**Gospel Thought for Today**

**16th October Memorial of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, virgin**

**Gospel: Matthew 11:25-30**

At that time Jesus answered:
"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
for although you have hidden these things
from the wise and the learned
you have revealed them to the childlike.
Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.
All things have been handed over to me by my Father.
No one knows the Son except the Father,
and no one knows the Father except the Son
and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am meek and humble of heart;
and you will find rest for yourselves.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus would not be complete without mentioning St Margaret Mary Alacoque. She was born a few years after the Jansenist heresy took hold of her native land. This heresy had a stern view of God’s justice. As a young Visitation nun, Jesus appeared to her revealing His Sacred Heart. “This Divine Heart is an ocean of good things wherein poor souls can cast all their needs; it is an ocean full of joy to drown our folly, an ocean of mercy for those in distress, an ocean of love in which to submerge our poverty.” These words of our Lord reaffirms today’s Gospel when He invites suffering humanity to come to Him. St Margaret tells us “Our Lord Himself invites you to come to Him and take your rest in His Heart. Is It not the throne of mercy, where the most miserable are the most favourably received, provided that, although steeped in misery they are drawn by love?”. What is holding us back from approaching Him?

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**17th October Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel: Mark 10:35-45**

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him,
"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."
He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?"
They answered him, "Grant that in your glory
we may sit one at your right and the other at your left."
Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking.
Can you drink the cup that I drink
or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"
They said to him, "We can."
Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink,
and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;
but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give
but is for those for whom it has been prepared."
When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John.
Jesus summoned them and said to them,
"You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles
lord it over them,
and their great ones make their authority over them felt.
But it shall not be so among you.
Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;
whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.
For the Son of Man did not come to be served
but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

During his first few months in office, Pope Francis criticized the careerism among priests and urged them to renounce their personal ambitions for their service to the Church. He called such behavior as a leprosy and asked priests to make as their priority the “cause of the Gospel and the fulfillment of the mission”. In today’s Gospel, we see James and John being ambitious. The other ten disciples were indignant at the two brothers. Perhaps they were ambitious too? Jesus tells them that mission comes first before ambition in His Kingdom. Hence, we see a Christ who washes others’ feet, a Christ who feeds the multitude, a Christ that heals the sick, a Christ that dies for the flock. Have we come to our community to serve or to be served?

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**18th October Feast of Saint Luke, evangelist**

**Gospel: Luke 10:1-9**

The Lord Jesus appointed seventy-two 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 laborer deserves 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.’”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

Believed to have been a native of Antioch and a physician by training, Luke authored the Gospel that bears his name as well as the Acts of the Apostles. Luke accompanied Paul in his journeys and likely suffered martyrdom in Boeotia. The three daily Gospel canticles in the Liturgy of the Hours - the Canticle of Zechariah (1:68-79), the Magnificat (1:46-55), and Simeon’s Nunc dimittis (2:29-32) - are all found in his Gospel. Luke is the patron saint of artists, based on the tradition that he painted an image of the Blessed Mother. Like Luke, God has entrusted us with some talents. How do we use these to work in the Master’s abundant harvest?

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**19th October Memorial of St Paul of the Cross, priest**

**Gospel: Luke 12:35-38**

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Gird your loins and light your lamps
and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding,
ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.
Blessed are those servants
whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.
Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,
have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.
And should he come in the second or third watch
and find them prepared in this way,
blessed are those servants.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

Growing up in the Ovada, Genoa, Italy, Paul of the Cross lost ten of his fifteen siblings to illness. Yet his devout mother made time to read to her eldest son, sharing with him the writings of the Desert Fathers. At seventeen, Paul felt a call to a life of strict penance. In prayer, he conceived the Rule for a new order: men who would embrace monastic austerity as the foundation for their public proclamation of the Passion of our Lord. Paul and his younger brother John began preaching, and others joined them – the first Passionists. Twelve “retreats”, Passionist monastic houses, were formed in his lifetime. In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells us to be faithful servants who are always ready for His coming. Distractions of various sizes and forms would come our way. Paul of the Cross offers us Jesus’ Passion as key to remain focused and faithful. He once said, “How, when I think of a God suffering for me, a God scourged, a God crowned with thorns, a God covered with spittle for me, on the cross for me, how is it possible, penetrated today and tomorrow with this greatest of truths of faith, for me to offend Him? It is impossible.”

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**20th October Wednesday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel: Luke 12:39-48**

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Be sure of this:
if the master of the house had known the hour
when the thief was coming,
he would not have let his house be broken into.
You also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

Then Peter said,
“Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?”
And the Lord replied,
“Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward
whom the master will put in charge of his servants
to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so.
Truly, I say to you, he will put him
in charge of all his property.
But if that servant says to himself,
‘My master is delayed in coming,’
and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants,
to eat and drink and get drunk,
then that servant’s master will come
on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour
and will punish the servant severely
and assign him a place with the unfaithful.
That servant who knew his master’s will
but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will
shall be beaten severely;
and the servant who was ignorant of his master’s will
but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating
shall be beaten only lightly.
Much will be required of the person entrusted with much,
and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

Whenever I think of a faithful and prudent servant that Jesus described in today’s Gospel, I cannot fail to remember St Joseph, his foster father. This year is dedicated in his honour. The Bible has not recorded a single word that he uttered. Despite that, his life was a total dedication to Mary and Jesus. Through the sweat of his brow, he made sure that there was food on the table. Through his trade, he taught Jesus to be a carpenter. Through his faithful obedience to God’s will, he nurtured Jesus to become a man for others. Indeed, much was entrusted to Joseph. Yet, he did his best, full of trust in the Lord. The words of the Psalm has a fitting tribute to Joseph: “He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed” (105:21). We too have been entrusted by the Lord through our vocation. God expects a lot from us. Freed from the slavery of sin, we owe a debt to God who saved us and to those who have not yet heard the Good News of salvation.

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**21st October Thursday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel: Luke 12:49-53**

Jesus said to his disciples:
“I have come to set the earth on fire,
and how I wish it were already blazing!
There is a baptism with which I must be baptized,
and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!
Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth?
No, I tell you, but rather division.
From now on a household of five will be divided,
three against two and two against three;
a father will be divided against his son
and a son against his father,
a mother against her daughter
and a daughter against her mother,
a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

Just when we expect a rosy, peaceful life united with Jesus, He tells us that he brings fire and division. Some commentaries identify this fire as the fire of divine charity that “destroys sin and makes our hearts burn with zeal for God, even at the cost of being misunderstood or opposed by those closest to us”. We are called to have a personal and deep relationship with God. We are called to love Him. Dorothy May once wrote, “Love must be tried and tested and proved. It must be tried as though by fire, and fire burns.” How far are we willing to have our love purified so that the world would be set on fire by Jesus?

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**22nd October Friday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel: Luke 12:54-59**

Jesus said to the crowds,
“When you see a cloud rising in the west
you say immediately that it is going to rain–and so it does;
and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south
you say that it is going to be hot–and so it is.
You hypocrites!
You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky;
why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

“Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?
If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate,
make an effort to settle the matter on the way;
otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge,
and the judge hand you over to the constable,
and the constable throw you into prison.
I say to you, you will not be released
until you have paid the last penny.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

Pope Francis once said, “When you lose the sense of sin, you also lose the "sense of the Kingdom of God". Losing the sense of the Kingdom of God, according to the Holy Father, brings about an "anthropological vision" according to which "I can do anything.” In today’s Gospel, Jesus rebukes the people for their lack of discernment. They could predict the weather, but they could not read “the signs of the times”. Pope Francis encourages us to keep on praying: “This is why we pray every day to God' Thy kingdom come, Thy kingdom grow,’ because salvation will not come from our cunning, our cleverness, our intelligence in doing business. Salvation comes from God's grace and how we train every day of our Christian life for this grace.”

**Gospel Thought for Today**

**23rd October Saturday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel: Luke 13:1-9**

Some people told Jesus about the Galileans

whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices.

He said to them in reply,

“Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way

they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?

By no means!

But I tell you, if you do not repent,

you will all perish as they did!

Or those eighteen people who were killed

when the tower at Siloam fell on them—

do you think they were more guilty

than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem?

By no means!

But I tell you, if you do not repent,

you will all perish as they did!”

And he told them this parable:

“There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard,

and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none,

he said to the gardener,

‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree

but have found none.

So cut it down.

Why should it exhaust the soil?’

He said to him in reply,

‘Sir, leave it for this year also,

and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it;

it may bear fruit in the future.

If not you can cut it down.’”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection:**

We can compare ourselves with that fruitless fig tree in today’s Gospel. We would love to follow Jesus, to be good, but there is something holding us back. Perhaps people around us have grown impatient with us. Disheartened, we too may be tempted to despair.Fr Cajetan Mary da Bergamo, an Italian Capuchin priest and spiritual writer, once wrote, “A tree does not fall while bending under its own weight, and this must be attributed to the strength of its support; and in the same way if I have not fallen into every kind of iniquity, it must not be attributed to my own inherent virtue but only to divine grace, which by its goodness has supported me.” Let us ask Mary, Mother of Divine Grace, to remain open to God’s mercy and healing.