

Short Meditative reflections on Scriptural passages

(By Sr. Jessy Mary Paul SSpS)

1

“You have kept your promises, Lord, and you are good to me your servant.” Ps 119: 65

The most significant promise that anyone can give to the other is to love unconditionally and that too for eternity. God the father does the same to me and I am endowed with His love. He expressed his love for me by giving up his own even to the death. He blesses me with the Holy Spirit at every moment. I am not alone but being embedded in the great power and presence of God. What do I return to this love? How can I maintain my promise of love to Him? I take less care at times to return his love in a full measure and I falter. Yet, He is there always reminding me of His presence through daily miracles. I receive daily manifold blessings in return to my negligence and unfaithfulness. I learn from Him that love is patient, kind, understanding and never punishing. I am called to fulfil the promises of God for me in my life. Moreover, this is possible only by listening to him deeply and translating his promptings in my daily interactions with the created beings.

2

Reconciliation of the opposites (Mt 5: 20-26)

One of the central messages of Jesus to the humanity was reconciliation which he exemplified throughout his life and especially even while hanging on the Cross! Mathew writes, Jesus saying about 'having a sense of right and wrong, handling anger, insult, facilitating reconciliation and peace.' As I look around the universe, nature and human beings, I come in touch with the existence of the opposites. For example: night and day, negative and positive, good and bad, hills and valleys, white and black ,hot and cold, life and death etc. I believe, what is life promoting or what leads to wholeness is when the reconciliation between the both takes place. This is applicable on a personal and communal level. It is true that the intrapersonal (within) conflicts lead to interpersonal (among) conflicts. In order to reach fullness of life which Jesus has promised, I as a person need to enter into my own world in the light of the Holy Spirit and bring acceptance, reconciliation between those elements which are constantly in fight! At times our mind and body, emotions and behavior, actual self and ideal self can be at two different poles bringing discord and disharmony. To establish harmony I require patience to work with myself and humility to accept God's grace. In this process I become aware of my ego which wants to punish, insult, take revenge on others or to protect oneself.

In the second level, I consciously become aware of the fact that I am a representative of my master who brought reconciliation between God and the fallen humanity. This encourages one to deliberately take action towards reconciliation and peace among our own brothers and sisters in the community- who are equally vulnerable and wounded, often for the reasons that they are not responsible. I have heard often people saying, 'keep away, don't associate with bad people'

and it is our natural inclination to be easily at the side of people of good values. Jesus tells us something different, "Love your enemies...pray for those who persecute you." Yes, it implies to go beyond our natural inclination and care for those 'opposites'. In this regard, we are always at the verge of making choices. When I am confused of what to do next I ask the following questions to myself. Is it in line with my conscience? Is it going to help me and others without any selfish motives? Is that God wants of me at this point of my life? May this season of Lent keep reminding us of the reconciliation that Jesus initiated and of our responsibility to 'walk the talk' as His disciples.

3

St. Joseph, lead us on... (Mt 1:18-21, 24)

During my hour of meditation I asked Jesus what he learned from His foster father Joseph. He had a lot to share starting from learning to love others, up to giving up His life for others. He opened to me a world of beautiful events that took place particularly during His childhood. Joseph was a man who walked miles in faith for the sake of others, without losing his smile. While Jesus was growing up Joseph must have taken him for walks, sharing with him the stories of his birth and the journey that he undertook from Nazareth to Bethlehem covering nearly 80 miles with the pregnant Mary. Probably another highlight of His story was his flee from Bethlehem to Egypt overnight treading another 400 miles, taking responsibility for Mother Mary and baby Jesus, as was told to him in a vision by the angel of God. No wonder Jesus became an itinerant preacher who was never frightened of what happens 'around' but focused on what is 'within and ahead'. Jesus learnt to trust in the God of journey, who provides on the way without fail. Jesus knew the pain of what it means to live as a refugee at the margins, away from the familiar zones. Above all He developed deeper convictions of life with regard to God's plans and its revelation in our daily lives while drawing inspiration from Joseph's encounter with the angel.

Being just and upholding the dignity of women was another lesson that he translated into his own very life from Joseph (restoring the dignity of woman caught in adultery, Mary Magdalene, Samaritan woman at the well etc.). He must have known that his father never wanted to disgrace his mother even when he felt that his dreams of building a family with Mary was almost shattered. Who else can ever better demonstrate the fact that, in a genuine relationship, love and acceptance takes precedence over the seemingly unpleasant arenas of the other's life? I believe, compassion (ability to 'suffer with') of earthly Jesus has his roots in the person of St. Joseph. Consequently, people of all sorts and walks of life became his friends. Joseph never felt belittled to take Mary as his wife but considered her as his prized possession. Like Joseph, Jesus too learned to overcome ridicule, scornful looks, prejudices, blind practices, labelling etc. It did not bother Jesus when he was unduly labelled as glutton, drunkard, friend of sinners, traitor, blasphemer etc. because he knew well his true identity and his role in the master plan of God. It was from St. Joseph that Jesus imbibed the virtue of sacrifice - joyful giving of one's own life for others. I wonder, how many of our petty issues of life with regard to family, relationships etc. can be solved if we try to live like St. Joseph at

least in few aspects! May St. Joseph ever remain as an icon of faithfulness, justice, guardian of dignity and unconditional love for the partner destined by God.

4

Through Love, towards thee... Mark 12:30-31

The acid test for our love for God is always the love we have for our neighbour! In the scripture we see Jesus answering with conviction that the *love of God and love of neighbour* can never be equated with any other norms as prescribed by the church in order to live a holy life. The questions arose in my mind in this context was: How did Jesus love His God? How did He love his neighbour? Did Jesus love himself as to love others? I got the answer for all my questions in the sacrificing love of Jesus on the Cross and His resurrection. Love becomes sacrificial love, when you foresee the joy of the other having received what you deserve, when you *joyfully offer* to others what legitimately belongs to you, when you feel everything is a gift thus need to be shared, when you feel the pinch of cutting the edges of those strings of attachments and petty sentiments.

I believe, what motivated Jesus was the conviction that He was given as a gift by His Abba father to this world and thus need to be shared. For this reason, Jesus maintained an unquestionable deep relationship with the giver of His life all the time. He longed to be in solitude with His father (on the mountain, at the sea shore, in the temple etc.) and also loved to be *publicly engaged* with Him (at every miracle He performed he invoked Him, at every visible spark of life he praised Him- never spared even a grass or a bird! and at the hour of his death on the cross). Jesus applied the same principle to his everyday relationship. He had personal encounter with those needed special attention (Mary and Martha after He was informed that Lazarus is dead, Samaritan woman at the well) and He also socialized himself by becoming one among those in the common folk (feasting at Simons' house, attending wedding function at Cana, eating with tax collectors & sinners). What was he trying to communicate while relating with such a high standard of interpersonal skills? It's nothing but love in its pure and practical form. No wonder he took pleasure in highlighting the goodness of the 'good Samaritan' as compared to the so called prominent figures of the society who practiced the letter of the law. I wonder if you and I, at times fall into undue religiosity and rituals that do not offer any more meaning! I am able to kneel down and pray a whole rosary but find it difficult to bend my head before someone, I show the willingness to keep a night vigil before the blessed sacrament but fail to volunteer to keep awake with a bed ridden brother or sister of mine, I am keen on making pilgrimage even at far places but run short of time to visit my neighbours in the vicinity! The paradox we need to pay attention to!

As Christians it is our responsibility to dictate 'due love' in all our endeavors to all those entrusted to our care. For instance, among parents and children, husband and wife, brother and sister, boss and assistant, teacher and student, formator and formandi, rich and poor, healthy and weak, friend and foe etc.

Yes, Jesus loved His life, held it with at most dignity as priceless gift and finally joyfully offered for us -His friends. Self-love is the beginning of all other forms of love. It becomes negative only when you don't share it or confine yourself in a selfish world of '*I, Me, and Mine*'. I am invited to love God and my brothers and sisters, with all my soul (nourishing the thirst to merge with the higher self), heart (developing my affective dimensions), mind (let go and let God in) and strength (gently directing my body and its energies to holy purposes).

Exclusion to inclusion...Jn 7:49-52

The Pharisees condemn the ordinary - the so called 'sinners' by saying, "Only these cursed people who have no knowledge of the law!" Are we allowed to pass judgments on one another as the disciples of Christ? God's nature is infinite love and not of judgment. In His flock everyone is included and enjoys the privilege of the children of God. We are to be sharers of this divine love at all circumstances with all sorts of people, regardless of their earthy status or gender.

During this season of Lent, God invites us to 'include' everyone in our circle and not to 'exclude' anyone. Jesus himself being an 'insider' chose to be outsider in order to *bring the outsider inside*. He loudly proclaimed in his attitudes and actions, '*hate sin but love the sinner.*' It demands lot of patience and grace from God for those who follow this principle. In the practical living, they will be drawn to be at the side of all those who need them. It prepares ground for them to weep with those in need, instead of giving a lecture. They are able to notice the dormant good in the other even at the face of the most unpleasant situations. They are the real healers of the soul with their comforting presence and forgiving attitude. They challenge with a gentle and loving touch. When they touch you, you know that Jesus touches you. When they look at you or walk with you, you experience indescribable 'at homeness'. Yes, they really *live Christ* for us!

Here is a prayer that has become part of my life in the recent past:

When you wake up say: "Jesus, I love you"

When leaving the house say: "Jesus, come with me"

When you feel like crying say: "Jesus, hug me"

When you feel happy say: "Jesus, I adore you"

When you do something say: "Jesus, help me"

When you make a mistake say: "Jesus, forgive me"

When you go to sleep say: "Thank you Jesus and cover me with your Holy mantle"

"I will make my covenant between me and you" Gen 17:3-5

Abraham fell face down and God said to him: "This is my covenant with you..." I was amazed to know the mysterious ways of God, as He made covenant with the ninety nine year old Abraham! We know the outcome of Abraham's total surrender to God's dreams. By establishing a covenant with Abraham, God gently invites him to leave His secure and familiar ground behind and move to unfamiliar realms. He asks him to change his name from Abram to Abraham. His package also consists of a promise of a land and numberless descendants! And he fell for that in great faith! Wasn't it risky for him 'to be lead' responding to His call and promises at that age?

In fact, at each and every moment the Lord comes to us with similar packages of assurances and promises. With some we strike a deal and with some we do not, because of the fear of the unknown. By striking a deal with God, I am afraid of being lead, losing my identity, name and comfort zone! Unfortunately, engulfed by this fear and false images, I forget His faithfulness and the assurance of his constant presence. Due to this, I am likely to experience conflict when I am asked for a different mission, professional study or transfer to a least preferred place. It's the same insecure feeling that puts us away from a promising relationship, a possible reconciliation process or pursue a painful 'U' turn in our lives, in line with God's dream. In reality, God is so very much with us visibly and invisibly during our 'change over' times or seemingly unpleasant situations. I am invited by my personal God to bow my head in trust, to put on the identity as God's own priced possession, to take daring steps sensing his footsteps even in the darkness and place myself as a channel of blessing for others. I hear Him whispering with extended hands, "May I have this dance?" I let Him lead the dance of life according to His rhythm!

7

"I love you no less" Jn. 13: 21

Jesus, John, Peter and Judas together set up the preparation for the climax during the farewell meal. Jesus, knowing what is to come shortly gets distressed in his human spirit. Like any other person in trouble, he tries to verbalize his innermost feelings in the circle of his friends. It must have been devastating for him to notice that not even his beloved disciple-John- who was reclining to his side understands his inner groaning. Yet Jesus doesn't give up his integrity and moves on to love his betrayer explicitly by sharing the bread. By this act he implies that, '*Judas, I love you no less*, in spite of the forthcoming painful betrayal of friendship.' A beautiful example of love in its pure form! A marvellous aspect of God, that no one is spared from his passionate love regardless of the weaknesses.

Will I be able to love someone when I know that there is trace of betrayal in that person? Jesus did! Am I to follow Jesus extending understanding to others, beyond my own petty issues? Jesus exemplified this sort of love during his passion. He restored the ear of the high priests' slave while he was arrested. Besides, while carrying the cross among insults and jeering, he finds time to console the weeping women at Jerusalem. Moreover even while hanging on the cross, he consoles and assures the repentant thief. Rarely do we encounter such persons who forgetting their own pain, chooses to console others in their misery. Indeed they take the role of *wounded healers* bestowed with divine grace and human heart. Such persons mediate the seeping in of divine love in human form to those weary souls!

Further, I am invited to check in whether there is a Peter in me, who signalled John to ask Jesus about the one who is to betray him, thus lacking the courage to encounter the Lord directly? At times like Peter we too make promises saying, "Lord, I am ready to give my life for you." The consequence is repeated betrayal in big and small ways from our side. Yet, what Jesus has to offer to us is the loveliest words, "*I love you no less, you are dear to my heart.*" When we make an honest confession of our human weaknesses, the priest- Christ's representative- utters the same words of assurance. When we receive the Holy Communion during Eucharist, Jesus

readily enters into our spiritual and physical dimension with the same message. During this Holy week like John, let us take our place close to the heart of Jesus, sharing his inner turbulence with a commitment to follow him even if it entails the cross.

8

Emmaus journey Lk. 24: 13f

Today we are with the disciples who encountered the Risen Lord on the way to Emmaus. They tell us how gently they were invited by the Lord to open their hearts and share the stories of pain and anguish. Jesus knew that they needed a let out as they have witnessed the dreadful crucifixion of their master. Hence, the sharing became very therapeutic for the disciples, causing them to recognize the Risen Lord! Like a mentor, Jesus further leads them to understand scripture in the light of what they have shared. Following the example of our master we see that it is each one's duty to sense the other's world and set a conducive and trustful atmosphere where this sort of deep level sharing triggers inner freedom. Inversely, we need to measure what is our own level of trust to go through such a process in the presence of our Lord and our earthly mentors? The disciples nostalgically recall those exciting moments they felt their hearts were burning during their conversation and those still moments when their eyes were opened as He broke bread for them.

In a second encounter, the disciples are baffled with another question from the Risen Lord, "Have you anything to eat?" The same question resonates in our hearts today because like the disciples, we have walked with Jesus, listened to Him, shared our inner turbulence with Him and experienced inner healing. Now the Lord expects us to be on a giving mode- breaking oneself for the others, nourishing their souls with love. I am encouraged to do a soul searching, "What do I have within, that I can offer to God and His people?" I believe the hunger of every soul is to reach the divine ultimately. It is also inevitable that human beings have the need to feel loved, accepted at least to some extent as they embark on their life journey. Hence, answering to the question of the Lord, let us give our loving heart for others to draw vital energy as to sustain themselves. Jesus, the great mentor invites us to reinforce the ability to walk with others patiently, listen to their inner groaning with compassion, inspire trust and hope, challenge the shadows and elicit goodness from them.



“I am the way, the truth and the life”(Jn.14:6)

The uniqueness of the way is that it is always open, freely accommodates all those who pass by expecting nothing but leading to an intended destination. When Jesus says He is the way, he lays himself for us to walk on through him to God, our final destination. One may find cross roads, winding roads, narrow roads, desert roads, steep roads, high ways etc. if chosen to make a larger itinerary. So also in our life, it is inevitable that we prepare ourselves to stroll through all kinds of pathways the life has in store for us. Jesus too never had always a smooth ride but often he had to choose the rough and less travelled roads in order to reach his life goal. May the attitudes, courage and daring spirit of Jesus be the provisions on our way.

Jesus is convinced of the fact that he is the truth, the God himself. A truth can never be hidden but to be revealed. The truth always sets us free, be it about oneself, others or events that take place mysteriously. Jesus was an open book before His Abba, disciples and people around. He never stopped himself from telling the truth about his own existence and purpose. Our human nature at times put us in a cautious mode, to prevent intrusion into our personal space. We may be also worried what others would think about me if he or she sees me just the way I am! The journey to self involves risk, patience and determination but it brings the hard laboured fruit of liberation. Jesus invites us to trust Him and our earthly mentors in order to help us see our own selves truly in the light of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is our life here and now and he is our life after too. It is wonderful to know that He constitutes our life and all about us. He is risen overpowering death; hence, we have life with Him and through Him. The Kingdom- the new earth and heaven is here and we have access to it. There lies a wakeup call to rise to the knowledge that He is the way, truth and life. Let us dive into those spiritual realms letting this knowledge to be personified in our lives.

“Where I am, you also may be.”Jn 14:3

Goodbyes are painful for us - human beings because we have a tendency to get attached emotionally to family members, relatives, friends, communities, certain places etc. Jesus knew this reality of his disciples and so he prepares them with utmost care and kindness for a separation from him! *“Do not be troubled, trust in me.”* He prepares them not only for a physical separation but also for a new way of being and relating with Him! Hence the words, *“Where I am, you also may be”* Which the disciples could not comprehend at first. Jesus wanted to awaken them to the awareness that stronger relationship is possible even when one is not physically present. Jesus never abandons His chosen ones but always opens new avenues to explore even at every twists and turns!

How many of us have not shed tears when faced with physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual separation caused by death, distance or life events? Although they bring moments of crisis what is beautiful about them is that there lies a possibility of making a new beginning- a

new way of relating that too breaking through the ties of human limitations. Today's life scenario expects us to face pros and cons of relating at different degrees with the attitude and heart of Jesus. When encountered hardships in a most cherished relationship or run into troubled waters of bitter feelings, can we still hold on to the hope that Jesus gives, 'trust me, you can embark on a new field and you will be with me where I am now.'

So naturally, a question arises, *where is Jesus now? He* is rightly with us here and now in spirit! That invites us to be present to the very moment, in a heightened state of alertness and find the new earth and heaven here itself! Knowing the oneness of ourselves with God and with others is true love, true care, true compassion and a true heaven that Jesus himself has modelled. A new way of being – indeed a reality that waits to take root in us. Someone said, "*If we can trust God with eternity, why don't we trust Him with today? God is in control!*" Let us strive to be where He is now and align ourselves with His great plan with least resistance from our side. Let us never regret but welcome moments of crisis, turmoil, separation etc. of the past and present because that is where God takes initiative to prepare us for the new heaven.

11

Remain in my love (Jn.15:10)

The earnest desire of God for every human being is expressed in these most precious words, "Remain in my Love." This invitation impels one to establish a personal relationship with Him at first, with a solid foundation. So not only falling in love with Jesus is sufficient but also we need to find ways to sustain that love at any cost. Different stages of a growing human interpersonal relationship throw light on the benefits and pitfall, as two individuals desire to live and love together. Eventually what keeps them bonded even when life goes tough is not the initial attraction but a decision to love one another, irrespective of the personal limitations. There love becomes a gratuitous gift and the partners need not earn love but just to receive and share from the superfluous. Yes, God loves us unconditionally and that is beyond comparison.

To help us remain in love we observe commandments, we take vows, make promises or sign into marriage contracts according to our status of life we have chosen. However we need to remind ourselves that these should not become ends but they are just means for us to reach God. For Jesus, Love of God and love of neighbour stood equal grounds, one flowing from the other. One should come to the awareness that we cannot please God and earn His love by reciting prayers, doing charity or taking on many religious rituals. *Because we are loved from eternity as beloved children of God and so we don't have to earn this love* by bribing Him. Prayers and observance of commandments do not please God extra but help us remain in His love because our will to love an unseen God is weak! Once we know the breadth and depth of God's love, we just abandon ourselves in that cosmic flow. Our joy is complete only when we become one with this cosmic energy-love.



“Your heart will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.” Jn 16:22

The saints and sages often hear their hearts throbbing with joy, a joy that overwhelms and lasts! What about us, the ordinary imperfect human beings? I believe, there is fleeting moments of joy in every one’s life however messy it may seem to be. For instance, we witness gushing of such deep joy while gazing at a new born and listens to its first cry or when we share the silent and profound presence of a loved one. We feel the stirrings of joy, when we bathe ourselves in the golden rays of a sun set or when we cast our eyes into the deep blue waters and the skies. Joy beacons us when we feel soaked by the unconditional love of God during moments of prayer and solitude, when we wonder at the miracle of blooming smile on a dear one’s face or when we sustain a narrow escape from a life and death situation. We are to understand that these are passing moments and do not give lasting joy. Because here our joy depends on what happens outside of us. Obviously, these luring moments can impel one to abandon oneself into the great ocean of joy, which God offers. That means we need to contemplate on these little joys that occur at the level of our senses with a liberated mind, leading to a joy that is beyond the senses. *The real joy cannot come from outside sources but it emanates from our consciousness, our being, where we are united with the Holy Spirit.*

This is the kind of joy that Jesus offers us today as He says, “Your heart will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.” He invites us to the joy of having His Spirit within. The Holy Spirit grace us with all what we need in order pass through our earthly pilgrimage. The Spirit unites all the scattered elements of our life to a whole factor in time and space. Such birthing moments may initially seem to be painful but eventually turns into moments of Joy. Consequently, we claim our identity as the beloved of God. We just need to be receptive and say, “I don’t judge anything but I let things happen in the power of Jesus’ Spirit in my life, here and now.”

Leave your gift in front of the altar and make peace with your brother. (Mt 5:24)

God’s nature is all about an indefinable love and overwhelming sense of peace that embraces the whole creation. The two trillion galaxies, numerous black holes, supernovas and all the living form in the universe, explicitly proclaim the greatness and wisdom of God. Everything created is to be in harmony along with God the great harmonizer. God is so very much in the universe, filling it, hovering over it and of course many more expressions that my human mind cannot comprehend. One thing I am sure that the author of my life and of my brother and sister is the same God. The reality that we are all made in the image and likeness of God brings home the knowledge that we are inter connected in the dimension of our body and spirit. This is the common thread that God wants us to keep alive! Our God deeply desires that we own again this reality, renew it time to time specially when there is a sensed damage to this interconnectedness and harmony. God loves that we regain this consciousness with effort to reconcile with our estranged neighbour, than proceeding with gifts and sacrifices to Him. This inter connectedness and brother hood can even be fostered through profound silence and

prayer, dying to one's own ego, respecting the uniqueness of the other, observing rituals of reconciliation, embracing a holistic approach to life etc. Then we can say that we are on the path that leads to the court of the divine.

14

“Even before I formed you in the womb I knew you, even before you were born I had set you apart.” (Jer 1:4)

What privileged ones are we, to hear such loving and comforting words from the author of our lives. We are in the master plan of God, even before this thought of the purpose of our existence ever dawned in us. We were made in the complete knowledge and perfect love of God. It reminds us that we are under the loving gaze of God all the time, for all eternity. God's love always follows us, circle us and envelope us. Often this love can be compared to a performer performing his item in a dark stage, where he is followed by beams of light circling him alone, wherever he moves. All the spot light of the stage seem to be converging into one spot – on the performer ,never leaving him in darkness of the surrounding. We are blessed to have such haunting and loving presence of God in our daily lives. For this fact to affirm in us, lets enter into the depth of our soul in contemplation, let us be enchanted by the natural beauty, let us have deep sense of love and reverence for every created being. God knows every one of our inner yearning, dreams, aches, wounds, feelings, emotions, life struggles etc . He will never leave us alone but hold a beautiful dream for us, setting the background always for his dream to be actualized.

15

“Every hair of your head has been counted...you are worth more than many sparrows. (Mt 10:31-33)

Heavenly father knows everything and nothing is hidden from Him. If he has to know everything, He has to be present everywhere. That means there is no particle of creation devoid of God. When Christ tells us that we are worth more than many sparrows he points out at our higher consciousness that distinguishes us from the rest of the animals and plants. God wishes that in our free will, through our consciousness we reach and merge with Him. Jesus tells us that since God knows everything, there is nothing we can call to God's attention. He knows our every thought, word, deed, dream, feeling, virtue and vice as well. This knowledge leads us to a total surrender and comforts us in times of trials and troubles. In our human frailty, we may fail to understand or give understanding to others, but God does!

It is so clear in His great design we are born to particular parents in a particular society and environment. It is He, who directs significant people and events into our lives. He knows our every need, even before we ask. Therefore, it is foolish to sit before the Lord with our begging bowls asking Him to satisfy our innumerable earthly needs and wants. Let us humbly submit ourselves to His divine will and say, “Lord I gratefully accept all that you have given me

without any regret and I say yes to all that is in store for me in the days to come.” Let us live every moment knowing that we are precious to our God and He provides us with everything in His own time.

16

I choose you dear friend Jesus....

Today's reading present us with the delicacy and depth of God's love in the medium of an irresistible invitation to follow Him. Yes, invitation often leads us to make choices whether to be part of the event you are called for or not. Usually, we make our free choice depending on the type and degree of relationship we hold with the host and obviously many other criteria too come alive under varied circumstances. Today we are in receipt of such an irrevocable invitation from Jesus, with its highlights: deny, take up and follow. To me, 'denying oneself' means to come before the Lord naked - emptying myself- that I can be wrapped with God's unconditional love just the way I am, without any mask. Then I show the willingness to 'take up' the cares and worries of my neighbors, by consciously entering into their world which sometimes may even seem bleak coupled with uncertainties. Here I offer myself as a soothing balm to those wounded ones who are in need of healing. This demands me to live in time and space, side by side along with my brothers and sisters. 'Follow me' reminds me of shore of Lake Galilee, where Jesus enticed the first disciples with His dream for the humanity. I am simply 'caught up' in His mission to be partners with Him. I, as a disciple grow daily trying to listen to His voice deep within my heart, uniting my will with His will and translating it into my deeds. I am damn sure, He will never leave me alone and even in my weaknesses He will manifest His love. "With Him, I am a hero and without Him I am a zero." Let us ask the intercession of Francis of Assisi who was faced with such a question, "What does it profit you to gain the whole world while you destroy or damage your soul?" What/ whom do you choose today?

17

The Lord is my strength and my shield, in Him my heart trusts. (Ps 28:7)

Each one is the product of God's unconditional love. There is nothing created in this world outside of his knowledge and love. Hence we all become children of God in this vast universe, under his divine will. When we don't realize fully this reality of interconnectedness, we create gap among ourselves and the rest of the creation. Unnecessary breakage of relationships, indifference, violence in the world, undue political, social and geographical dispute, loss of dignity of a particular sect are examples. In this situation whom can we run up-to or where can we get energy to move on? It is none other than the Lord who knows everything. We trust that in every situation, be it joyful or painful, he intends our good. Even through our daily trials and imperfections we are prepared for a better or holy life. So let's thank God in every situation and at every moment.



“Let them grow together until harvest.” Mt13:10

Jesus explains a profound universal truth in these words that good and bad exist side by side. If it is there out in the world, it's right here in us too. So what are we to do when we find this unhealthy part of ourselves that inhibit our real growth? Be patient, understand it, accept it, know its nature and live in vigilance. This is not sufficient, Jesus asks us to take right action at the right time having known the difference between. Harvest is a time when wheat is rich with grains-the healthiest time. So also we are invited to grow adequately, being open to the spiritual gifts that God bestows on us. Multiplication of these God given goodness in useful manner would definitely reduce the evil in us. In other words, it is a way of conquering the darkness by shedding the light in us!

It also asks us to be tolerant when we see the negative energy, taking upper hand in the lives of others. Let us not hate the sinner but be alert to the sin. May the words of Jesus give us inner strength to face the evil in and out of us, without being lost.

Pray together, stay together...

The power of prayer is tremendous! I wonder whether there are people who have not prayed at all, at least once in their life time. Prayer erupts positive feelings in the hearts of the one who prays and the same feelings are transferred in a most inexplicable way. Every thought is an energy form. When one prays certainly this energy is transmitted and I guess it gets caught up in the human hearts. Just like the way the radio waves are caught up wherever a radio set is tuned into.

Praying together binds hearts in a most mysterious manner. It anchors all those involved in the holy ground. No wonder, family prayers play a great role in anchoring the family in love. Praying together is possible in many ways such as: in the physical presence, praying over the phone, vocal and in silence, releasing positive thoughts, writing prayer in the air, writing prayer in a paper, sending prayer messages, sending uplifting pictures, going for pilgrimage, making sacrifices joyfully, following certain rituals etc. One may even keep fast or abstinence with the particular intention of the other. One can find one's own pious practices that would help him/her to pray better.

The modern electronic gadgets in a way aid us to pray together and stay connected. Prayer can alleviate pain, ease tension, erase ill feeling and mediate healing and wholeness. Let's us be the channel of hope to those millions who have none. Make a call today to someone in need and pray together for a while in silence or oral. You will be blessed with a miracle sooner or later!



Trailing the sentiments of Jesus (at His farewell prayer) Jn 17: 20-26

Father, I in them and You in me,
Proclaims my heart in hope and love.
For my chosen ones lay in doubt,
Pricked by the spear of disunity.

Father, You are in me and I am in you,
Prompt them to be one in us.
For the world may heed my voice that
You alone sent me here on earth.

Father, I love them just as you love me,
Precious are the gifts you give me in them.
Fearless I would die a thousand times,
For I know you will raise me up in your glory.

Father, long have I known you as you know me in depth,
Loved and cared from eternity.
I cared to live and proclaim your will,
Dare they know your design destined.

Father, pour your love I pray that they,
Savour it, as honey for a bee in stroll.
That may I dwell in their hearts,
Forever gleaming in your glory.

Father, gracious to fetch your children,
Mould them in your dream.
Plunge them in the light of your joy,
Make them over a perfect band of unity.

“A loving desire for God is the essence of prayer.”

