

This is the start of Liturgical Year 2003B

## December 1, 2002 First Sunday of Advent

Reading Old Testament: [Is 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7](#)

You, LORD, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you, while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful; all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.

Reading New Testament: [1Cor 1:3-9](#)

Brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel: [Mk 13:33-37](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: "Watch!"

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi – Father Jack Vessels

During the day: Be on watch. Think of your affairs as God's, not yours. Keep his directives in mind as you go about the day's business. Apply his principles to problems, his objectives to projects. If you make the effort it will eventually become second nature - divine as well as human. You won't even know the difference; nor will he.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer one gets familiar with the attitudes & values of Jesus; we recall them with the memory, ponder them with the intellect, embrace them with the will. Thru prayer we learn to think & feel about things the way he does, & end up wanting what he wants. Such harmony guarantees fulfillment.

## December 8, 2002 Second Sunday of Advent

Old Testament: [Is 40:1-5, 9-11](#)

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins. A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Go up on to a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God! Here comes with power the Lord GOD, who rules by his strong arm; here is his reward with him, his recompense before him. Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.

Reading New Testament: [2 Pt 3:8-14](#)

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard "delay," but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out. Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.

Gospel: [Mk 1:1-8](#)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi – Father Jack Vessels

During the day - Be concerned about people, not projects & problems. Don't use people to promote projects & solve problems; rather, use problems & projects to 'make straight the way of the Lord' into the hearts of others. His problems are people, his only projects serving & saving them. In your little corner of the world, be his instrument. Do the best you can.

ABOUT PRAYER - Advent prayer prepares us to spend another year in the School of Jesus. Prayerfully we remind ourselves that we're just as important in his scheme of things as the men & women who walked with him the trails of Galilee. Hopefully more mature this year than last, our prayer supposes sensible generosity, resolute courage. Mark's words, prayed again, sound the same; but the living truth communicated reveals new facets of the Master & his mission. In personal prayer we assimilate them; in community prayer we discern them; in liturgical prayer we assume them - with him.

## December 15, 2002 Third Sunday of Advent

Reading Old Testament: [Is 61:1-2a, 10-11](#)

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God. I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

Reading New Testament: [1 Thes 5:16-24](#)

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

Gospel [Jn 1:6-8, 19-28](#)

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, there John was baptizing.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi – Father Jack Vessels

During the day: Be a witness, not a messiah. Don't try to save the situation, just remind others of the One who can, if he wants to. Let your calm & absolute trust in his Providence relax others & inspire them to do their best, as you are doing. Appear unconcerned, satisfied he has the power & wisdom always to succeed, even in failure; he'll gather up the pieces & put them together in a beautiful mosaic only he can design.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer we get accustomed to moving out of center stage & letting the spotlight, at least in our own lives, rest on Christ. In prayer we reread the script & take our cues from him. We're there to enhance his role, not ours; the less attention we call to ourselves, the more the gaze of others stays fixed on him. At times he may share the limelight with us, and, even if only in prayer, we sense the love with which he appreciates our cooperation.

## December 22, 2002 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Reading Old Testament: [2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16](#)

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?' "It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

Reading New Testament: [Rom 16:25-27](#)

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel: [Lk 1:26-38](#)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi – Father Jack Vessels

During the day: If the end seems worthy & pleasing to God, attempt the impossible. Give it a try; give him a chance. If you don't, he can't. Even if he lets you down, you'll form the habit of doing things not for what you get out of it but what he does, if he wants it. You'll enjoy it even when you fail & have deeper inner satisfaction when you succeed.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer sharpens our ability to discern truth. At prayer the mind scans evidence with faith. In prayer the will embraces its counterpart in God; docile to his Spirit, our own becomes the handmaid of the Lord.

Missing  
12/29/2002  
And  
1/05/2003

## January 12, 2003 The Baptism of the Lord

Reading Old Testament: [Is 42:1-4, 6-7](#)

Thus says the LORD: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. a bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching. I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

Reading New Testament: [Acts 10:34-38](#)

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

Gospel: [Mk 1:7-11](#)

This is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

During the day - Confident Christ lives within you, immerse those you encounter in his presence. Don't have to do anything - just be yourself. Habitually keen to his directives, your demeanor is the Spirit's tool maturing their attitudes & values into those of Jesus. Reciprocal, the Spirit's action shapes yours with theirs. The Jesus formed in each becomes the Christ in all.

ABOUT PRAYER - In prayer, we take each other's sinfulness to the Lord for forgiveness; more, in prayer we assume with Him each other's sinfulness. Schooled through prayer in Christ's behavior, we correct each other's with courage & discretion; more, in the patience born of prayer, we suffer with love its consequences.

## January 19, 2003 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19](#)

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am." Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." So he went back to sleep. Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep." At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet. The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

Reading New Testament: [1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20](#)

Brothers and sisters: The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body; God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

Gospel: [Jn 1:35-42](#)

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" -- which translated means Teacher, "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" --which is translated Christ --. Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas"--which is translated Peter.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

During the day: Keep your focus on what you're looking for. Most especially, be sure the proximate is in sink with the remote, the immediate with the ultimate, the relative with the absolute. Harmony flows from the keen perception of what present circumstances imply for convinced commitments. Ultimately interpersonal, one's destiny is inseparable from Christ's.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is always a quest. The person at prayer is never satisfied. The spiritual appetite is insatiable, knows no limits. The richer the experience of God, the more unfathomable the separating chasm. Fortunately for us, it's bridged. Prayer rests in Christ - a refreshing respite restoring inspiration.

## January 26, 2003 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Jonah 3:1-5, 10](#)

The word of the LORD came to Jonah, saying: "Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you." So Jonah made ready and went to Nineveh, according to the LORD's bidding. Now Nineveh was an enormously large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began his journey through the city, and had gone but a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed," when the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

Reading New Testament: [1 Cor 7:29-31](#)

I tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is running out. From now on, let those having wives act as not having them, those weeping as not weeping, those rejoicing as not rejoicing, those buying as not owning, those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away.

Gospel: [Mk 1:14-20](#)

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp

During the day: Repent. That is, acknowledge mistakes. Apologize. More important, correct them. More important still, distinguish between mistakes of bad judgement & mistakes of bad will - judge yourself harshly for the latter, not the former. Recognize unGodlike choices for what they are: evil. And remember that the grace of forgiveness, always guaranteed, must be sought.

ABOUT PRAYER: No one likes to admit mistakes; the humility to do so is the fruit of regular prayer. Authentic prayer is based on the assumption that we are all sinners, totally dependent of God's help as we strive honestly to correct our behavior. Honesty in prayer supposes a keen sense of truth; without it there can be no spiritual progress - the only kind that matters.

## February 2, 2003 Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Reading Old Testament: [Mal 3:1-4](#)

Thus says the Lord God: Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; And suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. He will sit refining and purifying silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, Refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the Lord. Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will please the Lord, as in the days of old, as in years gone by.

Reading New Testament: [Heb 2:14-18](#)

Since the children share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel: Lk 2:22-40

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted –and you yourself a sword will pierce– so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

During the day -Wonder at the things said about the Christ. As a situation develops, weigh your convictions, ponder your doubts. Swayed by both, take your time making decisions. Truth has it's own authority - give it a chance. Experience verifies faith is intuitional - though reasonable, not always rational. Grappling with doubts is the only way faith can grow.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer occasionally urges a leap in the dark. Prayer's true purpose is to bring the one at prayer into harmony with God's will, not vice versa - but God owes no one clarity of vision. Trusting Him, one learns at prayer to measure the sincerity of one's own intentions. Convinced, choices are made & consequences assumed, knowing He does too.

## February 9, 2003 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Jb 7:1-4, 6-7](#)

Job spoke, saying: Is not man's life on earth a drudgery? Are not his days those of hirelings? He is a slave who longs for the shade, a hireling who waits for his wages. So I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me. If in bed I say, "When shall I arise?" then the night drags on; I am filled with restlessness until the dawn. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle; they come to an end without hope. Remember that my life is like the wind; I shall not see happiness again.

Reading New Testament: [1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23](#)

Brothers and sisters: If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

Gospel: [Mk 1:29-39](#)

On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them. When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him. Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp – Fr Jack Vessels comments:

During the day: Glance at those around you. See if anyone needs lifting up. If one does, set other things aside & do so. An encouraging smile; a cup of coffee; a discreet inquiry; a stroll together. Relaxed, help him (or her) relax. Don't worry about the time it takes - you couldn't spend it better! As the other goes back to more useful service, give yourself credit for yours; as Jesus does.

ABOUT PRAYER: The prayer of petition is frequently for good health; the prayer of intercession frequently for the good health of others. In both cases, it's not health that's the objective of prayer, but rather service to the Kingdom of God - that's what we're building, & that's what we need health for. It's the implicit condition of our request, & the reason explicit in God's answer.

## February 16, 2003 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Lev 13:1-2, 44-46](#)

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "If someone has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch which appears to be the sore of leprosy, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests among his descendants. If the man is leprous and unclean, the priest shall declare him unclean by reason of the sore on his head. "The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!' As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp."

Reading New Testament: [1 Cor 10:31--11:1](#)

Brothers and sisters, Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Gospel: [Mk 1:40-45](#)

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning the him sternly, he dismissed him at once. He said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

During the day: Speak freely about God. Not fanatically, but as among friends about a friend. Share experiences, the good & the not-so-good. His presence, though hidden, is sensed in the telling. Faith grows on faith; the unique faith of each contributes to the common faith of all.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer we go looking for the Christ others tell us about. Elusive, he doesn't always let himself be found. Perseverance in prayer nourishes the quest, intensifies the effort, deepens the friendship once he's found. The Christ we commune with in prayer is the Jesus we introduce to others.

## February 23, 2003 Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Is 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25](#)

Thus says the LORD: Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers. The people I formed for myself, that they might announce my praise. Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob, for you grew weary of me, O Israel. You burdened me with your sins, and wearied me with your crimes. It is I, I, who wipe out, for my own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more.

Reading New Testament: [2 Cor 1:18-22](#)

Brothers and sisters: As God is faithful, our word to you is not "yes" and "no." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed to you by us, Silvanus and Timothy and me, was not "yes" and "no," but "yes" has been in him. For however many are the promises of God, there Yes is in him; therefore, the Amen from us also goes through him to God for glory. But the one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.

Gospel: [Mk 2:1-12](#)

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?" Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, "Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth" --he said to the paralytic, "I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home." He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

During the day: Forgiven, forgive. Unforgiving? Unforgiven! Emotions are blind; don't let anger & resentment & a false sense of pride close your heart. If you do, He can't get in! Think truth, the only key that unlocks a door with no outside handle. Truth #1: only God forgives the offender, & that's exactly what he became man to do - ALL sinners, including you. Truth #2: leave the offender to God & forgive the offense; if you don't, your offense is greater. Sincere repentance saves you both.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is immersion in mercy. In prayer we fill the spirit - the mind & heart - with God's, that it might overflow on others. Without judgement or condemnation, in prayer we recall our own mistakes of bad will & sinful tendencies, & sense the healing Love that strengthens. We bring to prayer those whose selfishness & indifference offend, join hands, & turn together to the Sun of unconditional pardon.

## March 2, 2003 Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Hos 2:16b, 17b, 21-22](#)

Thus says the LORD: I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. She shall respond there as in the days of her youth, when she came up from the land of Egypt. I will espouse you to me forever: I will espouse you in right and in justice, in love and in mercy; I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the LORD.

Reading New Testament: [2 Cor 3:1b-6](#)

Brothers and sisters: Do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all, shown to be a letter of Christ ministered by us, written not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are hearts of flesh.

Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that of ourselves we are qualified to take credit for anything as coming from us; rather, our qualification comes from God, who has indeed qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter brings death, but the Spirit gives life.

Gospel: [Mk 2:18-22](#)

The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were accustomed to fast. People came to him and objected, "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak. If he does, its fullness pulls away, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse. Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

During the day: Fast. What you don't need, don't eat; practice temperance. What you do need, eat less; practice penance. Health requires disciplined appetites. Physical health, a sensible diet; spiritual health, freedom. The spirit feeds on the words of Christ. 'You want to be my disciple? Deny yourself, take up your cross & follow me.' With him we're all in this together; a proud, sinful, selfish society needs all the strength its members can muster!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer enjoys the presence of the Bridegroom - his gaze, his smile, his encouraging words, shared experiences, his comforting embrace. Prayer is possessing, being possessed; in prayer we burrow deep into the heart of Christ to conceive the day's activities, fruit of indefinable intimacy.

## March 9, 2003 First Sunday of Lent

Reading Old Testament: [Gn 9:8-15](#)

God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals that were with you and came out of the ark. I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth." God added: "This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings."

Reading New Testament: [1 Pt 3:18-22](#)

Beloved: Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit. In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

Gospel: [Mk 1:12-15](#)

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

During the day - Get accustomed to the desert - your desert. Keep struggling with temptations. They're good opportunities to do God's will, not your own. Win some, lose some; but keep loyal to your option, 'Your will, Lord, not mine.' Trust the Spirit to steer you through them, avoiding the big one: to think you can do without God.

ABOUT PRAYER - Regular prayer sharpens the quest for truth: the desire to find it, the courage to embrace it, the strength to live it. Deceptions rarely pass the test of authentic prayer. Even when they do, ongoing prayer recognizes them for what they are & the source from which they come. Prayer then invokes the Judge, Who sends them on their way.

## March 16, 2003 Second Sunday of Lent

Reading Old Testament: [Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18](#)

God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am!" he replied. Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am!" he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son. Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing-- all this because you obeyed my command."

Reading New Testament: [Rm 8:31b-34](#)

Brothers and sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us, who will condemn? Christ Jesus it is who died--or, rather, was raised-- who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Gospel: [Mk 9:2-10](#)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

During the day: Dazzle others. Turn on the charm. Give those around you all your attention. Be a good listener; they'll enjoy your presence, since you're obviously enjoying theirs. Nourish the intimacy of friendship - it lasts forever. Be sincere, be authentic, be yourself; the Christ in you will light you up, his the warmth that radiates.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer we hear the words, 'You are my child, my beloved' & know he's talking to each of us & all of us. Prayerfully we ponder Abraham's arm raised, ready to give God his precious son, & hear with him the words 'Because you withhold nothing from me I bless you abundantly'. We marvel at the unspoken words, 'It's my own son's life I take to give you yours'; then rest in the mutual love of Father & Son, open to the Spirit that is its fruit.

### March 23, 2003 Third Sunday of Lent

Reading Old Testament: [Ex 20:1-17](#) or [20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17](#)

In those days, God delivered all these commandments: "I, the LORD am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other gods besides me. "You shall not take the name of the LORD, your God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave unpunished the one who takes his name in vain.

"Remember to keep holy the sabbath day. Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."

Reading New Testament: [1 Cor 1:22-25](#)

Brothers and sisters: Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Gospel: [Jn 2:13-25](#)

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi:

During the day: Don't back away from the difficult; it's not going to go away. Handle it with firmness, with respect for the dignity of those involved - compassion, even, when circumstances warrant. Your own integrity is the measure of your concern, whatever the consequences of your action. Temple of the Holy Spirit, your behavior reflects his wisdom, your courage his pleasure.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the moment to soothe emotions. Blind, both good & bad tend to express themselves blindly. In prayer we use the intellect to ponder the truth of the matter, till calm enough to act accordingly. Decisions made in prayer assume long as well as short range consequences. Prayfully directed emotions enrich the experience.

## March 30, 2003 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Reading Old Testament: [2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23](#)

In those days, all the princes of Judah, the priests, and the people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing all the abominations of the nations and polluting the LORD's temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. Early and often did the LORD, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised his warnings, and scoffed at his prophets, until the anger of the LORD against his people was so inflamed that there was no remedy. Their enemies burnt the house of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, set all its palaces afire, and destroyed all its precious objects. Those who escaped the sword were carried captive to Babylon, where they became servants of the king of the Chaldeans and his sons until the kingdom of the Persians came to power. All this was to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah: "Until the land has retrieved its lost sabbaths, during all the time it lies waste it shall have rest while seventy years are fulfilled." In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD inspired King Cyrus of Persia to issue this proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing: "Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD, the God of heaven, has given to me, and he has also charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever, therefore, among you belongs to any part of his people, let him go up, and may his God be with him!"

Reading New Testament: [Eph 2:4-10](#)

Brothers and sisters: God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ--by grace you have been saved--, raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

Gospel: [Jn 3:14-21](#)

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "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. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

**MAR 30, 4th Lent: 2Chr 36.14-23; Eph 2.4-10; JN 3.14-21**

DURING THE DAY: Love your little corner of the world - the people, the places, the situations. Though much to condemn, don't. Plan your presence; make your world the better, not the worse for it. By the reactions of others, measure yourself as a source of light for them rather than a cause of confusion. As their trust in you grows, act ever more responsibly on their behalf. Prove your value to society. And to Christ.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is recognition. In prayer, truths come into focus. Strengths as strengths, weaknesses as weaknesses. Prayer is acknowledgement. Again, both strengths & weaknesses. Prayer fosters responsibility - to exercise the strengths & strengthen the weaknesses. Prayer inspires the courage to do both, for love of a Christ who neither condemns our weaknesses nor loves us more for our strengths; but simply loves us the way we are.

## April 6, 2003 Fifth Sunday of Lent

Reading Old Testament: [Jer 31:31-34](#)

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I had to show myself their master, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their evil-doing and remember their sin no more.

Reading New Testament: [Heb 5:7-9](#)

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Gospel: [Jn 12:20-33](#)

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

From the banks of the Mighty Mississipp -

**Apr 6, 5th Lent: Jer 31.33-34; Heb 5.7-9; JN 12.20-33**

During the day: Produce fruit. A lot of it - don't be lazy. Pay the price – your energy, your time, your attention, your patience, your respect & understanding, your money, self-denial -- whatever's called for. Fruit as a gift can be given in a minute; but it takes a lifetime to produce it. Be the seed who knows how to disappear once it produces the fruit (the gift) within. Be Christlike.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the expression of faith in the life within; action its communication. In prayer we commune with the Lord whose life we live; through action we communicate this life to others. Prayer cultivates our fruitfulness; action fertilizes it. Prayer programs its harvesting; action distributes it to those for whom God intends it. Prayer transcends all human activity; action is the Spirit at work integrating it into human history, making it eternally divine.

## April 13, 2003 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

2 pages

Being Palm Sunday the readings are a little longer than normal. However, this is a special day in the Christian religion. For the even longer version click on the web reference above.

Gospel for the Procession of Palms: [Mark 11:1-10](#)

When Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately on entering it, you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone should say to you, 'Why are you doing this?' reply, 'The Master has need of it and will send it back here at once.'" So they went off and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They answered them just as Jesus had told them to, and they permitted them to do it. So they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks over it. And he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! Hosanna in the highest!"

[Jn 12:12-16](#)

When the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out: "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel." Jesus found an ass and sat upon it, as is written: Fear no more, O daughter Zion; see, your king comes, seated upon an ass's colt. His disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus had been glorified they remembered that these things were written about him and that they had done this for him.

Reading Old Testament: [Is 50:4-7](#)

The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

Reading New Testament: [Phil 2:6-11](#)

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: [MK 15:1-39](#)

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed. Pilate answered, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate again said to them in reply, "Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?" They shouted again, "Crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him." So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

They brought him to the place of Golgotha --which is translated Place of the Skull--. They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down from the cross." Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down." Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**APR 13, Palm Sun: Is 50.4-7; Phil 2.6-11; MK 15.1-39**

During the day: Give your back to those who beat you. Keep your cool. They know not what they do. And even if they do, let them get it out of their system - they'll be the better for it. You'll survive & be the better for it, too, having taught them truths they would not otherwise have learned. "Truly, this person is a child of God!"

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer anticipates the day's threats. It focuses them in God's perspective. In prayer we build up our reserve of courage, secure in the hand we cling to. Prayer enables us to believe in the value of suffering when embraced as an opportunity to love. Faith & love - inseparable - only increase their capacity through exercise. Prayer is study time with the Master's textbook, learning his techniques.

## **April 20, 2003 Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord**

### The Mass of Easter Day

Reading New Testament: [Acts 10:34a, 37-43](#)

Peter proceeded to speak and said: "You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name."

Reading New Testament: [Col 3:1-4](#) ; [1 Cor 5:6b-8](#)

Brothers and sisters: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Gospel: [Jn 20:1-9](#)

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**Apr 20, Easter Sunday: Acts 10. 34a, 37-43; Col 3.1-4; JN 20.1-9**

During the day: Run faster. And if you get there first, respect your competitors. Best way to enjoy success is to share it. In all authentic achievement, Christ is the victor. One with him in his humanity, ours efforts realize his own dream of a renewed society. Grateful as we are for his inspiration & help, even more so is he for our willing instrumentality. Be our goals lofty or modest, the love that motivates them is his reward for the price he pays for our redemption

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer, we rattle around in an empty tomb. We really don't know what to expect, nor how to make sense of random thoughts & feelings. Prayer takes stock of the void we're in & simply concludes that he's alive & well, & that's all that matters. If we listen carefully, we can hear his soft sigh of satisfaction.

## April 27, 2003 Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday

New Testament: [Acts 4:32-35](#)

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](#)

Reading II: [1 Jn 5:1-6](#)

Beloved: Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him. In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

Gospel: [Jn 20:19-31](#)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**APR 27, 2nd Easter: Acts 4.32-35; 1Jn 5.1-6; JN 20.19-31**

During the day: Be yourself: be obstinate. Don't agree just to be agreeable. Trust your intellect & wait for evidence. Truth has its own authority & will exercise it in its own sweet time; just be honest & humble enough to recognize it when it does. Once convinced, you'll be yourself - to the end of the world & the end of time.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer we climb into the hole in the heart of Jesus; human like our own, we feel at home there. Its warmth removes the chill in our own hearts, its beat revives our spirit. Slowly we relax in the reality of his love, his life. Doesn't take long to feel refreshed, & ready to hit the road again. In no hurry, we hang around for awhile; we know we're welcome as long as we care to stay.

## May 4, 2003 Third Sunday of Easter

### Reading I: [Acts 3:13-15, 17-19](#)

Peter said to the people: "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in Pilate's presence when he had decided to release him. You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of ignorance, just as your leaders did; but God has thus brought to fulfillment what he had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away."

### Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9](#)

### Reading II: [1 Jn 2:1-5a](#)

My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world. The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments. Those who say, "I know him," but do not keep his commandments are liars, and the truth is not in them. But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him.

### Gospel: [Lk 24:35-48](#)

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread. While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them. He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

### From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

During the day: Do the Easter thing: tell the story of Jesus. Not in so many words, maybe, but make sure others know he's alive & well in you. They'll look inside themselves & see him sitting at table waiting to be served. Of a sudden you'll be aware of his presence together, right there & then. His new life is a community thing--healthy, holy relationships; all in the family way waiting to give birth in the hearts of those who don't yet know him.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer nurtures the life within; his, not ours. Or rather, his in ours. Prayer is our own free choice to be grafted onto him & allow his Spirit to circulate his attitudes & values throughout our activities. Prayer matures his love for others in us, fruit that may fall to the ground, its seed a long time germinating. Patient, prayer doesn't expect to see results.

## May 11, 2003 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Reading I: [Acts 4:8-12](#)

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said: "Leaders of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. He is the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29](#)

Reading II: [1 Jn 3:1-2](#)

Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Gospel: [Jn 10:11-18](#)

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**Acts 4.8-12; 1Jn 3.1-2; JN 10.11-18**

During the day -

Don't scatter. Integrate. Don't antagonize; congregate. Don't jeopardize; consolidate. Sure, you've got lots of tensions inside you; keep them there! Don't let them boil over & cause conflict. Any relationship is a responsibility. Yours are the only ones got; don't ruin them. As a matter of fact, they're the only things that matter in your life: living realization of the Kingdom of God. Christ does his best to be a Good Shepherd. Do yours!

### ABOUT PRAYER

In prayer we harmonize with the human intelligence of Christ, filter thru which the divine intelligence governs our affairs. Prayer fails to plumb the depths of the carpenter's oneness with the Godhead--doesn't even try. Rather, prayer relives the ordinary ups & downs of the day & shares them with the Friend who's been there, done that & enjoys the reminiscing. To rest in prayer--no words, no thoughts--is to give him the opportunity to share his, too; back door to divinity.

## May 18, 2003 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

### Reading I: [Acts 9:26-31](#)

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus. The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

### Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32](#)

### Reading II: [1 Jn 3:18-24](#)

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

### Gospel: [Jn 15:1-8](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**[Acts 4.8-12](#); [1Jn 3.1-2](#); [JN 10.11-18](#)**

During the day - Don't scatter. Integrate. Don't antagonize; congregate. Don't jeopardize; consolidate. Sure, you've got lots of tensions inside you; keep them there! Don't let them boil over & cause conflict. Any relationship is a responsibility. Yours are the only ones got; don't ruin them. As a matter of fact, they're the only things that matter in your life: living realization of the Kingdom of God. Christ does his best to be a Good Shepherd. Do yours!

ABOUT PRAYER- In prayer we harmonize with the human intelligence of Christ, filter thru which the divine intelligence governs our affairs. Prayer fails to plumb the depths of the carpenter's oneness with the Godhead-- doesn't even try. Rather, prayer relieves the ordinary ups & downs of the day & shares them with the Friend who's been there, done that & enjoys the reminiscing. To rest in prayer--no words, no thoughts--is to give him the opportunity to share his, too; back door to divinity.

**May 25, 2003 Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Reading I: [Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48](#)

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being." Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him." While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4](#)

Reading II: [1 Jn 4:7-10](#)

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

Gospel: [Jn 15:9-17](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

**MAY 25, 2003 - 6th Easter: Acts 10.25-48; IJn 4.7-10; JOHN 15.9-17**

During the day: Ask. Ask questions. Ask favors. Expect neither answers nor concessions. No one owes you anything, least of all God. Favors are always gratuitous, information often privileged. Forthcoming only if requested, they are conditioned by the nature of the need & the consequences of their use. Truth & goodness, when shared, are reproductive of life & love. God is the source of both, the Sun we reflect on each other.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is choosing to be chosen. In prayer we bask in the Beloved's need to communicate the life of the Lover. Prayerfully, we acknowledge our unworthy unlovableness, product of our self-centered failures to love others. Joyfully we suspect he finds this admission irresistible. Prayer is the transforming embrace we yearn to learn to give others.

## June 1, 2003 The Ascension of the Lord

### Reading I: [Acts 1:1-11](#)

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for "the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." When they had gathered together they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9](#)

### Reading II: [Eph 4:1-13](#)

Brothers and sisters, I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says: He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men. What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature to manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.

### Gospel: [Mk 16:15-20](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**[Acts 1.1-11](#); [Eph 4.1-13](#); [MK 16.15-20](#)**

During the day: Learn from yourself. Tell yourself what to do, but not how to do it. Make your choice, then let it happen. You'll be amazed how much quicker & better you do things if the mind stops getting in the way, just backs off & watches. Even the impossible becomes possible, the improbable probable. Like the Lord says.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the lesson plan that integrates spirit, mind & body. Prayer helps the mind humbly step back & let the spirit take charge. In prayer, both mind & body relax while the spirit, connatural to God's, tunes It in. Through prayer, the Spirit communicates the attitudes & values, virtues & projects of Jesus. Lesson learned, prayer flows into action; mind & body execute the plan. The Risen Humanity of Christ walks again, in each & all together, serving the needs of others.

## June 8, 2003 - Pentecost Sunday

### Reading I: [Acts 2:1-11](#)

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34](#)

### Reading II: [1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13](#)

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

### Gospel: [Jn 20:19-23](#)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**JUNE 8, 2003 PENTECOST: Acts 2.1-11; 1Cor 12.3-13; JOHN 20.19-23**

During the day: Witness truth. Let it flow thru you with power & finality. Beautiful, even in tragedy. Reality is a timeless rock that can't be hidden nor hidden behind. Sustained by the Spirit, courage assumes truth's consequences. Cowardice, on the other hand, creates confusion & renders aid from the Spirit inoperable. If you forgive errors, they're absorbed; if you don't, they perpetuate the chaos. Your fault.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is wondering what love is all about. Waiting for it to happen. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. When it does, it's prayer's reward. When it doesn't, prayer enunciates hope with phrases like 'You exist, & I am Yours;' 'You love me, & I trust You;' 'You use me, & I'm available,' & rests. Truth rolls over from prayer into action & makes it happen.

## June 15, 2003 - The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Reading Old Testament: [Dt 4:32-34, 39-40](#)

Moses said to the people: "Ask now of the days of old, before your time, ever since God created man upon the earth; ask from one end of the sky to the other: Did anything so great ever happen before? Was it ever heard of? Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as you did, and live? Or did any god venture to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, with strong hand and outstretched arm, and by great terrors, all of which the LORD, your God, did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? This is why you must now know, and fix in your heart, that the LORD is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other. You must keep his statutes and commandments that I enjoin on you today, that you and your children after you may prosper, and that you may have long life on the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you forever."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22](#)

Reading New Testament: [Rom 8:14-17](#)

Brothers and sisters: For those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Gospel: [Mt 28:16-20](#)

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they all saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**June 15, 2003 - Dt 4.32-34,30-40; Rm 8.14-17; MT 28.16-20**

During the day: Overcome hesitations. Work as a team member even when unconvinced--others will respect your caution. Team effort requires decisive leadership, alert to correct mistaken judgments. Wisdom bespeaks humility, key to the obedience that helps Authority achieve its ultimate purpose with love for all concerned.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is sitting next to Jesus listening to his Abba story again. Always with a different ending, sometimes happy, sometimes sad. Sometimes no ending at all - he just gets up & moves away. Hearing someone murmur, 'Wish I had a Dad like that' he turns & says, 'You do!' After he's gone the Spirit he left behind tells us what he meant.

## June 22, 2003 The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Reading Old Testament: [Ex 24:3-8](#)

When Moses came to the people and related all the words and ordinances of the LORD, they all answered with one voice, "We will do everything that the LORD has told us." Moses then wrote down all the words of the LORD and, rising early the next day, he erected at the foot of the mountain an altar and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites to offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD, Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar. Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do." Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words of his."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18](#)

Reading New Testament: [Heb 9:11-15](#)

Brothers and sisters: When Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God. For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

Gospel: [Mk 14:12-16, 22-26](#)

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**June 22, 2003 Body of Christ: Ex 24.3-8; Heb 9.11-15; MK 14.12-16**

During the day: Go into the city. Do your job, run your errands. Sit around at lunch sharing your experiences with others. Observe; listen; speak respectfully; learn. Be nourished by this communion with friends & colleagues. Sense its depth. Weary, head home relishing the satisfaction of a job well done, a community strengthened. Unperturbed, leave tomorrow's problems for the Boss to worry about. He knows how.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer turns fate into faith. In prayer we immerse happenings & bruised selves in the soothing balm of destiny. Prayer helps us bounce, land on our feet, & keep running. Prayer shelves the 'what ifs', evaluates challenges, measures the resources, ponders alternatives, rests a moment in discernment, then makes a choice. Fruit of prayer, such decisions make it difficult for God to do anything but shrug & make the most of it. He does it all the time.

## June 29, 2003 Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

### Reading I: [Acts 12:1-11](#)

In those days, King Herod laid hands upon some members of the Church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also. –It was the feast of Unleavened Bread.– He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. He intended to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the Church was fervently being made to God on his behalf. On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison. Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, "Get up quickly." The chains fell from his wrists. The angel said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me." So he followed him out, not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first guard, then the second, and came to the iron gate leading out to the city, which opened for them by itself. They emerged and made their way down an alley, and suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter recovered his sense and said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9](#)

### Reading II: [2 Tm 4:6-8, 17-18](#)

I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance. The Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the proclamation might be completed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his heavenly Kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel: [Mt 16:13-19](#)

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**June 29, 2003 - Peter & Paul, Aps mt16.13-19 + acts12.1-11, 2tim4.6-8,17-18**

During the day: Be a rock. Just a pebble, maybe, but rock solid. Your faith a gift from God, let those around you sense it, presume it, draw strength from it. Yourself, sense how a common faith binds you to some, distances you from others, obliges you to the wanderers in between. Building with the Carpenter, herding with the Shepherd, observe how uniquely your routine fulfills these responsibilities - the other dimension, the real dimension, that gives meaning to your life.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the mirror that reflects the inner self - the real self. The you God sees, loves, blesses abundantly & uses. The beloved son or daughter. The mixture of hero & coward. The on-again, off-again assistant. In prayer, we don't avert our gaze from the less pleasant, but neither do we concentrate on it. Rather, with God, we try to see the whole, the better to take courage & set the inner house in order; the Lord's there to lend a helping hand.

## July 6, 2003 - Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Ez 2:2-5](#)

As the LORD spoke to me, the spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard the one who was speaking say to me: Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day. Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you. But you shall say to them: Thus says the LORD GOD! And whether they heed or resist—for they are a rebellious house—they shall know that a prophet has been among them.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 123:1-2, 2, 3-4](#)

Reading New Testament: [2 Cor 12:7-10](#)

Brothers and sisters: That I, Paul, might not become too elated, because of the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Gospel: [Mk 6:1-6](#)

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

**July 6, 2003 – 14th Ordinary Time ot: Ezek 2.2-5; 2Cor 12.7-10; MK 6.1-6**

During the day: Cure a few sick people. You have no idea how gratefully Christ uses a friendly visit or phone call (or e-mail) to improve the health of an ailing person. Nothing you are doing would please him as much. Too busy? Tell Him that. Whatever it is, it'll still be there waiting for you. And you'll feel a whole lot healthier yourself when you get back to it. Maybe you're the one he wants to heal!

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer, we climb outside of time & place ourselves in communion with those we love. They may not know it; but we do, & so does the Lord. Spiritual presence is every bit as vital as physical presence; moreso, since it transcends distance, time & death. And once we get used to it, it's even more real. It's what the Lord uses to communicate the the grace of growth in mutual love, human & divine.

## July 13, 2003 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Am 7:12-15](#)

Amaziah, priest of Bethel, said to Amos, "Off with you, visionary, flee to the land of Judah! There earn your bread by prophesying, but never again prophesy in Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary and a royal temple." Amos answered Amaziah, "I was no prophet, nor have I belonged to a company of prophets; I was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores. The LORD took me from following the flock, and said to me, Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14](#)

Reading New Testament: [Eph 1:3-14 or 1:3-10](#)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved. In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel: [Mk 6:7-13](#)

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick— no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them." So they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**July 13, 2003 15th Ordinary Time Amos 7.12-15; Eph 1.3-14; MK 6.7-13**

During the day: Don't work alone. Be a loner if you like, but be a team member when it comes to projects. A job is only as important as the people who are doing it & the the people they're doing it for. You grow when you get to know your co-workers better; even more as you learn together from the people you serve. The enrichment that lasts forever is in the heart of each, but shared in the common experience of all.

ABOUT PRAYER: Thru prayer we get to know God better, Who makes it easy by becoming one of us. In prayer we rest in Christ - his words, his gestures, his feelings, his purpose. We follow him into action, & learn with him from the people met along the way: The sick, the sinner, the beggar, the powerful, the youth, the blind. Each has something to teach, & prayerfully we stand with Christ in awe at so much goodness hidden in human trappings. The kinship is eternal.

## July 20, 2003 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Jer 23:1-6](#)

Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture, says the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, against the shepherds who shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds. I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands to which I have driven them and bring them back to their meadow; there they shall increase and multiply. I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear and tremble; and none shall be missing, says the LORD. Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David; as king he shall reign and govern wisely, he shall do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell in security. This is the name they give him: "The LORD our justice."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6](#)

Reading New Testament: [Eph 2:13-18](#) Brothers and sisters: In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Gospel: [Mk 6:30-34](#) The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**July 20, 2003 16th of yr: Jer 23.1-5; Eph 2.13-18; MK 6.30-34**

During the day: Look at the crowd around you & take pity. Stop feeling sorry for yourself long enough to wonder what you might do to cheer others up. Sit back, relax, nod & smile at whoever's eye you catch, inquire about someone who interests the other. After a while go quietly back to work & note how tension has eased around you. Body language is a great healer; be the doctor.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is going off by yourself for a few minutes to be alone with the Lord. He appreciates it & lets you know how much. Doesn't take long to feel refreshed, to know a friend is always nearby, to experience again the satisfaction of being on his team. Prayerful interludes are opportunities to smooth out difficulties, manifest regret for negligence, sense a deepening communion. Prayer leaves you pleased you've pleased him, convinced it's the only reward worth having.

## July 27, 2003 Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [2 Kgs 4:42-44](#)

A man came from Baal-shalishah bringing to Elisha, the man of God, twenty barley loaves made from the firstfruits, and fresh grain in the ear. Elisha said, "Give it to the people to eat." But his servant objected, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" Elisha insisted, "Give it to the people to eat." "For thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and there shall be some left over.'" And when they had eaten, there was some left over, as the LORD had said.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18](#)

Reading New Testament: [Eph 4:1-6](#)

Brothers and sisters: I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Gospel: [Jn 6:1-15](#)

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat. When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world." Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**JULY 27, 2003 - 17th of yr: 2Kings 4.42-44; Eph 4.1-6; John 6.1-15**

During the day: Learn & practice thrift. Take only what you need. Use only what you need. Share what you have with those whose need is greater. Throw nothing useful away - someone needs it. Fulfill the spiritual as well as material purpose of everything you touch - God's creature, made to express his love.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is atonement. Prayer puts us at one with everyone & everything around us. In prayer we enter into what we are: Creation! A grain of sand on God's beach. A blade of grass on God's lawn. A drop of ink in God's pen. A toothpick in God's kitchen. The apple of his eye. The love in his heart. In prayer we atone for the mistakes we make, freely determine to help get things back on track the way they ought to be. In prayer we see God smile.

## August 3, 2003 - Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Ex 16:2-4, 12-15](#)

The whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "Would that we had died at the LORD's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!" Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will now rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily portion; thus will I test them, to see whether they follow my instructions or not. "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them: In the evening twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread, so that you may know that I, the LORD, am your God." In the evening quail came up and covered the camp. In the morning a dew lay all about the camp, and when the dew evaporated, there on the surface of the desert were fine flakes like hoarfrost on the ground. On seeing it, the Israelites asked one another, "What is this?" for they did not know what it was. But Moses told them, "This is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 78:3-4, 23-24, 25, 54](#)

Reading New Testament: [Eph 4:17, 20-24](#) Brothers and sisters: I declare and testify in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; that is not how you learned Christ, assuming that you have heard of him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, that you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Gospel: [Jn 6:24-35](#) When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent." So they said to him, "What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat." So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**AUG 3, 2003 - 18th of yr: Ex 16.2-4, 12-15; Eph 4.17, 20-24; John 6.24-35**

During the day: Don't work for food that can't last - set your sights higher than money & what it buys. Dream away, for 'when you stop dreaming, you die.' Matter of fact, when you dream nobly, you don't die: after-death sees you working more successfully than ever at your masterpiece, a dream come true! Believe in the one God sent? Know, then, that he believes in you. And your dream.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is not doing something; it's being someone: the only one of me God made. In prayer we formulate questions & ponder answers; who are you, God? I AM. Who am I? MINE! A ray of My light. A whisp of My breath. A branch on My vine. Fruit of My love. Prayer adjusts us to realities beyond our comprehension, becoming what we will be for all eternity.

## August 10, 2003 Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [1 Kgs 19:4-8](#)

Elijah went a day's journey into the desert, until he came to a broom tree and sat beneath it. He prayed for death saying: "This is enough, O LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers." He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree, but then an angel touched him and ordered him to get up and eat. Elijah looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water. After he ate and drank, he lay down again, but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and ordered, "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!" He got up, ate, and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9](#)

Reading New Testament: [Eph 4:30—5:2](#)

Brothers and sisters: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ. So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

Gospel: [Jn 6:41-51](#)

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven, " and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**AUG 10, 2003 - 19th of yr: 1Kings 19.4-8; Eph 4.30-5.2; JOHN 6.41-51**

During the day: Live forever. Here. Now. This moment, whatever the circumstances. Live this experience fully, abundantly. Experience never ends, it just blooms, blossoms, fructifies. But make sure true love for another is the major ingredient; that's what makes human experience divine, synonym for eternal.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is awareness, acknowledgement: there's more to you than you realize! Sometimes in prayer you dive inwards, deeper into the Center of your own being. Sometimes you expand outwards, beyond the limits of Whatever's out there. In prayer you touch God, your Father-Mother. You hear Him, you see Her. You smell Him, you taste Her - you're alive in Him, & She in you. Through Christ, our Lord.

## August 17, 2003 Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Prv 9:1-6](#)

Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven columns; she has dressed her meat, mixed her wine, yes, she has spread her table. She has sent out her maidens; she calls from the heights out over the city: "Let whoever is simple turn in here; To the one who lacks understanding, she says, Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 34:2-3, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15](#)

Reading New Testament: [Eph 5:15-20](#)

Brothers and sisters: Watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord. And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

Gospel: [Jn 6:51-58](#)

Jesus said to the crowds: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip:

**August 17, 2003 - 20th of yr: Prov 9.1-6; Eph 5.15-20; JOHN 6. 51-58**

During the day: Give your flesh for your little corner of the world. You exist for it, not it for you. Developing it completes you. Don't sweat the details, just focus on the needs you serve; your own take care of themselves as you concern yourself with others.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer ponders less what we do than why & how we do it. In prayer, we flow as an organism, not an organization. The life of the whole circulates in each of the members as they function contributing to the health of the person - in this case, Christ. It's not the mind that directs the body, it's the spirit integrating mind & body. Prayer tunes to the Spirit of God & relaxes in Its movements; It never loses control.

## August 24, 2003 Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b](#)

Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, summoning their elders, their leaders, their judges, and their officers. When they stood in ranks before God, Joshua addressed all the people: "If it does not please you to serve the LORD, decide today whom you will serve, the gods your fathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are now dwelling. As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." But the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD for the service of other gods. For it was the LORD, our God, who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, out of a state of slavery. He performed those great miracles before our very eyes and protected us along our entire journey and among the peoples through whom we passed. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 34:2-3, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23](#)

Reading New Testament: Eph 5:21-32

Brothers and sisters: Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church.

Gospel: [Jn 6:60-69](#)

Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp:

**August 24, 2003 - 21st Sunday Josh 24.1-2,15-18; Eph 5.21-32; JOHN 6.60-69**

During the day: Struggle to reestablish the spirit's dominance over mind & body. Till you do your value system is disordered. Human spirit is connatural with the Spirit from which it came; listen to it. It has its own way of communicating uniquely with each, so you'll have to find your own. The Word of God humanized itself to help. Let him. He's not going to force himself on you; love doesn't work that way.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer the mind scans rather than rationalizes, then rests when it encounters a peaceful moment; healthy harmony renews all systems. The will turns meditation into prayer by opening itself to the divine – an unspoken 'yes, Lord.' Imagination does the rest, at the service of both.

## August 24, 2003 Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament:

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## September 7, 2003 Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Is 35:4-7a](#)

Thus says the LORD: Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing. Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe. The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10](#)

Reading New Testament: [Jas 2:1-5](#)

My brothers and sisters, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings and fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here, please," while you say to the poor one, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him?

Gospel: [Mk 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."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip

**September 7, 2003 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Is 35.4-7; Jms 2.1-5; MK 7.31-37**

During the day: If you want to correct some one, do so in private; that is, if you want him to hear you & not just be humiliated. Health is more of the spirit than of the body, for both of you. The other's dignity & your integrity are the contact points for God's love to flow in both directions. Don't abuse the opportunity.

ABOUT PRAYER: Sometimes in prayer we're tongue-tied: our thoughts confused, our feelings raw, our purpose pointless. We don't have to leave the crowd to be alone for a moment with Christ & let the Spirit do the groaning; they understand each other pretty well - the healing balm of peace soon reaches our hearts. Back to work the problem's still there, but vision cleared.

## September 14, 2003 Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Reading Old Testament: [Nm 21:4b-9](#)

With their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!" In punishment the LORD sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died. Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray the LORD to take the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people, and the LORD said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if any who have been bitten look at it, they will live." Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38](#)

Reading New Testament: [Phil 2:6-11](#)

Brothers and sisters: Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: [Jn 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.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip

**SEPT 14, 2003 - Triumph of the Cross: Num 21.4-9; Phil 2.6-11; JN 3.13-17**

During the day: Before condemning, save the salvageable. Things can be replaced, people can't. Something in every human relationship needs to be retained, woven as the fabric of Christ's own living body. Takes time, patience & suspended judgement to discover that something. Take it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer always lifts us up. Sometimes we feel it, sometimes we don't. Sometimes with baggage, sometimes without; if with, often it's stuff we'd prefer to leave behind but can't - the hurt, the pain, the resentment, the fear, the disappointment, the despair. We know the purpose, so in prayer we reach out & touch the cross, & join it to his own. For a moment his eyes flick open & look at us with gratitude. Makes it all worth while. .

## September 21, 2003 Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Wis 2:12, 17-20](#)

The wicked say: Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us; he sets himself against our doings, reproaches us for transgressions of the law and charges us with violations of our training. Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out what will happen to him. For if the just one be the son of God, God will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes. With revilement and torture let us put the just one to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for according to his own words, God will take care of him.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 54:3-4, 5, 6-8](#)

Reading New Testament: [Jas 3:16--4:3](#)

Beloved: Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace. Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members? You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Gospel: [Mk 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 the 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."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip

**SEPT 21, 2003 - 25th of yr: Wis 2.12-20; Jms 3.16-4.3; MK 9.30-37**

During the day: Bring up the rear. Observe the others: some doing fine, others need help; some too cocky, several hesitant; a few lazy & disinterested, not a few uptight & about to explode. As opportunity presents itself, nudge each accordingly; quietly, without others noticing. Then fall back in step with Christ again, two kids waiting to be sent on Dad's business. Without another care in the world.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer's like sitting back & watching a good movie. Entertaining. Relaxing. Moving, sometimes to tears, sometime to laughter through tears. In prayer we identify with the gospel characters - feel their feelings, think their thoughts, adopt their plans. Prayer good, we don't want it to end. When it does, the glow stays the rest of the day. We've grown.

## September 28, 2003 - Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Nm 11:25-29](#)

The LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, the LORD bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied. Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, were not in the gathering but had been left in the camp. They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; yet the spirit came to rest on them also, and they prophesied in the camp. So, when a young man quickly told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp," Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses' aide, said, "Moses, my lord, stop them." But Moses answered him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the LORD were prophets! Would that the LORD might bestow his spirit on them all!"

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14](#)

Reading New Testament: [Jas 5:1-6](#)

Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous one; he offers you no resistance.

Gospel: [Mk 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.'"

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp

**SEPT 28, 2003 - 26th of yr: Num 11.25-29; James 5.1-6; Mk 9.38-48**

During the day: Cast out a few devils. Not others; some of your own. You know them by name - don't pretend they're not around. Greed? Give, don't get. Lust? Grow up! Put first things first! Anger? Slow down, keep your sense of humor. Three down, four to go. Pride's the root, so keep chopping away. You can't do it alone, but neither can God without you. So make up your will, not your mind, & get with it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer prepares us for Purgatory - that pause at the Door when we look back & see all the hurt we've caused others; not another step forward till we've had a chance to repair the damage. Sure, Christ has already paid the price; but now, unrestricted by space & time, we want to get into the hearts we've wounded & share their suffering; & with love - his & ours - heal the hurt, free the bonds of resentment. Thru prayer we anticipate the process.

**October 5, 2003 Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Reading Old Testament:** [Gn 2:18-24](#)

The LORD God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." So the LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one flesh.

**Responsorial Psalm:** [Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6](#)

**Reading New Testament:** [Heb 2:9-11](#)

Brothers and sisters: He "for a little while" was made "lower than the angels," that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering. He who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin. Therefore, he is not ashamed to call them "brothers."

**Gospel:** [Mk 10:2-16](#) or [10:2-12](#)

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate." In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip

**OCT 5, 2003 - 27th of yr: Gen 2. 18-24; Heb 2.9-11; MK 10.2-12**

During the day: Don't separate what God has joined. You do so at your own risk. Whatever is in your ken is of God & there for a purpose. Respect its presence even when conflict necessitates adjustment. Mistakes acknowledged, unwilled conflicts assumed, harmonize adjustment with God's design as fully & keenly as possible. Judge not. Condemn not. Just keep on loving all concerned. As God does.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer brings out the child in us & expresses our earliest religious sentiments. Balanced or not, they were planted by those who love us, then nourished by God's own gift of faith. Prayer reaffirms our absolute trust in the One Who Is in whom we are. Enriched by other sentiments - gratitude, regret, courage, joy, generosity - authentic prayer overflows & determines the character of our actions. A healthy combination.

## October 12, 2003 Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Wis 7:7-11](#)

I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her, nor did I liken any priceless gem to her; because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be accounted mire. Beyond health and comeliness I loved her, and I chose to have her rather than the light, because the splendor of her never yields to sleep. Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17](#)

Reading New Testament: [Heb 4:12-13](#)

Brothers and sisters: Indeed the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

Gospel: [Mk 10:17-30](#) or [10:17-27](#)

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." Peter began to say to him, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."

From the Banks of the Mighty Mississip

**October 12, 2003 28<sup>th</sup> Wisdom 7:7-11, Hebrews 4:12-13; Mark 10:17-30**

During the day: Move a little faster, try to catch up. Too much 'stuff' weighing you down? Get rid of some of it. Be great if you got rid of all of it, but at least a start will make a difference. You'll feel the freedom, intuit the reason, then get rid of a little more. Moving faster, you'll know you're closing the gap. Eventually tempted to junk it all, you'll notice the less privileged around you urging you on. And not for the reason you think!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer inflates the gift of self. Prayer breathes God in, then holds itself while the Spirit takes possession & continues It's work. Prayer is of the will, & we sit there willing whatever it that grafts our attitudes & values onto those of Christ. Undetectably enriched, we move from prayer to action to test the Spirit's success. Observing ours, He waits, tools in hand, for the next opportunity to make adjustments. Prayerfully, we soon hold our breath again & tune ourselves to the harmony of God's creation.

**October 19, 2003 Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Reading Old Testament: [Is 53:10-11](#)

The LORD was pleased to crush him in infirmity. If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22](#)

Reading New Testament: [Heb 4:14-16](#)

Brothers and sisters: Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

Gospel: [Mk 10:35-45](#) or [10:42-45](#)

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."

Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississipp by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ

**October 19, 2003 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday Is 53:10-11; Hebrew 4:14-16; Mark 10:35-45**

During the day: Over or under, get to the heart of authority. If over, make it felt – in the right way, for the right reasons. If under, be as one with it, embrace the reason. Reason: always the common good. Way: respect for the persons served & the persons serving. Projects are for persons, not persons for projects. Command with love & you'll be obeyed with love. Obey with love, & love is its own reward.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is not something you do, it's something that happens; let it. Something the Trinity does; let them. The Father-Mother nourishing her children. The Divine Mechanic tinkering with his love machine. The God-Man toning the muscles of his body. Feel it. Taste it. Smell it. Hear it. See it. Love it! Love them! Love their masterpiece: each other! All as one.

## October 26, 2003 Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Jer 31:7-9](#)

Thus says the LORD: Shout with joy for Jacob, exult at the head of the nations; proclaim your praise and say: The LORD has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them back from the land of the north; I will gather them from the ends of the world, with the blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with child; they shall return as an immense throng. They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them; I will lead them to brooks of water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble. For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6](#)

Reading New Testament: [Heb 5:1-6](#)

Brothers and sisters: Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, it was not Christ who glorified himself in becoming high priest, but rather the one who said to him: You are my son: this day I have begotten you; just as he says in another place: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel: [Mk 10:46-52](#)

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ

**October 26, 2003 30<sup>th</sup>, Jeremiah 31:7-9; Hebrews 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-52**

During the day: If it's important & you need to be heard, shout the louder. Otherwise, speak softly; there's more conviction in firmness than noise. Be effective for Truth's sake, not your own. Once the blind see, fall back in place as a follower & let the Way lead the pack to Life.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is sensing without seeing - we even close our eyes to sense better. A Presence. Imagination probes; others have told us about It, but this is different. It's here, now, with me. I feel It's gaze, It's touch. I rest in it, aware It's communicating. In response I open my heart more fully. As It moves away, I follow.

**November 2, 2003**

**Reading Old Testament:** [Is 25:6, 7-9](#)

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken. On that day it will be said: "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the LORD for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

**Responsorial Psalm:** [Ps 27:1, 4, 7 and 8b and 9a, 13-14](#)

**The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

**Reading New Testament:** [Rom 6:3-9](#)

Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

**Gospel:** [Jn 6:37-40](#)

Jesus said to the crowds: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."

Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississip by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ

**November 2, 2003, Isaiah 25:6-9; Romans 6:3-9; John 6:37-40**

During the day: Lose nothing that has been given you. Every true gift is a gift of self, wrapped in the material of symbolic gesture. Gifts are alive with the life of the giver, forever precious bond between giver & receiver. With a life of its own, when shared with others the gift keeps radiating out till it runs full cycle & returns to its source, God - All in all.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is a bond uniting us with those whose gift of life we've shared, now fully one with the Love That Is. Prayer is our chat room in the communion of saints where sinners pick up counsel & courage from those whose love radiates Christ as he enlivens us all. Prayer is our consolation in sadness, our joy in tragedy, our hope in failure. Prayer is of God, Christ's will victorious.

## **November 9, 2003 Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome**

Reading Old Testament: [Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12](#)

The angel brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water flowing out from beneath the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the façade of the temple was toward the east; the water flowed down from the southern side of the temple, south of the altar. He led me outside by the north gate, and around to the outer gate facing the east, where I saw water trickling from the southern side. He said to me, "This water flows into the eastern district down upon the Arabah, and empties into the sea, the salt waters, which it makes fresh. Wherever the river flows, every sort of living creature that can multiply shall live, and there shall be abundant fish, for wherever this water comes the sea shall be made fresh. Along both banks of the river, fruit trees of every kind shall grow; their leaves shall not fade, nor their fruit fail. Every month they shall bear fresh fruit, for they shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary. Their fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9](#)

Reading New Testament: [1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17](#)

Brothers and sisters: You are God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ. Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy.

Gospel: [Jn 2:13-22](#)

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his Body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississip by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ

**November 9, 2003 - 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, Ezra 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Cor 3:9-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22**

During the day: Be tough when justice requires it - tougher on yourself than on others. It's the offense you're after, not the offender. Corrected, if he acknowledges his error the offender changes. Sometimes you tell him, sometimes you show him, as gently or forcefully as necessary. The motive for words & action the other's good, time eventually bears them fruit.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is love, possessing while being possessed. Prayer cleanses the temple of the heart, allows the values & attitudes of Christ gradually to take possession. A new Lord acknowledged, prayer adjusts to his priorities. Two personalities blend, & Christ's humanity restores the Divine title to your domain. The price to pay is surrender.

## November 16, 2003 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading Old Testament: [Dn 12:1-3](#)

In those days, I Daniel, heard this word of the Lord: "At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace. But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever."

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11](#)

You are my inheritance, O Lord!

Reading New Testament: [Heb 10:11-14, 18](#)

Brothers and sisters: Every priest stands daily at his ministry, offering frequently those same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God; now he waits until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer offering for sin.

Gospel: [Mk 13:24-32](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky. "Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ

**November 16, 2003 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Mark 13:24-32**

During the day: Learn a lesson from the fig tree. Be alert to signs - body language, innuendo, exchanged looks, unusual situations, all such things. Don't jump to conclusions, just pay attention. Observe developments objectively, ready to react in a way that secures the common good. Build on truth, not supposition. Human affairs are guided, but not manipulated, by divine wisdom - be It's instrument; respect the freedom of others, firm in your own decisions.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer we hang loose, ready for anything. Prayer tunes the human to the divine. Prayer is humble enjoyment of the larger picture - being a part, not the whole; in orbit, not the center. In prayer we dive beneath troubled waters to the deeper calm below; prayer rebuilds energies, renews courage, ignites faith, then launches us back into the order or chaos of the moment. Like David, we laugh as we run to meet Goliath!

## November 23, 2003 The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

Reading Old Testament: [Dn 7:13-14](#)

As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a Son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; when he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.

Responsorial Psalm: [Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5](#)

The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

Reading New Testament: [Rev 1:5-8](#)

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming amid the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. All the peoples of the earth will lament him. Yes. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty."

Gospel: [Jn 18:33b-37](#)

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississip by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ

**Nov 23, CHRIST THE KING: Dan 7.13-14; Rev 1.5-8; JN 18.33-37**

'I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth.'

During the day: Bear witness to the truth. Dreamer, you like to think reality is other than it is, more in your favor than against you. Tempted to project your own perspective onto the scene, don't. It's Christ's, & he knows what he's doing; be a help, not a hinderance. Truth is not an abstraction, it's a developing design being realized. There's a Will behind it that wants what's best for everyone, yourself included, even when the situation calls for crucifixion. Sometimes you just have to hang there.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the regal acceptance of being a beggar. Prayer helps govern by humble submission to Another's authority. Prayer guides decisions through a maze of alternatives to discern what's truly best – the beggar's plea for light from above & the courage to exercise the power of freedom with nobility.