

**LAZARITE DAILY PRAYER**

☞ **THE PSALM, BIBLE PASSAGE AND PRAYER FOR THE DAY** ☞

**1-31 JULY 2018**



I will open rivers on the bare heights,  
and fountains in the midst of the valleys;  
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,  
and the dry land springs of water.

*Isaiah 41.18*

1<sup>st</sup> JULY

Despair and release

Psalm 51: 1-12

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
*according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.*  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
*For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.*  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
*so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgement.*  
Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

*You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.*  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean,  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
*Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.*  
Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.  
*Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.*  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.  
*Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.*

Romans 7: 19-25a

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

*The Oxford Bible Commentary, John Knox & John Reumann*

*We cast ourselves upon God's mercy in Christ; only then do we find freedom from both the guilt and the power of sin. To know the interior battle between right living and sinfulness is to be truly alive in Christ.*

*Pope Francis, 2016 book title*

*The name of God is Mercy.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Jesus our Saviour, set us free from the sin within us that we may rejoice in your mercy and love both now and for all eternity. *Amen.*

2<sup>nd</sup> JULY

The spirit of adoption

Psalm 57: 7-11

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast.  
I will sing and make melody.  
*Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre!*  
*I will awake the dawn.*  
I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;  
I will sing praises to you among the nations.  
*For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;*  
*your faithfulness extends to the clouds.*  
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.  
Let your glory be over all the earth.

Romans 8: 14-17

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

*To be a spiritually mature child of God in Christ is the most glorious destiny that humans can ever enjoy. One of life’s saddest sights is to see the Spirit’s inspiration wasted by so many people.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Abba, Father, hear us as we praise your name  
and give you thanks for life and salvation;  
may we live fearlessly in your truth  
and strongly in your power,  
through Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

3<sup>rd</sup> JULY

THOMAS THE APOSTLE (I)  
Doubt turned to faith

Psalm 16: 7-11

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;  
in the night also my heart instructs me.  
*I keep the Lord always before me;*  
*because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
my body also rests secure.  
*For you do not give me up to Sheol,*  
*or let your faithful one see the Pit.*  
You show me the path of life.  
In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

John 20: 24-29

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

*Sounding the Seasons*, Malcolm Guite, 2012

A Sonnet for St Thomas the Apostle

'We do not know... how can we know the way?'  
Courageous master of the awkward question,  
You spoke the words the others dared not say  
And cut through their evasion and abstraction.  
O doubting Thomas, father of my faith,  
You put your finger on the nub of things:  
We cannot love some disembodied wraith,  
But flesh and blood must be our king of kings.  
Your teaching is to touch, embrace, anoint,  
Feel after him and find him in the flesh.  
Because he loved your awkward counterpoint,  
The Word has heard and granted you your wish  
O place my hands with yours, help me divine  
The wounded God whose wounds are healing mine.

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Take our lives, O Lord, and use them to show others the truth of your teaching and the power of your resurrection. *Amen.*

4<sup>th</sup> JULY

Thomas the Apostle (II)  
Those whose faith has been shaken

Psalm 89: 46-52

How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself for ever?  
How long will your wrath burn like fire?  
*Remember how short my time is—  
for what vanity you have created all mortals!*  
Who can live and never see death?  
Who can escape the power of Sheol?  
*Lord, where is your steadfast love of old,  
which by your faithfulness you swore to David?*  
Remember, O Lord, how your servant is taunted;  
how I bear in my bosom the insults of the peoples,  
*with which your enemies taunt, O Lord,  
with which they taunted the footsteps of your anointed.*  
Blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen and Amen.

Mark 9: 14-24

When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. He asked them, 'What are you arguing about with them?' Someone from the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.' He answered them, 'You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.' And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' And he said, 'From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.' Jesus said to him, 'If you are able! All things can be done for the one who believes.' Immediately the father cried out, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'

*Tradition tells us that Thomas, once the Doubter, was the first to take the Christian faith to India, founding there what is called to this day the Mar Thoma Church.*

*Pray for all those who have no faith or have lost their faith in Christ, may they find the pilgrim road of faith and feel the love and mercy of God in their lives.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

*Contemporary Parish Prayers, Frank Colquhoun*

Most merciful God, we pray for those who doubt your love; for those who find it difficult to believe or to pray; for those who have lost a faith they once possessed. May the Holy Spirit give light to their minds and lead them into all the truth through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

5<sup>th</sup> JULY

Keeping and growing in faith

Psalm 119: 81-88

My soul languishes for your salvation;  
I hope in your word.  
*My eyes fail with watching for your promise;  
I ask, 'When will you comfort me?'*  
For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,  
yet I have not forgotten your statutes.  
*How long must your servant endure?  
When will you judge those who persecute me?*  
The arrogant have dug pitfalls for me;  
they flout your law.  
*All your commandments are enduring;  
I am persecuted without cause; help me!*  
They have almost made an end of me on earth;  
but I have not forsaken your precepts.  
*In your steadfast love spare my life,  
so that I may keep the decrees of your mouth.*

2 Timothy 3: 12-17

Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But wicked people and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

*Worship, thanksgiving and service are God's due. Maintaining faith under life's pressure and being regular in prayer are the work of each Christian in every century and this is God's way of strengthening and refreshing us. Christ, by his sacrificial death and resurrection has opened the way from earth to heaven, but we are free to follow his way or sink deeply into selfishness, a road leading only to empty despair.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Almighty God, you have made us stewards and guardians of the true faith; as you brought Lazarus from the tomb and gave him new life and ministry, grant us the grace to live through times of hardship, boredom and joylessness as faithful pilgrim followers of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

6<sup>th</sup> JULY

Keeping and sharing the faith

Isaiah 62: 10-12

Go through, go through the gates,  
prepare the way for the people;  
*build up, build up the highway,*  
*clear it of stones,*  
lift up an ensign over the peoples.  
The Lord has proclaimed  
to the end of the earth:  
*Say to daughter Zion,*  
*'See, your salvation comes;*  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.'  
*They shall be called, 'The Holy People,*  
*The Redeemed of the Lord';*  
and you shall be called, 'Sought Out,  
A City Not Forsaken.'

2 Timothy 4: 1-5

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

*Who and what are the teachers and teaching that contemporary 'secular' society chooses to listen to?*

*Christian faith increases in us the more that we give it away to others: this is the joyful and refreshing paradox of witnessing to love and truth.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Heavenly Father, you have made us stewards and guardians of the true faith; as Lazarus was raised from the tomb to minister to others, may we also help many to seek you and find you through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

7<sup>th</sup> JULY

The Good Shepherd

1 Peter 2: 21b-25

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example,  
so that you should follow in his steps.  
*'He committed no sin,  
and no deceit was found in his mouth.'*  
When he was abused, he did not return abuse;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten;  
*but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.  
He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,*  
so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness;  
by his wounds you have been healed.  
*For you were going astray like sheep,  
but now you have returned to the shepherd  
and guardian of your souls.*

John 10: 1-10

[Jesus said:] 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

*All of us have others to care for; to follow the Good Shepherd is beyond human ability, yet by grace and the strength of the Spirit we can follow in his steps.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Faithful shepherd, lead us in caring for others and make us perfect in your love. *Amen.*

8<sup>th</sup> JULY

Thankfulness

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.  
*Know that the Lord is God.*  
*It is he that made us, and we are his;*  
*we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him, bless his name.  
*For the Lord is good;*  
*his steadfast love endures for ever,*  
*and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Ephesians 5: 15-20

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*We owe Christ everything and thankfulness is our eternal hymn.*

Augustine of Hippo, 4-5<sup>th</sup> C

*We are the Easter people and Alleluia is our song.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Blessed Lord, your mercy is infinite and your love eternal; may we grow in thankfulness and a peaceful spirit, that others may see in us the marks of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

9<sup>th</sup> JULY

The Lamb of God

Revelation 5: 12-13

‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered  
to receive power and wealth  
*and wisdom and might*  
*and honour and glory and blessing!*’  
Then I heard every creature in heaven  
and on earth and under the earth and in the sea,  
*and all that is in them, singing,*  
*‘To the one seated on the throne*  
*and to the Lamb*  
be blessing and honour  
and glory and might  
for ever and ever! Amen.’

1 Peter 1: 18-21

You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

*Commentary on the Revelation of St John, R H Charles*

*The Lamb who conquers is the Lamb who has given himself up as a willing sacrifice.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

All praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for your perfect sacrifice has saved us from our sins and put us on the pilgrim way to life eternal. *Amen.*

10<sup>th</sup> JULY

Christian chivalry  
and the temptation to misuse God's grace

Psalm 115: 1-8

Not to us, O Lord, not to us,  
but to your name give glory,  
*for the sake of your steadfast love  
and your faithfulness.*  
Why should the nations say,  
'Where is their God?'  
*Our God is in the heavens;  
he does whatever he pleases.*  
Their idols are silver and gold,  
the work of human hands.  
*They have mouths, but do not speak;  
eyes, but do not see.*  
They have ears, but do not hear;  
noses, but do not smell.  
*They have hands, but do not feel;  
feet, but do not walk;  
they make no sound in their throats.*  
Those who make them are like them;  
so are all who trust in them.

Luke 4: 9-12

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'

*Display without substance is as dead as faith without works. No compliments, honours or decorations can change that.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Grant, O Lord, that in all our finery and solemn rituals we may never forget the crucified Son of Man, stripped naked on Calvary, yet glorious Victor for all eternity. *Amen.*

11<sup>th</sup> JULY

BENEDICT OF NURSIA (I)

*Founder of the Benedictine Order, Patron of Europe*  
Steady faith and stable commitment

Psalm 119: 57-64

The Lord is my portion;  
I promise to keep your words.  
*I implore your favour with all my heart;  
be gracious to me according to your promise.*  
When I think of your ways,  
I turn my feet to your decrees;  
*I hurry and do not delay  
to keep your commandments.*  
Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me,  
I do not forget your law.  
*At midnight I rise to praise you,  
because of your righteous ordinances.*  
I am a companion of all who fear you,  
of those who keep your precepts.  
*The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love;  
teach me your statutes.*

Philippians 4: 4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

From the Prologue to Benedict's Rule for Monks  
*We propose to establish a school of the Lord's service. In founding this we hope that we shall not make rules that are harsh or burdensome. But if, for the good of all concerned, for the correction of faults or the preservation of charity, there be some strictness of discipline, do not be immediately daunted and run away from the way that leads to salvation. Its entrance is inevitably narrow. But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, our hearts will be enlarged, and we shall run in the way of God's commandments with an inexpressible delight of love. Let us then never swerve from his instructions but rather persevere in God's teaching in the monastery until death. Thus shall we share by patience in the sufferings of Christ, and so deserve to share in his kingdom. Amen.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Eternal and unchanging God, we give thanks for Benedict and his faithful witness to the truth in an age of much corruption; may we follow the example of his steady faith and loving devotion to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

12<sup>th</sup> JULY

Benedict of Nursia (II)  
Hospitality

Leviticus 19: 33-34

When an alien resides in your land;  
you shall not oppress the alien.  
*The alien who resides with you shall be  
to you as the citizen among you;*  
For you were aliens in the land of Egypt:  
I am the Lord your God.

Romans 12: 9-13

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Benedict of Nursia, 6<sup>th</sup> C

*Let all the guests that may happen to come be received as Christ.*

*Hospitality is a divine privilege.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

O God, who for the sake of love reconciled earth to heaven in our Saviour Jesus; grant that we may show welcome and hospitality to all our human sisters and brothers, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

13<sup>th</sup> JULY

From slave to brother

Psalm 133

Behold how good and pleasant it is  
to dwell together in unity.  
*It is like the precious oil upon the head,  
running down upon the beard,  
Even on Aaron's beard,  
running down upon the collar of his clothing.  
It is like the dew of Hermon  
running down upon the hills of Zion.*  
For there the Lord has promised his blessing:  
even life for evermore.

Philemon 1: 1, 8b-16

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our dear friend and co-worker. Though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

*Brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ cannot be forced. Like the love of God it must be offered and received freely. Building a world society based on love, mercy and compassion is central to the work of Christians everywhere.*

*According to the United Nations Organisation and many other international observers, there are more slaves in the world today than when slavery was abolished in the UK in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

*Pray for all held in slavery today.*

Take from our hearts and minds, O God love and mercy, every trace of prejudice, every shred of pride,  
that we shall love in the manner of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

14<sup>th</sup> JULY

The generosity of God

Psalm 148

Alleluia.

Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights.

*Praise him, all you his angels;  
praise him, all his host.*

Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you stars of light.

*Praise him, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.*

Let them praise the name of the Lord;  
for he commanded and they were created.

*He made them fast for ever and ever;  
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.*

James 1: 12-18

Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. No one, when tempted, should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. Do not be deceived, my beloved. Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

*Selfless generosity brings the authentic taste of heaven into our world.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, we praise you for the generous love by which the creation and salvation exist; grant us grace to live generously, being wide in compassion and deep in the eternal love which brings meaning to human lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

15<sup>th</sup> JULY

Holiness and self-restraint

Sirach 5: 9 – 6: 1a

Do not winnow in every wind,  
or follow every path.  
*Stand firm for what you know,  
and let your speech be consistent.*  
Be quick to hear,  
but deliberate in answering.  
*If you know what to say, answer your neighbour;  
but if not, put your hand over your mouth.*  
Honour and dishonour come from speaking,  
and the tongue of mortals may be their downfall.  
*Do not be called double-tongued  
and do not lay traps with your tongue;*  
for shame comes to the thief,  
and severe condemnation to the double-tongued.  
*In great and small matters cause no harm,  
and do not become an enemy instead of a friend.*

James 1: 19-27

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

*Company of Voices*, George Guiver CR, 1985

*Expertise is ashes if it be not in the service of love.*

*10-Second Sermons*, Milton Jones

*Holy means set apart. Not like a set of cutlery that only comes out on Sundays. More like a Swiss army knife – remove a splinter, cut a rope, open a bottle, anytime anywhere. Whatever the boss needs.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

May the words of our lips and the thoughts of our hearts be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord our Strength and our Redeemer. *Amen.*



*Ikon of  
Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
with the Carmelite saints  
John of the Cross and Teresa of Jesus (of Avila)*

16<sup>th</sup> JULY

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Isaiah 7: 14

Hear ye now, O house of David;  
The Lord Himself shall give you a sign.  
*Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and shall call his name Immanuel,*  
which means 'God with us.'

Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

*Without the faithful courage of Mary, our faith would not exist.*

*Mary did not ask to be the Mother of Our Lord, she responded to God's call. All Christian life is a response to God – a response of gratitude for life, for love, for meaning and purpose.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

*Thank God for the Carmelite Order and for all who are inspired by the prayer and devotion of Mary, Mother of God. Pray that through the disciplines of prayer and fasting, study and proclamation we shall draw others to the name of Jesus.*

Father of all, as we give thanks for Mary, Virgin Mother of our Lord, may her example draw us ever deeper in communion with her Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

17<sup>th</sup> JULY

The heritage of children

Psalm 128

Happy is everyone who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways.  
*You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands;  
you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.*  
Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
*your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table.*  
Thus shall the man be blessed  
who fears the Lord.  
*The Lord bless you from Zion.  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life.*  
May you see your children's children.  
Peace be upon Israel!

Luke 18: 15-17

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.'

*The greatest riches of any community are its children. Our Lord cherished them, we follow his example, protecting and seeking always to love them as God loves them. In a world of much corruption, care for the young is at once a work of divine love and a protest against the darkness of evil.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

*For children, especially those in hunger and those in danger from war; pray for neglected and abused children and for those who seek to protect and heal their scars in body, mind and spirit.*

We thank and praise you, Heavenly Father, for the gifts and responsibility brought by children in every generation: may we honour their innocence, respect their weakness and guide them with wisdom and compassion, for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

18<sup>th</sup> JULY

Learning and education

Proverbs 9: 7-12

Wisdom speaks:

Whoever corrects a scoffer wins abuse;  
whoever rebukes the wicked gets hurt.

*A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you;  
the wise, when rebuked, will love you.*

Give instruction to the wise,  
and they will become wiser still;  
teach the righteous and they will gain in learning.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,  
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*

For by me your days will be multiplied,  
and years will be added to your life.

*If you are wise, you are wise for yourself;  
if you scoff, you alone will bear it.*

Deuteronomy 11: 18-21

You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

*To ignore history is to repeat its mistakes. To learn from past wisdom and knowledge is necessary to understand how to live in the present and prepare for the future. This is the basis for living intelligently – being grateful, penitent, warned and encouraged.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Bless with wisdom, knowledge and sincerity, O Lord of Truth, all who have the care and education of children and adults; may those who come after us know the truth and be set free to grow in truth and faith, in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

19<sup>th</sup> JULY

Chivalry and generosity  
*Chivalry is not only for members of chivalric orders;  
it is the way in which Christians relate to the world  
and the people around them.*

Psalm 72: 1-4, 12-14

Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to a king's son.  
*May he judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice.*  
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness.  
*May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
give deliverance to the needy,  
and crush the oppressor.*  
For he delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.  
*He has pity on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.*  
From oppression and violence he redeems their life;  
and precious is their blood in his sight.

2 Corinthians 9: 6-12

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

Matthew 5: 7

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

*The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare, 16-17<sup>th</sup> C*

*It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.*

*We have received generously from God's gifts to the human race; our gratitude to God means generosity and mercy to others. Grace and gratitude can bring peace and mercy whereas hardness and false legalism drive apart and do not heal anything or anyone.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

O Christ, who became poor for our sake, teach us how best to serve you in the weak, the suffering and the poor, may we have mercy on those who seek mercy, that they may come to rejoice in your divine compassion. *Amen.*

20<sup>th</sup> JULY

Chivalry and weakness

Psalm 70

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.

O Lord, make haste to help me!

*Let those be put to shame and confusion  
who seek my life.*

Let those be turned back and brought to dishonour  
who desire to hurt me.

*Let those who say, 'Aha, Aha!'  
turn back because of their shame.*

Let all who seek you  
rejoice and be glad in you.

*Let those who love your salvation  
say evermore, 'God is great!'*

But I am poor and needy;  
hasten to me, O God!

*You are my help and my deliverer;  
O Lord, do not delay!*

2 Corinthians 12: 7b-10

To keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given to me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

*By God's amazing love, our faults and failings, weaknesses and illnesses can be the source of true power and strength. We hope in God's mercy and grace.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Saviour of all, in your mercy make us strong and turn our worldly weaknesses into sources of blessing and praise. *Amen.*

21<sup>st</sup> JULY

Chivalry and accountability

1 Chronicles 29: 10b-14

Blessed are you, O Lord,  
the God of our ancestor Israel,  
for ever and ever.  
*Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power,  
the glory, the victory, and the majesty;  
for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours;  
yours is the kingdom, O Lord,  
and you are exalted as head above all.  
Riches and honour come from you,  
and you rule over all.*  
In your hand are power and might;  
and it is in your hand  
to make great and to give strength to all.  
*And now, our God, we give thanks to you  
and praise your glorious name.*  
But who am I, and what is my people,  
that we should be able to make this freewill-offering?  
*For all things come from you,  
and of your own have we given you.*

Galatians 6: 7-10

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

*God's servants will be called to render a true account of themselves, yet God is faithful – even when we are not; God is forgiving – even when our pride prevents us from repentance; God knows our worst – but loves us best;  
Thanks be to God for all eternity!*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Teach us, Heavenly Father, not to be too proud or too frightened to confess our sins and accept your forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord in the strength of the Spirit. *Amen.*

22<sup>nd</sup> JULY

MARY MAGDALENE

The fire of love

Song of Solomon 6: 1-3

Where has your beloved gone,  
O fairest among women?  
*Which way has your beloved turned,  
that we may seek him with you?*  
My beloved has gone down to his garden,  
to the beds of spices,  
*to pasture his flock in the gardens,  
and to gather lilies.*  
I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;  
he pastures his flock among the lilies.

John 20: 10-18

Then the disciples returned to their homes But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Pope Gregory the Great, 6<sup>th</sup> C

*Reflect upon Mary's state of mind, on the intense love of this woman who would not leave the Lord's tomb even after the disciples had gone away.*

*God has called you by name and made you his own.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Holy Spirit, inspire us to love our God with all our heart, all our soul and all our mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

23<sup>rd</sup> JULY

Friendship with God

Proverbs 18: 24 – 19: 1

Some friends play at friendship  
but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin.  
*Better the poor walking in integrity  
than one perverse of speech who is a fool.*

John 15: 12-15

Jesus said: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

*Friendship is love, freely, purely and simply given and received. God does not seek spiritual infants, but mature adults who have grown up to live in the eternal friendship of loving, heavenly parent to child.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

That all the members of our Order may grow in trust and friendship with one another.

O Jesus, friend of sinners and healer of wounded souls, graciously help us to love you and one another, for your dear Name's sake. *Amen.*

24<sup>th</sup> JULY

Poverty and spirituality

Psalm 12

Help me, Lord, for no one godly is left;  
the faithful have vanished from the whole human race.

*They all speak falsely with their neighbour;  
they flatter with their lips,  
but speak from a double heart.*

O that the Lord would cut off all flattering lips  
and the tongue that speaks proud boasts!  
*Those who say, 'With our tongue will we prevail;  
our lips we will use; who is lord over us?*

'Because of the oppression of the needy,  
and the groaning of the poor,  
I will rise up now,' says the Lord,  
'and set them in the safety that they long for.'

*The words of the Lord are pure words,  
like silver refined in the furnace  
and purified seven times in the fire.*

You, O Lord, will watch over us  
and guard us from this generation for ever.

*The wicked strut on every side,  
when what is vile is exalted by the whole human race.*

Mark 14: 3-9

While Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

Mark 8: 36

*For what will it profit them to gain the whole world but forfeit their life?*

*The poor are now God's gift to the wealthy, so that all people may have justice and enough to live safely.*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 20<sup>th</sup> C

*Do something beautiful for God!*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Lord, make us rich in love, ever wider in compassion, and filled with the beauty of holiness. *Amen.*

25<sup>th</sup> JULY

JAMES THE APOSTLE (I)  
From vain ambition to a martyr's death

Psalm 119: 161-168

Princes persecute me without cause,  
but my heart stands in awe of your words.  
*I rejoice at your word  
like one who finds great spoil.*  
I hate and abhor falsehood,  
but I love your law.  
*Seven times a day I praise you  
for your righteous ordinances.*  
Great peace have those who love your law;  
nothing can make them stumble.  
*I hope for your salvation, O Lord,  
and I fulfil your commandments.*  
My soul keeps your decrees;  
I love them exceedingly.  
*I keep your precepts and decrees,  
for all my ways are before you.*

Matthew 20: 20-23

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

John Chrysostom, 4<sup>th</sup> C

*When we look at these two brothers later on in their lives, we see how they were free of such impulses... James was not to live long. From the beginning he was inspired by so great a zeal, that setting aside all earthly interests, he rose to such pre-eminence that it was inevitable that he would be killed straightaway.*

Letter of Pope Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury

*He who would climb to a lofty height must go by steps, not leaps.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Heavenly Father, as James the Apostle learned to cast away self-seeking ambition, may we too learn true greatness in the service of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

26<sup>th</sup> JULY

James the Apostle (II)  
Jesus explains the true nature of greatness

Psalm 118: 5-14

Out of my distress I called on the Lord;  
the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.  
*With the Lord on my side I do not fear.*  
*What can mortals do to me?*  
The Lord is on my side to help me;  
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.  
*It is better to take refuge in the Lord*  
*than to put confidence in mortals.*  
It is better to take refuge in the Lord  
than to put confidence in princes.  
*All nations surrounded me;*  
*in the name of the Lord I cut them off!*  
They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;  
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!  
*They surrounded me like bees;*  
*they blazed like a fire of thorns;*  
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!  
I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,  
but the Lord helped me.  
*The Lord is my strength and my might;*  
*he has become my salvation.*

Matthew 20: 24-28

When the ten heard [of the favour asked for James and John], they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

*Jesus turns worldly ambition upside down and calls us to follow his example.*

Patrick Appleford, 20-21<sup>st</sup> C

*O Lord, all the world belongs to you,*  
*and you are always making all things new;*  
*what is wrong you forgive,*  
*and the new life you give*  
*is what's turning the world upside down.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Blessed Lord, as you came to serve and not to be served, may we be the servants of all, for your sake. *Amen.*

27<sup>th</sup> JULY

On the road to Calvary (I)  
The call to follow

Psalm 24: 1-6

The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it,  
the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.

*For he has founded it upon the seas  
and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep.*

'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,  
or who can rise up in his holy place?'

*'Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,  
who have not lifted up their soul to an idol,  
nor sworn an oath to a lie;*

*'They shall receive a blessing from the Lord,  
a just reward from the God of their salvation.'*

*Such is the company of those who seek him,  
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.*

Luke 18; 18-30

A certain ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, 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 shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother."' He replied, 'I have kept all these since my youth.' When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

*A daily question: 'Where does the Lord come on our scale of priorities?'*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Cf Revelation 1: 5-6

To Jesus Christ, the first born of the dead, who loves us and has set us free from our sins with his blood, who has made of us a royal house to serve as priests of his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever! *Amen.*

28<sup>th</sup> JULY

On the road to Calvary (II)  
The crisis to come

Psalm 3

O Lord, how many are my foes!  
Many are rising against me;  
*many are saying to me,*  
*'There is no help for you in God.'*  
But you, O Lord, are a shield around me,  
my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.  
*I cry aloud to the Lord,*  
*and he answers me from his holy hill.*  
I lie down and sleep;  
I wake again, for the Lord sustains me.  
*I am not afraid of tens of thousands of people*  
*who have set themselves against me all around.*  
Rise up, O Lord!  
Deliver me, O my God!  
*For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;*  
*you break the teeth of the wicked.*  
Deliverance belongs to the Lord;  
may your blessing be on your people!

Luke 18: 31-34

Then Jesus took the twelve aside and said to them, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.' But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

*Like his disciples, we need our Lord to read the signs of the times in our own day and age; there is much that is too hard and too frightening for human minds to contemplate with clarity. Through Christ truth can be discerned and courage be found to face the worst and be grateful for the best that life may offer.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland, 1994

Almighty Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, the Life:  
keep us upright in the way,  
faithful to the truth  
and eager for the life,  
until our lives are a perfect image of his eternal love,  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

29<sup>th</sup> JULY

On the road to Calvary (III)  
Crying out to be healed

Psalm 138

I give you thanks, O Lord,  
with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing your praise;  
*I bow down towards your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name  
for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;*  
for you have exalted your name  
and your word above everything.  
*On the day I called, you answered me,  
you increased my strength of soul.*  
All the kings of the earth shall praise you, Lord,  
for they have heard the words of your mouth.

*They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,  
for great is the glory of the Lord.*  
For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;  
but the haughty he perceives from far away.  
*Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you preserve me from the wrath of my enemies;*  
you stretch out your hand,  
and your right hand delivers me.  
The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;  
*your steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever.*  
*Do not forsake the work of your hands.*

Luke 18: 35-43

As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, <sup>41</sup> 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

John Newton, 18<sup>th</sup> C

*Thou art coming to a King:  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For his grace and power are such,  
One can ever ask too much.*

*We may go boldly to Jesus, despite the obstacles and objections of a world obsessed with power and gain.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland, 1994

Father in heaven,  
Your love brings life to dead souls,  
light to darkened minds, strength to weak wills.  
Help us to believe and trust  
that no wrong we have done  
no good we have failed to do,  
is too great for you to pardon  
through the merits of Jesus Christ your Son. *Amen.*

30<sup>th</sup> JULY

On the road to Calvary (IV)  
The Son of God, guest of a sinner

Psalm 146: 1-5

Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord, O my soul!  
*I will praise the Lord as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.*  
Do not put your trust in princes,  
in mortals, in whom there is no help.  
*When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
on that very day their plans perish.*  
Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord their God.

Luke 19: 1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

*Christ enters the lives of those who know their need; but those who think that they are perfect have barred the Lord from their lives.*

Matthew 5: 7a

*Blessed are the poor in spirit – that is 'those who know their need of God.'*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Teach us to humble ourselves, O Lord, that in due time, you may exalt us, through Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

31<sup>st</sup> JULY

On the road to Calvary (V)  
The parable of the pounds

Psalm 119: 129-136

Your decrees are wonderful;  
therefore my soul keeps them.  
*The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it imparts understanding to the simple.*  
With open mouth I pant,  
because I long for your commandments.  
*Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as is your custom  
towards those who love your name.*

Keep my steps steady  
according to your promise,  
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.  
*Redeem me from human oppression,  
that I may keep your precepts.*  
Make your face shine upon your servant,  
and teach me your statutes.  
*My eyes shed streams of tears  
because your law is not kept.*

Luke 19: 11b-27

Jesus went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. So he said, ‘A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, “Do business with these until I come back.” But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, “We do not want this man to rule over us.” When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. The first came forward and said, “Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.” He said to him, “Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.” Then the second came, saying, “Lord, your pound has made five pounds.” He said to him, “And you, rule over five cities.” Then the other came, saying, “Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.” He said to him, “I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.” He said to the bystanders, “Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.” (And they said to him, “Lord, he has ten pounds!”) “I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.”’

Eric Franklin, 20<sup>th</sup> C

*Disciples must risk all for the kingdom and not let their gifts come to nothing either by acquiescing in the present or by despairing of its future.*

*One of life’s saddest sights is wasted talent and unexplored new ways of serving God.*

PICTURE – PONDER – PRAY – PROMISE

Let us pray

Lord, you gave you life for us on Calvary; grant us the grace and courage to give our lives to you, in the strength of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*