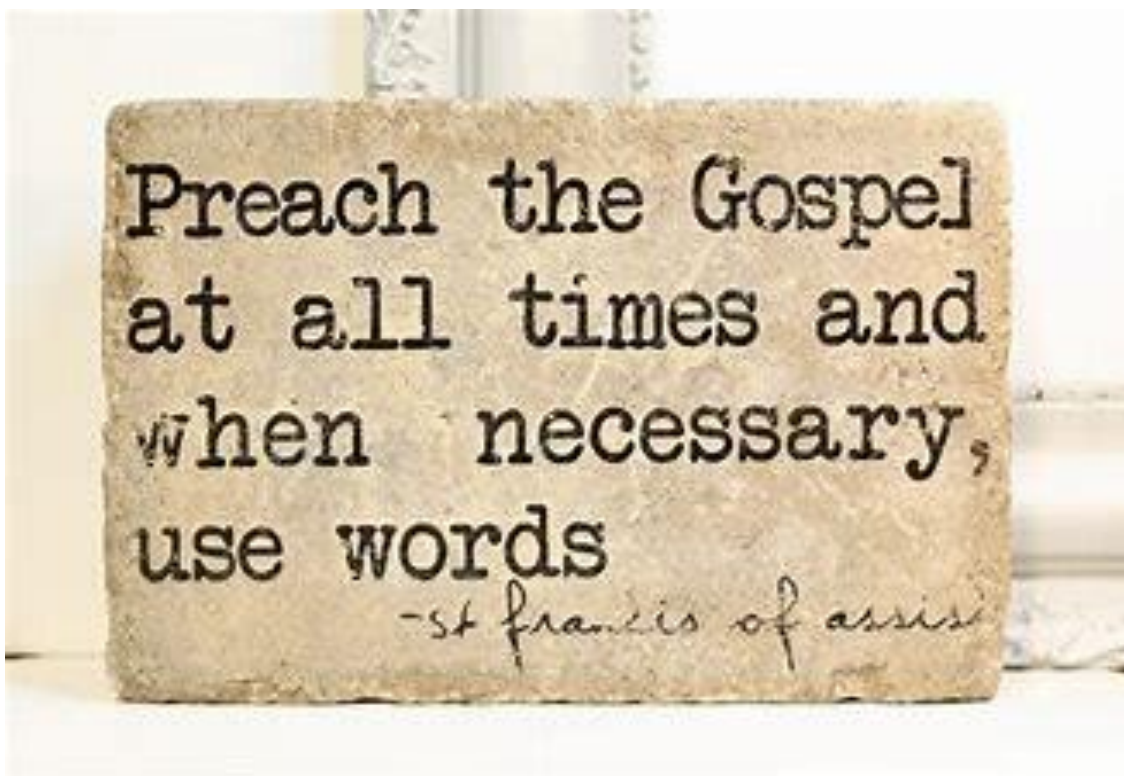
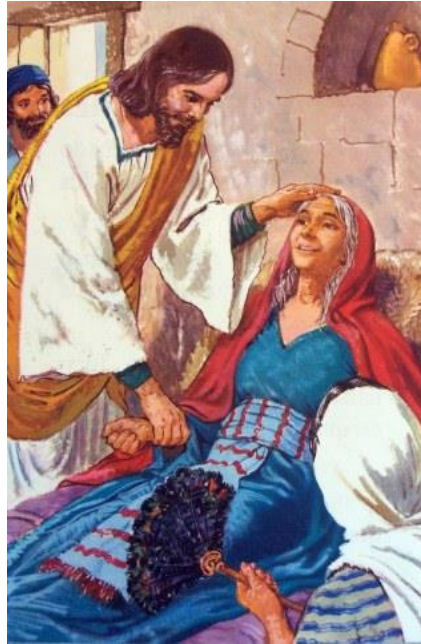


# **GOSPEL THOUGHTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021**



## Gospel Thought for Today

1<sup>st</sup> September - Wednesday of the Twenty-Second Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 4:38-44

After Jesus left the synagogue, he entered the house of Simon. Simon's mother-in-law was afflicted with a severe fever and they interceded with him about her. He stood over her, rebuked the fever and it left her. She got up immediately and waited on them. At sunset, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. He laid his hands on each of them and cured them. And demons also came out from many, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But he rebuked them and did not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place. The crowds went looking for him and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, "To the other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

### Reflection

Today we are reminded that when Jesus said, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28), it really was his purpose to put himself at the disposal of all who were in need and suffering in any way. Yet when invited to stay among the people who were so kind to him, Jesus reminded them that his main purpose was preaching the love of his Father to as many as possible and so He had to continue to meet others.

Since the Institution of the Eucharist, it means that we can in fact always have Jesus as a travelling companion in our journey through life. It is wonderful to realise that the Word of God is at our disposal if only we call on him in faith. "I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

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## Gospel Thought for Today

2<sup>nd</sup> September - Thursday of the Twenty-Second Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 5:1-11

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him

### Reflection

'Put out into the deep water and let your nets down for a catch'. I pray for the trust Peter had when faced with this stark command, that seemingly did not make much sense. I ask this grace for the whole Church, that the community of believers may be full of courage as it carries out its mission to take the Gospel to the whole world.

I ponder on Jesus' response to Peter's confession of himself as a sinner. 'Do not be afraid: from now on you will be catching people'. Peter is given his mission when he realises his sinfulness: this insight actually makes him a better apostle, for he can understand better those he is sent to; he knows he shares their need for mercy and salvation.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

### 3rd September - Saint Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor (Feast)



#### Gospel – Luke 5:33-39

The scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus,  
“The disciples of John the Baptist fast often and offer prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same; but yours eat and drink.” Jesus answered them, “Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.” And he also told them a parable. “No one tears a piece from a new cloak to patch an old one. Otherwise, he will tear the new and the piece from it will not match the old cloak. Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. Rather, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins. And no one who has been drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’”

#### Reflection:

The Pharisees had reason to be unhappy as they spent a lot of time looking out. I notice the discontent that comes from noticing what is missing or looking at others. Jesus, help me to grow in awareness of your presence, to count my blessings instead of the deficiencies of others.

Jesus’ eyes were always open to notice, his heart open to appreciate; even everyday realities like clothing and packaging, spoke to him and had prompted wise insight. I pray that I may open my eyes and heart, learn from my world and grow in appreciation of God’s presence and action.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

4<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday of the Twenty-Second Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 6:1-5

While Jesus was going through a field of grain on a sabbath, his disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them. Some Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the sabbath?” Jesus said to them in reply, “Have you not read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry? How he went into the house of God, took the bread of offering, which only the priests could lawfully eat, ate of it, and shared it with his companions?” Then he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”

### Reflection

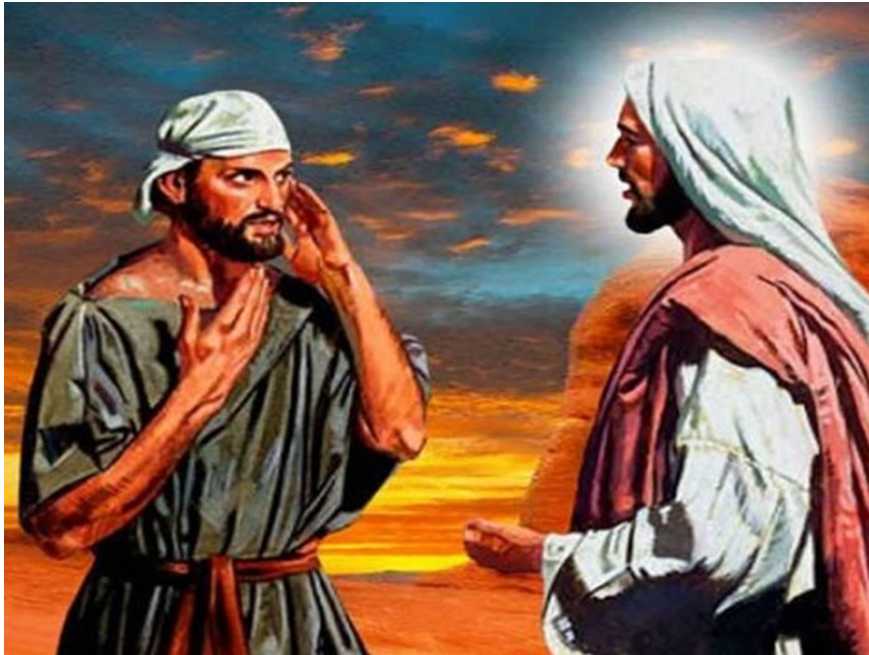
A simple natural action loses its innocence before judgemental scrutiny. Jesus takes a longer view, placing the snacking disciples in the context of their history, inviting the Pharisees to recognise the even longer timeline of God’s plan. I pray for the wisdom to know how to place my priorities in the context of God’s patient love.

Jesus invites the Pharisees to recognise that there is more than meets the eye. If I find myself like the Pharisees in judging, I pray that I may be like them too in asking what Jesus thinks.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

5<sup>th</sup> September - Twenty Third Sunday of The Year



### Gospel – Mark 7:31-37

Again, Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" – that is, "Be opened!" And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

### Reflection

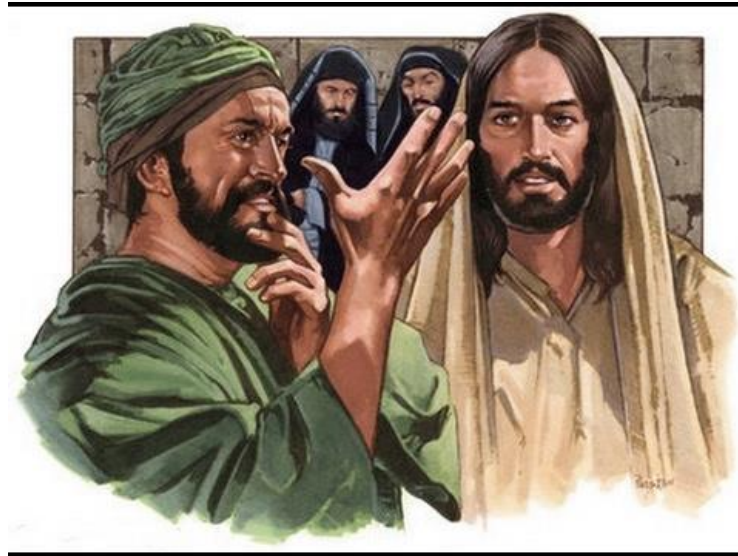
Jesus shows great care and sensitivity in his encounter with this deaf man. Deaf people often say they feel cut off from life and that they are forced to live in a world of their own. Jesus opens out his world again.

I also can sometimes be deaf – deaf to the things of God. I can be cut off from the life that really matters – the life of God. I can hear the word of God but not put it into practice; I can receive the Eucharist but not be nourished by it. So, I take this time with Jesus and ask him to touch the ears of my heart and loosen my tongue so that I may hear his life-giving words and speak clearly about how God is working in my life.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

6<sup>th</sup> September – Monday of Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 6:6-11

On a certain sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely to see if he would cure on the sabbath so that they might discover a reason to accuse him. But he realised their intentions and said to the man with the withered hand, “Come up and stand before us.” And he rose and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?” Looking around at them all, he then said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so and his hand was restored. But they became enraged and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

### Reflection

Isn't it intriguing that the authorities expected Jesus to perform the miracle, but they had no interest in the compassion that absorbed him, which outweighed all ritual? He was upset that their religious practice was so empty of heart. 'If I am without love, I am nothing'.

Lord, put heart and forgiveness and mercy into every prayer I utter. Take every vestige of self-pity out of my concerns. Draw me more and more towards compassionate action for the weak and the suffering.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

7<sup>th</sup> September -Tuesday of Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 6:12-19

Jesus departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. And he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and even those who were tormented by unclean spirits were cured. Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.

### Reflection

In these few verses, Luke summarises Jesus' way of life: prayer, forming his groups of disciples, preaching, healing. I prayerfully look at my life at present and ask for the freedom and wisdom to achieve a better balance, marked by an openness to myself, to friendship and to those in need.

I look in some amazement at Jesus' choice of his closest companions. Surely, he could have done better. But then I realise he has also chosen me, in my weakness and many limitations, and has shown a similar unwarranted trust in me and my potential. I ask for gratitude and trust.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

### 8<sup>th</sup> September - The Nativity of The Blessed Virgin Mary (Feast)



#### Matthew 1:18-23

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”

#### Reflection

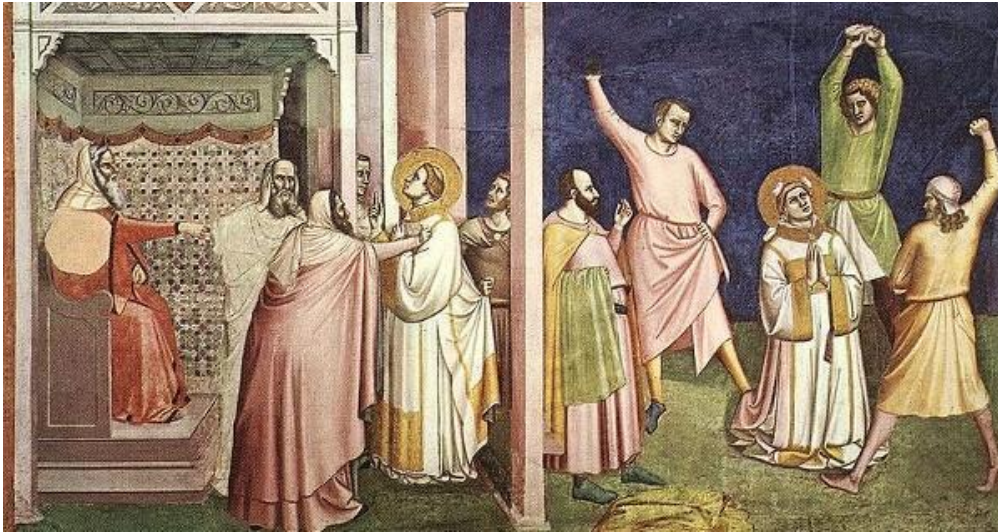
The birth of a baby is always a moment of great wonder and mystery. The birth of Our Lady is even more of a joyful event; it is a clear sign that our salvation, the fulfilment of God's promises is very near. I share in the joy and wonder of Anne and Joachim.

I reflect on Mary's place in my life now. It probably changes from time to time. I pray that I find in her the person who was closest to Jesus and I ask her to bring me closer to him, forming my heart as she formed his.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

9<sup>th</sup> September – Thursday of Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 6:27-38

Jesus said to his disciples:

“To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, *bless* those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

### Reflection

As we read this challenging passage, we should always have in the back of our minds two further Scripture passages. The first is the words of Jesus recorded by St John: “without me, you can do nothing”. No situation will ever arise in my life when Jesus is not by my side helping me to do what is for God’s glory and my own good. Didn’t he promise at the Ascension to be with us always to the end of time. The second passage comes from the Acts of the Apostles and is attributed to St Paul, “I can do all things in him who strengthens me”. So let us carry on confidently, courageously and cheerfully.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

10<sup>th</sup> September – Friday of Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 6:39-42

Jesus told his disciples a parable:

“Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,’ when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.”

### Reflection:

It can be a common weakness to judge my neighbour while not recognising my own faults and need of God’s mercy. Lord, today make me gaze at others as kindly as you do.

God sees each of us from the inside. He sees us with a generous and compassionate gaze and does not despise or condemn us for our shortcomings and failings. I pray for humility and for a deeper capacity to perceive God’s presence and action around me.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

11<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday of Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 6:43-49

Jesus said to his disciples:

“A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but not do what I command? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when the flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built. But the one who listens and does not act, is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, it collapsed at once and was completely destroyed.”

### Reflection

Pope Francis is encouraging us to be people of discernment, who know how to identify and choose what is best, beyond a black-and-white attitude. Today's reading provides us with a very basic discernment criterion: what fruit does each choice produce? I look at my options and ask myself whether I am happy with their fruit.

In our deeply relativistic times, Jesus' words on building our lives on his words sound like a real challenge. I ask to understand what it means in my own life, to see where my life is built on sand and where it is built on solid rock.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

12<sup>th</sup> September - Twenty-Fourth Sunday of the Year



### Gospel – Mark 8:27-35

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Christ.” Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.”

### Reflection

This crucial moment draws the first half of Mark’s gospel to a close. Jesus is not a triumphant but a suffering Messiah. On a surface level, Peter gets Jesus’ identity right. But he is reprimanded for his earthbound vision: he seeks to bend Jesus’ words and ways to his own all too human thinking. He learns that compromise has no place in Jesus’ life.

Lord, your question to the disciples’ echoes down the centuries and I hear it addressed now to me. Strengthen the bonds between us. May our relationship influence my living. Keep me close behind you, as I pick up the crosses and burdens that come from being your disciple. Jesus can always surprise us; every time we read a bit of the Gospel we can learn something new about him or about ourselves.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

13<sup>th</sup> September - Saint John Chrysostom, bishop and doctor (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 7:1-10

When Jesus had finished all his words to the people, he entered Capernaum. A centurion there had a slave who was ill and about to die, and he was valuable to him. When he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and save the life of his slave. They approached Jesus and strongly urged him to come, saying, “He deserves to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation and he built the synagogue for us.” And Jesus went with them, but when he was only a short distance from the house, the centurion sent friends to tell him, “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof. Therefore, I did not consider myself worthy to come to you; but say the word and let my servant be healed. For I too am a person subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, come here, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it.” When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him and turning, said to the crowd following him, “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.” When the messengers returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

### Reflection

Jesus is astonished: he is unused to finding such faith and rejoices where he finds freedom. I can pray for the freedom I need to show faith, trust or humility – even when it is least expected.

Jesus allows himself to identify with someone who speaks of “our people”. Surely, he values the generosity and openness of the speaker, glad that it is not used in a narrow or exclusive way. Seeing how Jesus is able to welcome the faith of the stranger and see in it an example, I pray that I may look again at those I consider different and learn from their ways.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

### 14<sup>th</sup> September - The Exaltation of The Holy Cross (Feast)



### Gospel – John 3:13-17

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

### Reflection

In our exaltation of the Cross lies the basic paradox of our faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that the suffering of Jesus brought us salvation, and that we are called to express this faith by joining our own suffering with His. I believe that doing this saves my suffering from meaninglessness and furthers the salvation of the world from suffering.

I gaze in wonder at the depth of God's wisdom and mercy, I adore the crucified Jesus and ask for a deep sense of gratitude in front of this mystery.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

15<sup>th</sup> September - Our Lady of Sorrows (memorial)



### Gospel – John 19:25-27

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

### Reflection

Mary was there at the most important moments of Jesus' life, so she had to be under the Cross too. I try to imagine her deep confusion at what was going on, her reaction as Jesus asks her for more love and openness to others in this moment of such deep suffering. I bring to mind some situation of terrible suffering, situations of interpersonal conflict or of war that have been going on for years. I bring them to the Cross, asking Mary to teach me to feel sorrow at such suffering, a sorrow that is illuminated by faithful trust and compassionate love.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

16<sup>th</sup> September - Saints Cornelius, pope, and Cyprian, bishop, martyrs (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 7:36-50

A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven."

He said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The others at the table said to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

### Reflection

This extravagant gesture by this woman is hard for us to understand. Yet it was her way of trying to say thanks for whatever she must have received from Jesus. Simon, on the other hand, not knowing the lovely interior movements of her heart, judges her by the external knowledge that he has of her. Jesus goes to great trouble to tell Simon the deeper meaning of her actions and how much he appreciates her response.

Have you ever been misjudged for something you did? It's very hurtful. We can always ask the Lord to help us not to judge others too quickly. It gives you an inner spirit of freedom when you are charitable in thought about others.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

17<sup>th</sup> September – Friday in the Twenty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time



## Gospel – Luke 8:1-3

Jesus journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.

## Reflection

The colourful group described in this passage indicates that Jesus was not "choosy" about his followers. He comes to call us all, regardless of our background or our past. He has high hopes for all of us. He wants all of us, you and me, to be saints.

St Therese of Lisieux was upset when a priest scolded her in the confessional when she expressed her desire to become a great saint, implying that she thought a lot of herself. Therese, however, was not deterred and she encourages all of us to have the same desire as she had, confident that this is eminently pleasing to God who wants us to be perfect "like he is perfect".

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## Gospel Thought for Today

18<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday in the Twenty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 8:4-15

When a large crowd gathered, with people from one town after another journeying to Jesus, he spoke in a parable. “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold.” After saying this, he called out, “Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear.” Then his disciples asked him what the meaning of this parable might be. He answered, “Knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God has been granted to you; but to the rest, they are made known through parables so that they may look but not see and hear but not understand. “This is the meaning of the parable. The seed is the word of God. Those on the path are the ones who have heard, but the Devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved. Those on rocky ground are the ones who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe only for a time and fall away in time of temptation. As for the seed that fell among thorns, they are the ones who have heard, but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and they fail to produce mature fruit. But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance.”

### Reflection

A farmer would understand this parable very well. His livelihood depends on what happens to the seed he sows. Jesus uses this to remind us of the seeds we sow in various ways of living and of their success or otherwise.

Does my life have a clear purpose, have I got my priorities right or am I just living day by day and a victim of circumstances? The gift of reflecting on your life in the company of the friendship of Jesus can be a source which can help the good seed which is you, to bear fruit in good ground.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

19<sup>th</sup> September - Twenty-Fifth Sunday of The Year



### Gospel – Mark 9:30-37

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him. They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child, he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”

### Reflection

The disciples are on the way to Jerusalem with Jesus. They cannot accept that such a dreadful fate awaits him there - betrayal and death. They are in shock, distraught, squabbling among themselves. Do I desire to be important, wealthy, a celebrity? In welcoming a little child, Jesus reminds us that greatness is to be found in loving service of the weaker members of the community.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

20<sup>th</sup> September - Saints Andrew Kim Tae-gon, priest, and Paul Chong Ha-sang, and Companions, martyrs (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 8:16-18

Jesus said to the crowd:

“No one who lights a lamp conceals it with a vessel or sets it under a bed; rather, he places it on a lampstand so that those who enter may see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not become visible, and nothing secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care, then, how you hear. To anyone who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he seems to have will be taken away.”

### Reflection

Jesus asks me to pay attention to how I listen, to notice how I notice. If my prayer is full of distraction or if my mind is always racing, I need to do as Jesus asks and pay attention. If I see only deficiency, I will lose everything; if I am able to recognise, appreciate and receive blessing, I can trust in God's goodness and love.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

### 21<sup>st</sup> September - Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist (Feast)



#### Gospel – Matthew 9:9-13

As Jesus passed by, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” He heard this and said, “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

#### Reflection

Jesus is inclusive – even ‘tax collectors and sinners’ are welcomed. They represent those whose professions and social status are ‘not respectable’. But Jesus shows that he has come for all people, without exception, and especially the weak and the vulnerable, the ‘sick’ and the ‘sinner’.

How inclusive and compassionate Jesus is in his ministry! I ask myself if I am prejudiced against any individuals or groups? Lord, help me to become more like you in thought, word and deed. Make me large-hearted.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

22<sup>nd</sup> September – Wednesday in the Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 9:1-6

Jesus summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, *and* he sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He said to them, “Take nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. And as for those who do not welcome you, when you leave that town, shake the dust from your feet in testimony against them.” Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing diseases everywhere.

### Reflection

‘Take nothing for your journey!’ Pope Francis dreams of a poor Church for the poor. Like the disciples in the Gospel scene, the Church today must depend on God, not on property, power or prestige. The only riches that matter are the riches of the Good News. Today’s disciples need to be focussed solely on God; only thus will the power of God’s grace be free to work through them unrestrictedly. In this way they will ‘bring good news’ to a world which has lost its way, and they will ‘cure its diseases everywhere’.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

23<sup>rd</sup> September - Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, priest (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 9:7-9

Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening and he was greatly perplexed because some were saying, “John has been raised from the dead”; others were saying, “Elijah has appeared”; still others, “One of the ancient prophets has arisen.” But Herod said, “John I beheaded. Who then is this about whom I hear such things?” And he kept trying to see him.

### Reflection

The Gospel today brings to light a very important point: to simply know about somebody is very different from actually knowing them personally. Through the gift of grace, we can know Jesus, and our prayer is our communication with a friend, not with an acquaintance. If you are blessed in having some close friends, you then understand the difference. Recall then the words of Jesus, “I do not call you servants any longer...I have called you friends” (John 15:15). You are never alone when you return his offer of friendship.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

24<sup>th</sup> September - Our Lady of Walsingham (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 9:18-22

Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, ‘One of the ancient prophets has arisen.’” Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said in reply, “The Christ of God.” He rebuked them and directed them not to tell this to anyone. He said, “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.”

### Reflection

Jesus asks his disciples ‘Who do the crowds say that I am’? Let us look at Jesus putting that question; how do I respond today? To what extent is Jesus the norm of my values, actions? To what extent do I make all my decisions with reference to Him?

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## Gospel Thoughts for Today

25<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday in the Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 9:43-45

While they were all amazed at his every deed, Jesus said to his disciples, “Pay attention to what I am telling you. The Son of Man is to be handed over to men.” But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was hidden from them so that they should not understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

### Reflection

See how Jesus emphasises his words; he knows that the disciples will find them difficult to accept. It is still the case. Sometimes it is easier for me to accept that I might betray Jesus than it is for me to receive his assurance of continuing love and presence. I ask, now, that I might listen to Jesus’ words and not be preoccupied by my own hesitation.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

26<sup>th</sup> September - Twenty-Sixth Sunday of The Year



### Gospel – Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

At that time, John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us.” Jesus replied, “Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward. “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’”

### Reflection

The followers of Jesus are not meant to be an exclusive group which despises the good work that others do. We are encouraged to work with other Christians, and indeed with anyone of good will. The old slogan, ‘Outside the Church there is no salvation’ was a stumbling block to many good people and must be left aside. Boasting has no place in the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit blows like the wind wherever it pleases and is at work incognito in every heart. God has a large imagination and labours to orchestrate all things for the world’s good.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

27<sup>th</sup> September – Saint Vincent de Paul, priest (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 9:46-50

An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. Jesus realized the intention of their hearts and took a child and placed it by his side *and* said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest.” Then John said in reply, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company.” Jesus said to him, “Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you.”

### Reflection

Jesus turns everything on its head. For him the Kingdom of God is the only absolute value. The creative power of the Holy Spirit is active in every person, even in those who belong to no Christian denomination. Can I rejoice in that? ‘In the evening of life, we will be examined in love’ (Saint John of the Cross).

What makes a person great? Is it power, or wealth, or skills, or beauty, or giftedness of one kind or another? In the Kingdom of God greatness is judged by one’s capacity to serve others. So it is the little people of the earth, those who serve the rest of us, who turn out to be the greatest! Will I be considered great in God’s Kingdom?

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## Gospel Thought for Today

28<sup>th</sup> September – Tuesday in Twenty Sixth Week in Ordinary Time



### Gospel – Luke 9:51-56

When the days for Jesus to be taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, *but* they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?” Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they journeyed to another village.

### Reflection

The disciples thought, ‘if only everybody were like us,’ as they asked Jesus to teach a lesson to the obstinate Samaritans. Even as he had set his face to Jerusalem, Jesus recognised how his followers did not understand his heart. Help me, Jesus, to follow you in humility, to seek your way. Let the logic of my head be tempered by the compassion of your heart.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

### 29<sup>th</sup> September - Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels (Feast)



### Gospel – John 1:47-51

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him.” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.” And he said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

### Reflection

Jesus witnessed some aspect of Nathanael that seemed to surprise him; there are hidden and secret aspects of my life too that are known and valued by God.

Jesus lifts Nathanael’s eyes from the everyday and prompts him to think of heaven; I might consider my hoped-for destination and see how my daily concerns are enlightened and brought into another perspective.

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## Gospel Thought for Today

30<sup>th</sup> September - Saint Jerome, priest and doctor (memorial)



### Gospel – Luke 10:1-12

Jesus appointed seventy-two other disciples whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the labourer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, ‘The Kingdom of God is at hand for you.’ Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, ‘The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.’ Yet know this: The Kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you; it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town.”

### Reflection

Sometimes, in the quest to encounter Jesus in our own hearts, we forget the other side of the story. Jesus sent the disciples out two by two. He proclaimed that where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there among them. Jesus calls us to walk with one another, and draw from one another, on the journey. How well do I understand and respond to this message that discipleship is not a solitary endeavour?

In instructing the disciples to travel light, Jesus is encouraging them to depend on him for all that they need to accomplish their mission. What heavy baggage am I carrying that slows me down on my spiritual journey?

**God Bless you all.**

**Deacon Martyn**