered for us we can only imagine but he knew his part was essential in God's plan of salvation for the world. Christ is our bridge to heaven, through our sin and the original sin of Adam a void between heaven and earth is created but through the death and resurrection of Jesus we are reconciled with the Father of Mercy.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died for us on the cross to take away our sins. When you stretched out your arms, you showed us how much you love us. May we always remember your great and merciful love. Amen.

Sunday 21st April 2019 – Easter Sunday (C)

Scripture

Luke 24:1-12

On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, they went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on entering discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee: that the Son of Man had to be handed over into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?' And they remembered his words.

When the women returned from the tomb they told all this to the Eleven and to all the others. The women were Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. The other women with them also told the apostles, but this story of theirs seemed pure nonsense, and they did not believe them.

Peter, however, went running to the tomb. He bent down and saw the binding cloths but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened.

Reflection

So why is Easter the most important celebration in the Churches year? Why does it matter to us that Jesus rose from the dead? Because it means death is no longer the end of everything, joy and hope have come into this broken world. Now that death no longer has dominion over Jesus, it has no more power over us, who, belong to Jesus. We believe through Jesus death and resurrection we may have eternal life even when we die.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your passion. We thank you for coming to our broken world to save us. May we never forget all that you have done for us. May we leave all that holds us back in the tomb so we can rise in glory with you. Amen.

Sunday 28th April 2019 – Divine Mercy Sunday (C)

Scripture

John 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.'

'As the Father sent me,
so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.
For those whose sins you forgive,
they are forgiven;
for those whose sins you retain,
they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me.
Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

Reflection

Jesus appeared to the frightened disciples who were hiding from the Jews in a locked room. He was dazzling white and shown them his hands and side. He commissioned them with the task of starting the Christian Church on that day, "just as the father sent me, so I am sending you" and breathed on them saying "receive the Holy Spirit, for those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven", instituting the sacrament of reconciliation. From these humble beginnings the Church began. After experiencing Jesus and the Holy Spirit the disciples went from being scared to wanting to share the good news. If we call on the Lord the same can happen in our lives.

Prayer

God and Father, pour out your Spirit on us that we may know in our hearts and minds the power and truth of the Gospel of your risen Son.
Amen

Sunday 5th May 2019 – 3rd Sunday of Easter (C)

Scripture

John 21:1-19

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' They replied, 'We'll come with you.' They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night.

It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, friends?' And when they answered, 'No', he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something.' So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' At these words 'It is the Lord', Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak round him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land.

As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead.

After the meal Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?' He answered, 'Yes Lord, you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He replied, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Look after my sheep.' Then he said to him a third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was upset that he asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and said, 'Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'

Reflection

Again this week we hear the successes the disciples achieve when they place their trust in Jesus as they make a big catch. Then Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him, many believe this is to counteract the three denials Peter made just before Jesus was crucified. If we say we love Jesus how are we feeding the sheep and lambs entrusted to our care in our parishes?

Prayer

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Sunday 12th May 2019 – 4th Sunday of Easter (C)

Scripture

John 10:27-30

Jesus said:

'The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice;
I know them and they follow me.
I give them eternal life;
they will never be lost
and no one will ever steal them from me.
The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone,
and no one can steal from the Father.
The Father and I are one.'

Reflection

What is God calling you to? What is his plan for your life? The 4th Sunday of Easter is vocation Sunday where we pray for the priesthood but we all have our vocation. There are three aspects to a vocation. The first relates to the work of profession we feel called to. This

can be nursing, teaching or any other job. The second is our state in life: many are called to marriage, some to the single life and others to the clerical or religious life. The third, and most important part of every vocation is to be holy. To live a holy life and strive to be a saint. We listen to the voice of the Spirit to discern where he is leading us.

Prayer

Lord, soften my heart through your grace of repentance, that I may listen to your voice and be led and guided by your Spirit, Amen.

Sunday 19th May 2019 – 5th Sunday of Easter (C)

Scripture

John 13:31-33,34-35

When Judas had gone Jesus said:

‘Now has the Son of Man been glorified,
and in him God has been glorified.
If God has been glorified in him,
God will in turn glorify him in himself,
and will glorify him very soon.

‘My little children,
I shall not be with you much longer.
I give you a new commandment:
love one another;
just as I have loved you,
you also must love one another.
By this love you have for one another,
everyone will know that you are my disciples.’

Reflection

The very definition of God is love. If God is love then there is nothing created that is not carried and surrounded by his infinite benevolence. God not only declares that he is love, he also proves it by dying on the cross for us: “Greater love has no man but this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13) When we are struggling to show love we can pray to God who is love.

Prayer

Jesus, you are the author and of love. We only know love because you are love and you loved us first. You love us specifically and sacrificially. You love us in our sin and rebellion against you. You love us despite the pain we inflict on others. You love us in our mess. It is that love - that selfless, self-sacrificing love, which allows us to love others. Jesus help us to love others as you love us. Amen.

Sunday 26th May 2019 – 6th Sunday of Easter (C)

Scripture

John 14:23-29

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If anyone loves me he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him and make our home with him.
Those who do not love me do not keep my words.
And my word is not my own:

it is the word of the one who sent me.
I have said these things to you while still with you;
but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all I have said to you.
Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you,
a peace the world cannot give,
this is my gift to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
You heard me say: I am going away, and shall return.
If you loved me you would have been glad to know that I am going to the Father,
for the Father is greater than I.
I have told you this now before it happens,
so that when it does happen you may believe.'

Reflection

This week Jesus tells us if we love him we should keep his commandments, then the father and son will make their home in us by giving us a peace which the world cannot give. He tells his friends he will soon return to his father in heaven but will send the Holy Spirit to remind them of what he has told them. The same Spirit comes to us to strengthen and inspire us to keep Gods word which brings us peace of mind.

Prayer

Compassionate God and Father of all, we are horrified at violence in so many parts of the world. We pray for a change of heart for those who kill and harm; Grant your strong Spirit of peace - peace that surpasses our understanding and changes lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Sunday 2nd June 2019 – 7th Sunday of Easter (C)

Scripture

John 17:20-26

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

'Holy Father,
I pray not only for these,
but for those also
who through their words will believe in me.
May they all be one.
Father, may they be one in us,
as you are in me and I am in you,
so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.
I have given them the glory you gave to me,
that they may be one as we are one.
With me in them and you in me,
may they be so completely one
that the world will realise that it was you who sent me
and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.
Father, I want those you have given me
to be with me where I am,
so that they may always see the glory you have given me
because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
Father, Righteous One,
the world has not known you,
but I have known you,
and these have known that you have sent me.
I have made your name known to them

and will continue to make it known,
so that the love with which you loved me may be in them,
and so that I may be in them.'

Reflection

Jesus prepared his followers for his departure by promising them peace, guidance by the Holy Spirit, and his eventual return. Carrying on in his absence was not easy. Faith in him did not eliminate the need for the new church to make assignments, resolve issues or deal with conflict caused by new teaching but they knew they were responsible for keeping his vision alive. They discerned, made judgments, and acted on the strength of their deep faith, just as we must continue to do today!

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, before ascending into heaven, did promise to send the Holy Spirit to finish your work in the souls of your apostles and disciples, allow the same Holy Spirit to me that he may perfect in my soul the work of your grace and love. Grant me the gifts of the spirit so I can serve you well. Amen.

Sunday 9th June 2019 – Pentecost (C)

Scripture

Acts 2:1-11

When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech. Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome – Jews and proselytes alike – Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'

Reflection

Let us reflect on this account from the apostles who experienced the Holy Spirit descend upon them. The Holy Spirit transformed fearful apostles into courageous witnesses to Christ. They received the gift to preach the Gospel in all languages and on that day 3,000 people were baptized and converted. From this humble beginning the Church of Christ spread to every land which is why we consider Pentecost to be the birthday of the Church. Ever since the Holy Spirit has guided and strengthened the Church and still continues to do so today.

Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth.
Amen

Sunday 16th June 2019 – The Most Holy Trinity (C)

Scripture

John 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I still have many things to say to you
but they would be too much for you now.
But when the Spirit of truth comes
he will lead you to the complete truth,
since he will not be speaking as from himself
but will say only what he has learnt;
and he will tell you of the things to come.
He will glorify me,
since all he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.
Everything the Father has is mine;
that is why I said:
*All he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.*'

Reflection

The Holy Spirit is a community of three persons - Father, Son and Spirit together making up one God. Powerful love is exchanged between the three of them, which we experience a glimpse of on earth. Let us give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for all the blessings they bestow on us.

Prayer

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Sunday 23rd June 2019 – Corpus Christi (C)

Scripture

Luke 9:11-17

Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were in need of healing.

It was late afternoon when the Twelve came to him and said, 'Send the people away, and they can go to the villages and farms round about to find lodging and food; for we are in a lonely place here.' He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves.' But they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go ourselves and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples, 'Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty.' They did so and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven, and said the blessing over them; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the crowd. They all ate as much as they wanted, and when the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve baskets.

Reflection

Jesus always transforms the little we have into more than we need. He leaves us the Eucharistic as a memorial of his death and resurrection. Jesus, present body, blood, soul and divinity is the heart of our parishes. He is our strength for our missionary efforts. He transforms us from the inside out so we can become what we receive.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for this memorial of your sacrifice which you invite us to partake in. Help us to believe that you are truly present in the sacrament of the Eucharist. We pray for our parish community as we celebrate this feast, help us to see that you are present in our lives and call us to be part of one body. Amen.

Sunday 30th June 2019 – Feast of St Peter and St Paul (C)

Scripture

Matthew 16:13-19

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

Reflection

St Peter and St Paul were two of the greatest apostles of all time but it wasn't always the case. Peter denied Jesus three times and Paul persecuted Christians. This is reassuring for us that God can do amazing things with imperfect people.

Prayer

O God, who on the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul give us the noble and holy joy of this day, grant, we pray, that your Church may in all things follow the teaching of those through whom she received the beginnings of right religion. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Sunday 7th July 2019 – 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 10:1-9

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. Start off now, but remember, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you go into, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you."' "

Reflection

The Lord has appointed us and sent us out to prepare people's hearts for Jesus. He gives us a warning, we may not always get a warm welcome but that shouldn't put us off. We are to stick to an area and invest our time with those people. We should also pray that the Lord will send volunteers to help in our parish as the 'harvest is rich but the labourers few.'

Prayer

Lord, the road to heaven is paved with acts of love and self-sacrifice. Teach me to lay down my life in love and service of others. Amen.

Sunday 14th July 2019 – 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 10:25-37

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What do you read there?' He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' 'You have answered right,' said Jesus 'do this and life is yours.'

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

Reflection

- Who are my neighbours and what are their needs?
- How can we as a parish be beacons of hope to those in need around us?

Prayer

I thank you for choosing me to be your disciple and for the gift of your Son, Jesus. Help me proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel by word and by deed today and every day. Open my heart to the outcast, the forgotten, the lonely, the sick and the poor. Grant me the courage to think, to choose and to live as a Christian, joyfully obedient to God. Amen.

Sunday 21st July 2019 – 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said 'you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.'

Reflection

In this week's Gospel we hear the encounter Jesus has between Martha and Mary. Martha means well, she is worried about all the practicalities of feeding Jesus and his friends but Jesus isn't interested in that, he tells her it is more important to be in his presence and listen to him like Mary. Do we take time out of our busy lives to be in Jesus' presence or do we get caught up in our day to day tasks?

Prayer

Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things pass away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Those who have God. Find they lack nothing; God alone suffices.

Sunday 28th July 2019 – 17th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 11:1-13

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'

He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:

"Father, may your name be held holy,
your kingdom come;
give us each day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.
And do not put us to the test."

He also said to them:

'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him"; and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

Reflection

What an honour it is to be able to call almighty God 'Father'. In the Our Father Prayer we are given the pattern of all prayers. We start with praise and then petition. Jesus encourages us to be persistent in our prayers trusting that when we keep asking we receive, when we keep searching we find and when we keep knocking the door is opened. We serve a Good Father who cares for us.

Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

Sunday 4th August 2019 – 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 12:13-21

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.' 'My friend,' he replied, 'who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?' Then he said to them, 'Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs.'

Then he told them a parable: 'There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time." But God said to him, "Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?" So it is when a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God.'

Reflection

- Do you think there is a happy medium balance between saving and spending?
- Jesus said "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." What are our financial priorities as parish?

Prayer

Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do your will. Amen

Sunday 11th August 2019 – 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 12:35-40

Jesus said to his disciples:

'See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Reflection

- How can I prepare myself for Jesus' coming?

Prayer

O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again. Amen.

Sunday 18th August 2019 – 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 12:49-53

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

Reflection

- Is the Holy Spirit burning in our parish community?
- What do we think Jesus means by 'he came to bring division?'

Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Sunday 25th August 2019 – 21st Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 13:22-30

Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, 'Sir, will there be only a few saved?' He said to them, 'Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.

'Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, "Lord, open to us" but he will answer, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will find yourself saying, "We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets" but he will reply, "I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!"

'Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And men from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

'Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last.'

Reflection

- Have we become complacent about being saved?
- How can we enter by the narrow door?

Prayer

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Amen.

Sunday 1st September 2019 – 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 14:1,7-14

On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man." And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher." In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

Reflection

C. S Lewis said - Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less. Jesus is not asking us to have low self-confidence, he is just asking us to turn our eyes from ourselves. We do this by putting others before ourselves and by not thinking we are the most important people in the world. We find JOY when we do things in that order – Jesus, Others, Yourself.

Prayer

Jesus we thank you for humbling yourself to share in our humanity and showing us the way of service to one another. May we always be ready to serve others, especially those most in need. Help us to remain humble and not strive for wealth and power but service. Amen

Sunday 8th September 2019 – 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. 'If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, "Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.'

Reflection

- Have I seriously considered the true cost of discipleship?
- Am I committed to finishing what I have started?

Prayer

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears! Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Sunday 15th September 2019 – 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 15:1-10

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," he would say "I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance.

'Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," she would say "I have found the drachma I lost." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.'

Reflection

This rhetorical question from Jesus, 'What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it?' is a crazy one. No shepherd would risk leaving ninety-nine sheep to go after just one but Jesus uses the example, along with the prodigal son and the lost coin, to emphasise the relentless mercy of God.

Prayer

Father, in your love you have brought me from evil to good and from misery to happiness. Through your blessings give me the courage of perseverance. Amen.

Sunday 22nd September 2019 – 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 16:10-13

Jesus said to his disciples: 'The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?

'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

Reflection

Looking at parish bank statements can be a good measure of parish priorities. What is our budget for evangelisation? What is our budget for social justice?

Prayer

Jesus, I thank you for giving us our daily bread and for fulfilling our every need. May we reach out to those in need around the world and put them first before money and earthly wealth. Amen.

Sunday 29th September 2019 – 26th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture

Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees: ‘There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

‘In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. So he cried out, “Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.” “My son,” Abraham replied “remember that during your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours.”

‘The rich man replied, “Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father’s house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too.” “They have Moses and the prophets,” said Abraham “let them listen to them.” “Ah no, father Abraham,” said the rich man “but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent.” Then Abraham said to him, “If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.”’

Reflection

- How can we do more for the poorest in our communities?

Prayer

God of justice, open our eyes to see you in the face of the poor. Open our ears to hear you in the cries of the exploited. Open our mouths to defend you in the public squares as well as in private deeds. Remind us that what we do to the least ones, we do to you. Amen.