

This is the start of Liturgical Year 2005A

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**NOV 28, 2004 - 1st Advent: Is 2.1-5; Rm 11.13-14; MT 24.37-44**

[This begins a new liturgical year, Yr A, first in the 3-yr cycle; most gospel texts taken from Matthew. These reflections can be found at [www.elpasojesuit.org](http://www.elpasojesuit.org)] "As in the days of Noah, they suspected nothing till the flood came & swept them all away. So will it be at the coming of the Son of Man."

During the day - Swept away, grab a hold of something or somebody & go with the flow. You don't control events, you adjust to them. Others depend on you, so calm down & use your head. Cut your losses, minimize the risks, make decisions based on goodness & truth; you'll never regret them.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is recourse to God's dominion. Prayer seeks & sometimes finds the security of absolute trust, the sense that God controls without manipulating. Prayer works thru fears & doubts to express the love that embraces destiny with vigor. Chaos turns to order as the pattern of God's design appears & human effort responds, generously & with courage.

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**DEC 5, 2004 - 2nd Advent: Is 11.1-10; Rm 15.4-9; MT 3.1-12**

"John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert, 'Repent! The Kingdom of God is at hand - produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.'"

During the day - Produce good fruit from mistakes made, be they of bad judgment or of bad will. Big difference between shame & sorrow: shame hides mistakes, sorrow takes responsibility for them & repairs the damage. Relationships are healed by humble recognition & Godlike forgiveness. Latter lacking, the offended becomes the offender. His grudge understandable, remain at peace.

ABOUT PRAYER: The first fruit of prayer is gratitude; the second is repentance, i.e. the recognition & regret that graces received haven't been used for the purposes intended; the third is trust that we're loved not less for our failures but more, since love always seeks the betterment of the beloved. Gratefully, sorrowfully & with trust, prayer acknowledges our mistakes & disposes us to be more responsible with graces received.

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**DEC 12, 2004 - 3rd Advent: Is 35.1-6,10; James 5.7-10; MT 11.2-11**

"What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Someone dressed in fine clothing? A prophet? Yes, & more than a prophet, 'the messenger who prepares the way before you'."

During the day - Don't sway in the wind. Be loyal to the truth as you see it. Don't be stubborn, be firm. Stubbornness is resistance to change, inability to grasp reasons for doing so. Conviction based on a sense of what is right & true provides a beacon for those in doubt. Authentic values enrich, false values impoverish; whichever attracts the most followers wins the day, & leaves the field to future prophets.

ABOUT PRAYER We take our doubts to prayer; we ponder them with the light of reason, open to the light of inspiration. The mind discerns: seeks inner peace as it scans the alternatives. The basic premise of prayer is to want what God wants, to see things as he sees them. He seldom fails to grant to the intellect & will so disposed a sense of direction. Followed cautiously a step at a time, his presence confirms the quest.

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**DEC 19, 2004 - 4th Advent: Is 7.10-14; Rom 1.1-7; MT 1.18-24**

"Joseph her husband, a righteous man, was unwilling to shame her & decided to divorce her quietly; but an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream."

During the day - Before making a decision consider the consequences for others; let the angel in you put their interests above your own. Judging words & actions may be justified; judging persons never. The commandment to love one another stipulates no exceptions. On the contrary, whatever the other's mistakes of bad judgment or bad will, they're just that: mistakes. Correction is called for, not condemnation.

ABOUT PRAYER Make serious choices prayerfully; consult the Christ who lives within you. He's as stuck with them as you are, & pays a far greater price for the results. Prayer submits blind emotional reactions - all emotions are blind - to the intellectual scanning of fact; which in turn glances at Christ in faith to discern his assessment. Prayer petitions both to see it clearly & adopt it courageously.

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**DEC 26, 2004 - -Holy Family: Sirach 3.2-6,12-14; Col 3.12-21; MT 2.13-15,19-23**

"He rose, took the child & his mother & went to dwell in a town called Nazareth."

During the day - Dwell wherever destiny decrees. Harmonize with all around you. Nature provides the setting, people the motivation. There is peace to be found in both when it radiates from your own heart. Don't let externals overwhelm the interior - they're intended to enrich it. The civilization of love is within. Savour each moment.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the stabilizer that absorbs the shock of things gone wrong & people gone crazy. Prayer is our anchor in the heart of a God who can only love, & suffers with us the agony of bringing order out of chaos. Prayer is the reminder that it all has to start in my own heart - the only hearth I truly control. Warmth, forgiveness, freedom from fear & resentment, door open to any who wander in. Always & forever.

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**JAN 2, 2005 - Epiphany: Sirach 3.2-6, 12-14; Col. 3.12-21; MT 2.13-23**

"We saw his star & have come to give him homage."

During the day - Admire stellar people. Performance improves with appreciation. Let them know you do - honoring service honors the served. We serve each other - the person in need, not the need. Time, energy, character, possessions - all constitute human wealth. Shared, they enrich rather than impoverish & become the common heritage God intends for all. The Babe grown to manhood.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer seeks the Infinite in the infinitesimal, finds it reducing thought to almost nothingness. Prayer rests in little things - the touch of clothing, a sound, a smell, a breath, our hands. Prayer prepares for encounters with the little people, so precious to God because so worthless to everyone else. Prayer returns us to the little child within, who with innocent trust brings their needs to the Child who came to save.

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**JAN 9, 2005 - Baptism of Jesus: Is 42.1-7; Acts 10.34-38; MT 3.13-17**

"After Jesus was baptized he came up from the water & the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove. A voice came from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

During the day - Come up from the water. Enough of recreation, time to go to work. There's a job to do & it won't wait. Your spirit is designed to follow a guiding Spirit. Do. As the mind peacefully ponders alternatives with the will ready to pounce, let it when a voice - not yours - wordlessly says 'Yes!' It's usually the hardest, but when you choose it you'll hear 'That's my boy!'

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is voluntary immersion in the presence of God. Spiritual exercise, prayer involves all the faculties: mind & will, memory & imagination, body & senses - harmonious kaleidoscope of on-going communion with the divine, immanent & transcendent. No two prayers are alike, no two pray-ers. Find the best time & place for you, develop your own effective preliminary exercises & let God do the rest. Even if he seems he's not around, he is. So stick to it.

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**JAN 16, 2005 - 2nd of yr: Is 49.3-6; 1 Cor 1.1-3; JOHN 1.29-34**

'I WILL MAKE YOU A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS THAT MY SALVATION MAY REACH TO THE END OF THE EARTH.' "John saw Jesus coming toward him & said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

During the day - When goodness & honesty demand it, be a lamb. Calmly but firmly, be willing to pay the price. You may lose your job. You may lose friends, even members of your family. But loyalty to truth is loyalty to the God of love whose Spirit sows seeds of fidelity in the hearts witnessing your sacrifice. The harvest may be a long time coming - you may not even see it. But the joy of its certainty only Christ can share.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the charger that restores moral & spiritual strength; which in turn refresh body, mind & heart. Prayer encourages the cynical optimist within to trust absolutely in the wisdom, power & love of the Spirit, even as things around one appear to disintegrate. Prayer nourishes a sense of humor that turns tears into chuckles even as one picks up the pieces. "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come!"

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**JAN 23, 2005 - 3rd of yr: Is 8.23-9.3; 1Cor 1.10-13,17; Mt 4:12.23**

THERE IS NO GLOOM WHERE BUT NOW THERE WAS DISTRESS. THOSE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT. "As he walked by the Sea of Galilee he saw Peter & Andrew casting a net into the sea. 'Come after me, & I will make you fishers of men.'"

During the day - Fish for men, not fame or fortune. Everything you do has to do with people. They're the reason for each day's existence - consider them so. Let purpose predominate priority. Whatever the relationship - professional, social, familial, friend, stranger, enemy - there's just the two of you & God, inside & between. Healer, helper, lover, guide, God uses you & the other as instruments. Make his day! He'll be eternally grateful & you forever proud.

ABOUT PRAYER - Pray people. Pray their needs. Be specific. Near & dear or far & foreign, will their good - God does, & joining him increases love, melts hate. Prayer is both retroactive & reflexive. With living faith prayer places past moments of intense emotion good or bad in God's healing heart. Wisdom absorbs pain, love communicates new life. Finding this happening in your own, continue praying with hope it does so in the other's as well. Perseverance in prayer has a way with God.

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**JAN 30, 2005 - 4th of yr: Zeph 2.3,3.12-13; 1Cor 1.26-31; MT 5.1-12**

SEEK THE LORD, ALL YOU HUMBLE OF THE EARTH! (Zephaniah 2.3) "When Jesus saw the crowds he began to teach them saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.'"

During the day - Look at the crowds. Study the faces of strangers. Note the contentment, the peace, the serenity; the purpose, self-confidence, respect. Notice the exceptions - impatience, disrespect, indifference, selfishness. Ponder the multitude's struggle to survive & improve, together, & its sense of satisfaction that success is on the way. Perceive the God inside each making this dream come true.

ABOUT PRAYER : Prayer is getting to know God better, which we can only do thru analogy. When, however, the purpose of our prayer is to know Christ better, we can directly since he is human like us. We can read or hear his words, share his feelings, understand his purpose, admire his compassion, trust his love. We can become his friends. So when we pray with him, we come to know God directly. Father- Mother of us all, (s)he sends the Only begotten to make the introductions. Communion mutually accepted, our destiny is realized.

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**FEB 6, 2005 - 5th of yr: Is 58.7-10; 1Cor 21-5; MT 5.13-16**

SHARE YOUR BREAD WITH THE HUNGRY, SHELTER THE HOMELESS, CLOTHE THE NAKED & DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR OWN. THEN YOUR LIGHT WILL BREAK FORTH LIKE THE DAWN. Is.58.7 "You are the salt of the earth, the light of the world."

During the day - Don't worry about being too salty. Life is for living & God wants you happy. He wants us happy together & appreciates what we do to liven-up each other. We show others the way by the light of truth shining in our own hearts. Even in the toughest situations our loyalty to what's good in ourselves & others is the strength that sees us through. Hope is anchored in the roots of truth & goodness - never lose it!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is a source of courage. In prayer we remind ourselves that we are God's & our problems his. He's a better worrier than we are & well equipped to suggest solutions. Prayer learns to turn other voices down & God's up; or rather, to listen for clues to his advise in the words of others. Our prayer reminds us - & the Boss - that as we strive to follow his directives he needs to provide the wherewithal. He always does, tho the results fit his designs, not ours.

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**FEB 13, 2005 - 1 Lent: Gen 2.7-9, 3.1-7; Rom 5.12-19; MT 4.1-11**

THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN, BLEW INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE.(Gen 2.7) "Not on bread alone does man live but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

During the day - Don't live by bread alone. Nourish life intellectually & spiritually as well as materially. Read a good book. Say a few prayers. Do both regularly. Cut down on things material - eat less, be more thrifty, slow down, give time to people rather than projects. Life is an on-going test of values. Pass it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is time spent in the classroom of Jesus; or sometimes a stroll with the Master going over some of the difficulties. He's learned from experience; among other things he knows about hunger, ambition & power. Wisely, he lets us talk first, then helps us discover for ourselves the truths hidden in the alternatives. Prayer is a moment of mutual trust between master & disciple. Neither pushes; both wait for the right moment to nod.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**February 20, 2005 Second Sunday of Lent Gen 12:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Matthew 17:1-9**

"This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." When the disciples heard this they fell prostrate with fear. Jesus came, & touched them & said, " Rise, do not be afraid." I WILL MAKE YOU A GREAT NATION. ABRAM WENT AS THE LORD DIRECTED HIM.

During the day -

Stand up. Don't be afraid. Fear (blind emotion) paralyzes. Turn on the cold light of reason. You can handle it, & if you can't, there are others who want to & can. You are bigger than any problem. Mind, will & courage confront danger with confidence. Security radiates from within, flows from a source that transcends problems & dangers. Peril is reduced to opportunity.

**ABOUT PRAYER**

Prayer absorbs emotions. Through prayer, control passes to the spirit. Prayer senses the presence of power. Prayer trusts a providence that entrusts. Surface storms don't ruffle the calm waters where faith is anchored. A strength beyond ones own is tapped & never fails. Whatever the outcome.

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**Feb 27, 2005 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Lent Exodus 17:3-7; Psalms 95: 1-2, 6-9; Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42**

"The hour is coming when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit & truth." Jn 4.23  
STRIKE THE ROCK & WATER WILL FLOW FROM IT FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK. Ex 17.6

During the day: Worship truth. Don't manipulate it. Understand its place in your destiny. Build on it alone - subterfuge erodes. Truth frees, hiding it enslaves. Loyalty to truth strengthens integrity. Goodness & truth are inseparable; on their base relationships thrive or aren't worth having. Unvarnished truth is the measure of honesty. Only the dishonest reject its judgment, & theirs leads nowhere. Sense inner harmony with the courageous who follow it whatever the cost. Of such are the Kingdom of God, the civilization of love. .

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is truth's embrace - guarantee, if authentic, of insecurity's security. Prayer reflects the human condition, sinful & sorrowful. Prayer distinguishes mistakes of bad judgment from mistakes of bad will, flows with the divine condition, corrects the former, forgives the latter. Both one's own & others'. Through prayer we arrive at God's way of achieving the impossible.

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**MAR 6, 2005 - 4th Lent: 1Sam 16.1,6-7,10-13; Eph 5.8-14; JN 9.1-41**

"Jesus spat, made clay with the saliva, put it on his eyes & said, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.' He went, he washed, he saw." THE LORD SAID TO SAMUEL "THERE! ANOINT HIM! THIS IS THE ONE!"

During the day: The other seems blind to the truth? Don't rub his face in it, just dab a little on his eyes. Let him discover it for himself - curiosity wins more victories over stubbornness than humility. It's truth that matters, not your opinion. His insights may prove richly revealing - don't be surprised if he dabs a little on your eyes, too.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is listening. Before seeing. God's language in prayer is inner silence. He communicates himself. The clarity of conviction is absolute, however beyond our ken; 'Who is he, Sir, that I may believe?' our prayerful response.

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**March 13, 2005 Fifth Sunday of Lent - Ez 37.12-14; Rms 8.8-11; JN 11.1-45**

“Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, tied hand & foot. WHEN I OPEN YOUR GRAVES & HAVE YOU RISE FROM THEM, I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU THAT YOU MAY LIVE & KNOW THAT I AM LORD. Ez 37.14

During the day - Respond to the challenge to come fully alive. Whatever it is you're dying of - boredom, inertia, resentment, doubt - dive deep inside the inner tomb where will is dormant & plug it in the Sustaining Will that created you. Designed to work in partnership, do. Choose to make the effort, & watch it happen. Be patient; the pace is his, not yours.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer encourages the discouraged to go on hoping. Prayer accepts & forgives past mistakes, ponders the disordered priorities at their roots, petitions the Good God to give help us untie the bonds that bind us to them. Prayer brings us out into the sunlight of self-confidence, energized by love that lives.

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**March 20, 2005 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion Is 50.4-7; Phil 2.6-11; MT 26.14-27.66**

THE LORD GOD IS MY HELP; I SHALL NOT BE DISGRACED. Is 50.7

"One of the Twelve went to the chief priests & said, 'What will you give me if I hand him over to you?'"

During the day - Don't be a Judas, even in little things. Loyalty is not negotiable. Friendship is too precious a gift to be sacrificed to self-gratification. Measure the loss to others before closing a deal. Keep your mouth shut when conversation turns to gossip. Protect personal integrity against sudden onslaughts of material or ambitious avarice. Kiss with love, not for show. Betrayals either haunt or destroy - be quick to regret & repair, forgiveness your reward.

ABOUT PRAYER - In prayer, the heart opens to the Christ within & the Christ without. Sometimes he comes up, sometimes he comes in, sometimes both. We pray with Jesus within by diving deep into our own interior, growing in awareness of possessing while being possessed. We pray with the Christ above & all around us, immersed with him in that eternal moment on the cross when his dying humanity exploded into his transcendent divinity. He brings both to the encounter of prayer.

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**March 27, 2005 - Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord The Mass of Easter Day**

**Acts 10.34-43; Col 3.1-4; JN 20.1-9**

THIS MAN GOD RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY THAT HE BE VISIBLE,  
NOT TO ALL BUT TO THOSE CHOSEN TO BE WITNESSES.

"Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning while it  
was still dark & saw the stone removed from the tomb."

During the day: Start the day early, while it's still dark. Let the dawn of each new day reveal an empty tomb, the stone of yesterday rolled back. Sure, it's still there; but not the obstacle it was - unless you deny the Rising Sun the opportunity to be the new beginning it always is. New too are you, if you're allowing faith to grow.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer deepens the awareness that God lives within. Imperceptibly, prayer turns the inside out, & the one at prayer finds himself in God; one's own humanity becomes the humanity of the risen Christ, & morning prayer evolves into the daily routine of serving others. Embrace it.

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**April 3, 2005 Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday**

**Acts 2.42-47; 1Peter 1.3-9; JN 20.19-31**

THE NEW CONVERTS REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

"You believe, Thomas, because you have seen. Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believed."

During the day: Be blessed. Run the risks inherent in believing in others. Self-confidence is buoyed by trust, diminished by doubt. The effort encouraged by expectation is boosted by grace. God designed us for success; even when well-intentioned efforts fail, future fruits are seeded by loving trust. Relationships are nurtured by effort, not by success. Provide both others & yourself the necessary ingredient.

ABOUT PRAYER: All Christian prayer is the prayer of the Risen Christ. So, too, is all other authentic prayer, even if unknowingly. Prayer is the exchange between human & divine, consecrated forever & for all by Christ's loving victory over death. Made available to each & every one as gateway to the road home.

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**APRIL 17, 2005 4th Easter Acts 2.14,36-41; 1Peter 2.20-25; JN 10.1-10**

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GOD HAS MADE THE JESUS YOU CRUCIFIED BOTH LORD & CHRIST.

"I have come that they [my sheep] may have life & have it to the full."

During the day - Put your heart on hinges that open both in & out. The flow of fully fruitful love is in both directions. The easier the exit for you & access for others, the more likely an authentic encounter. You're not loved because you're lovable; you're lovable because you're loved. Awareness of another's affection sparks gratitude; which fans the flame, not of passion, but of wanting what's best for the other. Wanting it, seek it. Love is shown in deeds rather than in words.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is of the will rather than intellect or emotion. In prayer one is keen to the sense of God - his being, his will, his doing, all one & the same. Prayer plugs one in, willing what he's willing-doing-being, whatever that might be - concepts frequently don't fully grasp the situation. Like sheep, we're tuned to the voice of the shepherd, & follow wherever he leads.

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**APRIL 24, 2005 - 5th Easter Acts 6.1-7; 1Peter 2.4-9; JN 14.1-12**

THE WORD OF THE LORD CONTINUED TO SPREAD, & THE  
NUMBER OF DISCIPLES INCREASED.

"Whoever believes in me will perform the works I do, & even greater."

During the day - Godlike, work as designed. Responsibly. Honestly. Generously. For the common good. Cheerfully. Patiently. Respectfully. Considerately. Courageously. Know yourself. Be yourself, in all your uniqueness - you're the only you God made. Expect him to use you as designed. Produce the fruits he expects of you; let him provide whatever miracle necessary to so do. It's a matter of trust.

ABOUT PRAYER - Prayer purifies the will till it wants what God wants, irrespective of one's own desires. Prayer ambitions God's goals, sight unseen. Prayer initiates action, then evaluates it when day is done. Prayer uses God's perspective to measure success, recalling that for him there is no such thing as failure. Only love, or the lack of it.

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**May 1, 2005 Sixth Sunday of Easter Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalms 66: 1-7, 16, 20; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21**

PETER & JOHN WENT DOWN, PRAYED FOR THE SAMARITANS,  
LAID HANDS ON THEM & THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"The Father will give you another advocate to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth,  
whom the world cannot accept since it neither sees nor knows him."

During the day: Even in little things, be loyal to truth. It's at the heart of everything vital. Paradoxically, you'll be going against the grain, both yours & others; it's hard & demanding, even in little things, & we always prefer the easy way out. Yet the spirit of each is designed for the common good, & the courage to be truthful provides also the gentleness of compassion..

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is hanging in there, muttering 'You exist & I am Yours' when every other source of security fails. Once peace begins to take hold, prayer adds 'You love me & I trust You.' As the mind then registers 'You're using me for something - there's purpose to this', prayer moves to the will: 'I'm available.'

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**May 8, 2005 Seventh Sunday of Easter - Acts 1.1-11; Eph 1.17-23; MT 28:16-20**

YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT & BE MY  
WITNESSES TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

"Go, make disciples of all, baptize in the name of the Father, Son  
& Holy Spirit, teach to observe all that I have commanded you."

During the day: Observe whatever has been commanded by legitimate authority. You are as free to do the wrong thing as the right. Use this freedom to create order, not chaos. There is power in working together - order, if doing the right thing; chaos, if doing the wrong. The witness of properly used freedom is itself the spirit that inspires others to do likewise. The bond created is love. Everlasting.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer opens the doors of both mind & heart to the power of the Spirit: light to the intellect, courage to the will. Both are gifts, to be either accepted or rejected. The predisposition of prayer is generosity, the presumption trust. When both kick in, the Spirit adjusts the prayers & actions of all to the good of the whole: A civilization of love, the kingdom of God.

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**May 15, 2005 - Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104: 1, 24, 29-31, 34; I Cor. 12: 3b-7, 12-13; Gospel: John 20: 19-23**

During the day - Breathe forgiveness. Breathe it in; breathe it out - new life into ruptured relationships. Pardon needs to be sought to be granted. Once sought, taken for granted, only key to progress. Retained? Progress stalls, fault now of the offended. If you don't breathe, you die.

ABOUT PRAYER - The lungs pray always, breathing God in, breathing God out, praising him just by being lungs. That's the way we praise God best, too: just being. You, the person you are; me, the person I am - the only one of me he made! No better, no worse than anyone else - just better or worse than myself. Prayer helps me evaluate myself, not the other fellow. Prayer shows me when I've been offensive & suggests I apologize; it's the other's problem to forgive, & I hope he does, for his sake. When the shoe's on the other foot, I hope I do too.

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**MAY 22, 2005 -Trinity Sunday - Exodus 34.4-9; 2Cor 13.11-13; JN 3.16-18**

THE LORD, A MERCIFUL & GRACIOUS GOD, SLOW TO ANGER & RICH IN KINDNESS & MERCY

"God so loved the world he gave his only Son, that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life."

During the day - Love your little corner of the world. You may not be able to do much about the rest of it, but your love can make a difference where you live. What goes on around you is your business. A responsible, friendly reaction defuses explosive situations. A respectful, firm defense of truth changes people's minds. The courage to withdraw from a damaging project while remaining committed to the community's welfare may point to a better solution down the road. Good will is abundant, it just needs leadership.

ABOUT PRAYER - In prayer we attempt God's perspective, outside of time, beyond space. Prayer is awareness of the whole world in the palm of his hand, all history now. Prayer plunges us into the real world, not the illusion we're living. Daunted, prayer follows Christ into the sub world of pain & suffering, drugs & violence, physical & sexual abuse, worthlessness & despair - & wonders what he's doing there! Prayer shows us, & we hear him say 'go & do likewise.'

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**May 29, 2005 - Dt. 8:2-3, 14-16; 1 Cor 10:16-17; John 6:51-58**

NOT BY BREAD ALONE DOES MAN LIVE BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD.

"The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

During the day - Feed others. Feed them with your time & attention, your friendship & respect, your energy & talents. Make a difference in the lives of the people you share it with. You're worth more than you know; don't let doubt tie you up. Others' hunger is sated by the dignity with which you honor them. Just being there & being yourself is a word of encouragement that nourishes, strengthens, inspires. Speak it. .

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer feeds on the word of God It chews - discerns it, assimilates it, assumes it. Prayer is communication - listening/responding. The integrity of prayer reflects the purity of the truth perceived, its humility refracts it to the searching hearts of the confused. God does the rest.

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**June 5, 2005 - Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Hosea 6:3-6; Romans 4:18-25; Mt 9:9-13**

IT IS LOVE I DESIRE, NOT SACRIFICE, KNOWLEDGE OF GOD RATHER THAN HOLOCAUSTS.

"Go & learn the meaning of the words 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'.

I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

During the day - Be a good sinner. Have a healthy sense of sin, not a guilt complex. Define your options: the you, you want to be. Then work at it thoroughly & continuously. Reward the successes, correct the failures. The Friend you're trying to please is always there to help. Let him.

ABOUT PRAYER - A sinner's prayer is regret born of gratitude. Regret for the mistakes of bad will, recognition they violate the options made. Authentic regret recommits one to improve & assume responsibility for damage done. Prayer petitions God's patience, help & guidance, aware the divine designer knows better than we the flaws & how to fix them. Prayer reminds us we're loved not in spite of our sins but because of them. Hope born of the security of knowing we're not rejected is the motor that drives, faith the rudder that steers as we stay the course that brings us to true & eternal love.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**June 12, 2005 – 11th Ordinary Time Ex:19:2-6; Rms 5:6-11; Mt 9:36 – 10:8**

**YOU SHALL BE TO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, A HOLY NATION**

"Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."

During the day - Give without expecting payment. Whatever you charge for your services, know that the gift of self is not for sale. You're not yours to give. You belong to Another; by design his gift to others. Fulfillment is not in payment, it's in the harvest. Labor's worth is in its fruits: finding the lost, healing the broken-hearted, raising the dead from their despair, driving out the demons of weakness & fear. A tender touch; a genuine smile; an understanding nod proclaim an inner kingdom where love is all that matters.

ABOUT PRAYER - Ignatius prayed it this way: 'Lord, teach me to be generous. To serve you as you deserve. to give & not to count the cost; to fight & not to heed the wounds; to toil & not to seek for rest; to labor & ask for no reward save knowing I do your will.'

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**JUNE 19, 2005 - 12th of yr: Jer 20.10-13; Rms 5.12-15; MT 10.26-33**

**THE LORD IS WITH ME, LIKE A MIGHTY CHAMPION**

"Do not be afraid of those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both body & soul."

During the day - Stay alive. Don't be the living dead. Fearless of death, go the limit of life. Inside & out. First the inner, as deep as you can: to the Center that radiates a life that dies only if contact with the center broken. The only one who can break it is you. Don't. So the only one to fear is you. Do.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer harmonizes outer & inner, pulls the outer in, explodes the inner out. Prayer embraces things & people, absorbs situations & challenges, seeks grandeur in the small, senses simplicity in the grand. Prayer inhales the goodness in beauty, the beauty in truth, the truth in life. Life, order as endless as truth & beauty, is the expression of love. Prayer resists the blind attraction to chaos & locks in to the humanity of Christ, sole circuit with the divine.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**JUNE 26, 2005 - 13th of yr: 2 Kings, 4.8-11,14-16; Rms 6.3-4,8-11; MT 10.37-42**

**'THIS TIME NEXT YEAR YOU WILL BE FONDLING A BABY SON'**

"Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward."

During the day - Be a prophet. Announce & denounce. Announce what's good & right, denounce the obstacles to what is. Start in your own heart. Share with others what you know to be good & right about yourself, wrestle to correct what isn't. Promote opinions, not because they're yours but because you believe them to be true. Listen with respect to what others honestly believe to be true, disregard what's obviously only self-interest. Seeking what's good & right together, you'll find it - that's what we're made for.

ABOUT PRAYER: Pray with self-confidence in your own integrity. After all, a good God made you; he ought to know how to take care of you. Puzzled? Expect guidance. Discouraged? Ask for strength. Defeated? Hang on to hope. Successful? Don't forget to say thanks, & be sure to fulfill his purpose, not your own. Prayer shapes one's niche in humanity's history, indispensable to the healing of the not-so-good by Goodness itself. The human Christ gets all the credit, we take all the blame.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**JULY 3, 2005 - 14th of yr: Zec 9.9-10; Rms 8.9-13; MT 11.25-30**

SEE, YOUR KING - JUST SAVIOR IS HE - COMES TO YOU, MEEK & RIDING ON AN ASS

"Father, although you've hidden these things from the wise & learned, you've revealed them to the little ones.

Come to me all you who labor & are burdened, & I will give you rest."

During the day - Fatigued? Should be, if you're working hard. Burdened? Obviously, if you're taking your responsibilities seriously. Letting others help you? or preferring to do it all yourself? Why not wise up & be the little one you really are, & reach out for help to those who love you? You'll discover the whole new world of what life is really all about.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer researches reality; first identifies the transience of experience, then ponders the transcendence of its essentials. Prayer discovers the quality of relationships, then recognizes the permanence of presence. Finally, prayer rests the fatigue of living in becoming what we are; then - refreshed - prayer dissolves again into fruitful action & works on with Christ forever, enjoying partnership with the divine.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**JULY 10, 2005 - 15th of yr: Is 55.10-11; Rms 8.18-23; MT 13.1-23**

JUST AS FROM THE HEAVENS THE RAIN & SNOW COME DOWN & DON'T  
RETURN TILL THEY HAVE WATERED THE EARTH, MADE IT FERTILE & FRUITFUL,  
SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOES FORTH FROM MY MOUTH

"A sower went out to sow. Some seed fell among thorns; the thorns grew up & choked it.

Some seed fell on rich soil & produced fruit, a hundred, sixty or thirtyfold."

During the day - Enrich the soil of daily life. You have to water it in dry spells, fertilize it when necessary, even bring in some good top soil from elsewhere if possible. Made to be loved, let others in to render your heart fertile - hard to love others, till you're humbly grateful for theirs. Your fruitfulness depends, not just on returned love to the lover but consummated love's service, together, to the needs of those around you. Don't let thorns of self-doubt & partnership in selfishness sterilize you both. Love nourishes the inner life of lovers only when consumed by hungry outsiders. Fruit gives of itself for the abundant life of others, till nothing's left. That's when the eternal joys of love begin.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer plows the surface of daily routine, receives the seed of the Word, closes the heart around it, love the only condition it needs to release the Life within. The Good News is always good & it's always new. Prayer nourishes the unique divine vitality of this text in this heart at this moment! Prayer ponders with the intellect the truth discerned, embraces with the will the life it communicates. Then awaits with the secure conviction of faith the - at times unseen - fruitfulness of love's consummation.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**JULY 17, 2005 - 16th of yr: Wis 12. 13-19; Rms 8.26-27; MT 13.24-43**

THOUGH YOU ARE MASTER OF MIGHT YOU JUDGE WITH CLEMENCY.

YOU TAUGHT YOUR PEOPLE THAT THOSE WHO ARE JUST MUST BE KIND.

"If you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together till harvest; then collect the weeds in bundles for burning, but gather the wheat into my barn."

During the day - Know yourself. Credit the wheat, acknowledge the weeds. Don't be surprised they're both you. Tolerate the weeds, not only in yourself but in others as well. Acceptance is one thing; resignation is something else. Undeterred by weakness, don't be unperturbed. On the contrary, assume the justice of responsibility for your weakness' consequences & work diligently to keep them at a minimum. Faults acknowledged, virtue grows: the real & lasting you, in tune with Christ, lives on forever. The waste we leave behind.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is getting comfortable with truth. Being humble. Facing up to responsibilities. Trusting God to bring good out of your evil, even as you're struggling to diminish it. Prayer reaffirms your healthy options, disowns & disciplines uncontrollable tendencies. Prayer searches for the roots of these tendencies, begs God to help you do something about them. Prayer looks around at people with a kinder eye, knowing they're on the same battleground you are.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**JULY 24, 2005 - 17th of yr: 1Kings 3.5-12; Rms 8.28-30; MT 13.44-52**

I GIVE YOU A HEART SO WISE & UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE  
HAS NEVER BEEN ANYONE LIKE YOU NOR WILL BE TO EQUAL YOU

"Everyone who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the  
head of a household who brings from the storeroom both the new & the old."

During the day: You're the only one of you God made, no better nor worse than anyone else, your destiny yours alone to determine. Uniquely precious to creator-parent, your Father-Mother is always at your side, protecting you, not from sickness or death, pain or suffering, mistakes or failure, but from fear of them & their consequences. If wise enough to trust her absolutely, you'll soon learn how much he trusts you!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer links past to future, inspires us to embrace the blossoming of events with courage & enthusiasm, while cautiously defending core values. Prayer humbly ponders new ideas, tests them with inner norms of truth, tunes into God's will, recognizes them as his design (or not). If so discerned, one confidently steps from prayer to action, maintaining the prayerful mode to evaluate the transcendent unity between Absolute & relative. Satisfied, prayer marvels with awe & gratitude the ever-exploding beauty of God's creation.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**AUG 7, 2005 - 19th of yr: 1Kings 19.9-13; Rms 9.1-5; MT 14.22-33**

GO OUTSIDE & STAND ON THE MOUNTAIN BEFORE THE LORD - THE LORD WILL BE  
PASSING BY... AFTER THE FIRE THERE WAS A TINY WHISPERING SOUND,  
& ELIJAH HID HIS FACE IN HIS CLOAK.

"Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid."

During the day: Take courage. Whatever the obstacles, take courage. However impossible the challenge, take courage. However deep the fear & despair, take courage. You've been here before & you'll be here again - courage always sees you through. Obstacles & challenges are of the mind, fear & despair of the feelings; courage is of the will. Move! Go! Do it! God'll pull you out if you're drowning - trust him!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer promotes the process of turning gifts into fruits. Gifts are gratuitous & come from another. Fruits grow to maturity when gift is used by the beloved for the purpose intended by the giver. Faith, hope & charity are gifts that, when practiced, become virtues - habits of human activity that have divine effect. Prayer ponders the challenges, sidesteps the feelings, encourages the will to step out into what appears to be thin air. It isn't; the gentle whispering breeze reminds you it's God's presence & power. He's the doer; you be his instrument.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**AUG 21, 2005 - 21st of yr: Is 22.19-23; Rms 11.33-36; MT 16.13-20**

I WILL PLACE THE KEY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID ON ELIAKIM'S SHOULDER.  
WHEN HE OPENS NO ONE SHALL SHUT, & WHEN HE SHUTS NO ONE SHALL OPEN.

"I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be  
bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

During the day: You're the only one with a key to your heart. God gave it to you - not even he can get in if you don't want him to. What you bind is bound; what you loose is loosed. Take care in the why & how you do either. You're designed & commissioned to serve the needs of others. Self-centered goals bind; a heart open to compassion releases the energy of love, not only yours but God's as well. His works miracles.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer, too, is for others. Whatever the content that occupies the mind, the will is busy wanting what God wants. All authentic prayer is the prayer of Jesus - Christian prayer explicitly, other prayer implicitly. The human mind of Christ knows precisely what humanity needs, collectively & individually. And his human will proved his love & paid the price, in submission to the Father's just & loving way of serving these needs. The only thing he asks of us is trust - & the efforts that accompany our prayer.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**SEPT 4, 2005 - 23rd of yr: Ez 33.7-9; Rms 13.8-10; MT 18.15-20**

IF I TELL THE WICKED 'YOU SHALL SURELY DIE & YOU DO NOT SPEAK OUT TO DISSUADE HIM FROM HIS WAY, HE SHALL DIE FOR HIS GUILT, BUT I WILL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE.

"If your brother sins against you, go & tell him his fault, you & him alone....

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

During the day: Sin is a mistake of bad will, not just a mistake of bad judgment. When you & the other are the only two who know of his mistake, don't make matters worse by telling others. With more regard for his correction than your own damaged pride or welfare, pick the right time & the right manner to speak with him about it. Let the grace of God & the other's latent sense of justice do the rest.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer recalls the presence of Jesus. He, in turn, reminds me my own faults are as numerous & bad as the other guy's & I better do something about my own before I talk to him about his. Christ is there to help us both if we want it. Sometimes admitting my own struggle with sinful tendencies is a good way to get the other thinking about his own. If we get a little prayerful as we share, Jesus turns up the light & we both begin to know ourselves & each other better; we might even discover ways to help each other improve. Christ knows his business.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**SEPT 11, 2005 - 24th of yr: Sirach 27.30-28.7; Rms 14.7-9; MT 18.21-35**

WRATH & ANGER ARE HATEFUL THINGS, YET THE SINNER HUGS THEM TIGHT. THE VENGEFUL WILL SUFFER THE LORD'S VENGEANCE, FOR HE REMEMBERS THEIR SINS IN DETAIL.

"You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.

Should not you have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?"

During the day: We're all in this together. Don't make matters worse for the other - that just adds to the common misery. Transcendent Justice is personal, not impersonal, & the way we treat each other comes back to put the shoe on the other foot, painfully or comfortably. Compassion is both a natural & a supernatural virtue; nurture & practice the natural, that the supernatural assist the creator in recreating a happier, healthier, holier human society.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is redemptive, as concerned with the other's weaknesses as one's own. Prayer is awareness of God's healing current reaching the heart & lungs of the soul. Prayer enables mind & emotions to adjust to the flow, & radiate out to what ails the other. Prayer perceives the organic nature of our mutual interdependence, identifies with the other's vices & virtues, that the Christ in both better achieve our common destiny, redemption.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**SEPT 18, 2005 - 25th of yr: Isa 55.6-9; Romans 1.20-27; MT 20.1-6**

MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, MY WAYS ARE NOT YOURS.  
THE HEAVENS ARE AS HIGH ABOVE EARTH AS MY WAYS ARE ABOVE  
YOUR WAYS, & MY THOUGHTS ABOVE YOUR THOUGHTS.

"Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?  
The last will be first, and the first last."

During the day: You're neither better nor worse than anyone else, neither more nor less deserving. You're just you, the only one of you God made. Your destiny is unique, product of his design & your cooperation, fruit of his generous love & your unconditional gratitude. Do your job the best you can, humbly, without regard for status, helping others do even better if they can. We're all in this together, & no matter how secular the job, it's the work of the Lord & sacred in its purpose. When all is said & done, there's no first & last, just one gloriously happy & successful human family.

ABOUT PRAYER: In prayer we attempt the impossible: to think the thoughts of God! That's why, the deeper we get into prayer, we simply turn the mind off & let an inner awareness of unfathomable security, God, calm the emotions & strengthen the will. However chaotic in appearance, we embrace his designs, wise in both origin & fulfillment.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**SEPT 25, 2005 - 26th of yr: Ez 18.25-28; Phil 2.1-11; MT 21.28-32**

WHEN THE VIRTUOUS TURNS AWAY FROM VIRTUE, HE DIES; BUT  
IF HE TURNS FROM THE WICKEDNESS TO WHAT IS RIGHT & JUST,  
HE SHALL PRESERVE HIS LIFE

"Son, go & work in the vineyard.' I will not!' but changed his mind & went. To the other son he said the same. 'Yes sir', but didn't go. Which of the two did the father's will?"

During the day: Think twice before disobeying legitimate authority. It has its responsibility; so do you. Common goals are only reached by coordinated common action. The rot that condemns a project to failure is in the will, not the reason. Recognized & removed, wholesomeness restored. True health is in relationships, not results.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer goes to the core: God's authority is exercised with love & for love, & authentic obedience to his authority likewise. The mind may dissent but the will consents. Love is of the heart, not always of the mind. Prayer is the battleground of humility vs. pride, responsibility vs. cop-out, solidarity vs. cowardice. Prayer purifies the mind of doubt, the emotions of fear & resentment, the will of self-centeredness. Prayer always ends up as an act of love.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**OCT 2, 2005 - 27th of yr: Isa 5.1-7; Phil 4.6-9; MT 21.33-43**

HE LOOKED FOR A CROP OF FINE GRAPES, BUT WILD GRAPES WAS WHAT IT YIELDED.

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you & given to a people who will produce its fruit."

During the day: What are you after? Why? What will be the lasting fruit of your efforts? Does it matter? Should it? Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Well for whom? Just you? Or does the welfare of others enter into your motivation? How far down on your list of priorities is it? Move it up a notch & note the difference.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer takes the what & asks why. It strips pride of its dishonesty, acknowledges shallow self-centeredness. Prayer seeks & finds the higher ground, embraces a purpose beyond its ken. Prayer invokes a wisdom that inspires trust, no matter the risks. Prayer is the key to an inner peace that is strong & unafraid. Prayer determines the character of action.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**OCT 9, 2005 - 28th Sunday of yr: Isa 25.6-10; Phil 4.12-14,19-20; MT 22.1-14**

ON THE MOUNTAIN THE LORD PROVIDES A FEAST OF RICH FOOD & CHOICE WINES.

'THIS IS THE LORD FOR WHOM WE LOOKED! LET US REJOICE & BE GLAD  
THAT HE HAS SAVED US.'

"Some ignored the invitation & went away. He said to his servants, 'The feast is ready; go out & invite whomever you find.' Many are invited but few are chosen."

During the day: Don't ignore invitations. Be grateful; be courteous. Let inner harmony guarantee harmony with others. Take little things as seriously as big, be cordial (but firm) with everyone, especially yourself. Let reasonable considerations influence your decisions - though insignificant, they may determine unforeseen consequences. We build God's kingdom as we go.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the reverent obeisance to the Source from whom all good things come. The effectiveness of that very goodness depends on the humility with which it is acknowledged. Prayer submits to a divine plan working it's way, through human cooperation, towards a civilization of love, justice & peace. These constitute the objective of prayer: to be their instruments, always, in my little corner of the world.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**OCT 23, 2005 30th of yr: Exodus 22.20-26; 1Thess 1.5-10; MT 22.34-40**

IF YOU TAKE ANOTHER'S CLOAK AS A PLEDGE, GIVE IT BACK BEFORE SUNSET.  
IT IS ALL HE HAS; WHAT ELSE WOULD HE SLEEP IN? IF HE CRIES TO ME, I WILL  
LISTEN, FOR I AM FULL OF PITY.

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul & mind. You must love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law & the Prophets."

During the day: Purify love. Question the practice, not the feeling. Want what's good for the other; will it & do it. Love is in deeds, not words. Capacity to love grows with exercise, the harder the better. Made to love another, don't limit it by self-purpose. Love's object is universal, beginning with the Maker. No one exists that can't be bettered by being loved & loving. Love is the outside-of-time human activity that goes on forever. Don't waste your in-time opportunities; they're all around you.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer rests in another's embrace - God's. At times sensual, prayer may be accompanied by consoling awareness of God's presence. Intellectual, it may at times perceive clearly a guiding truth intuitively communicated. Intimate, prayer shares with the Beloved, perhaps wordlessly & without concepts, the depth of one's anxieties & desires, joys & sadness, hopes & disappointments. As it matures, prayer becomes more concerned with the needs & sentiments of others. Authentic channel of God's love for neighbor; prayer flows into God-powered action. Whatever the human results, the divine effect is guaranteed

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**OCT 30, 2005 - 31st of yr: Malachi 1.4-2.2,8-10; 1Thess 2.7-9,13; MT 23.1-12**

A GREAT KING AM I, SAYS THE LORD, & MY NAME WILL BE REVERED.  
PRIESTS, THIS COMMANDMENT IS FOR YOU. IF YOU DO NOT LISTEN &  
LAY IT TO HEART, I WILL SEND A CURSE UPON YOU.

"The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself  
will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

During the day: Be exalted. But let God do the exalting. Glory in your success; but give God the credit. Cherish a good reputation, but let it be for service to others. You have only one authentic destiny to achieve, the one for which you were designed. The realization of your potential for greatness isn't found in the pursuit of self-aggrandizement; rather, in the fullest possible exercise of your faculties, material & spiritual - yourself - to serve the need at hand, yours or another's. The chaos we create when we all seek to meet our own needs first is the undesired curse we bring on ourselves. It's only solution is repentance & reform.

ABOUT PRAYER: All Christian prayer is the prayer of Christ, prayer of a priestly people. Praying Scriptures, Christ discovered his own prophetic, pastoral & priestly character. Praying with Christ the Old Testament, we share his insights into ministry. Praying the New Testament illumined by his Spirit, we discern individually the particular charism to which each is called, & collectively the balance of these charisms in the community of faith. Thus fully priestly, pastoral & prophetic, the community brings Christ to the world & the world to Christ. He does the rest.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**NOV 6, 2005 - 32nd of yr: Wisdom 6.12-16; 1Thess 4.13-18; MT 25.1-13**

RESPLENDENT & UNFADING IS WISDOM, READILY PERCEIVED BY  
THOSE WHO SEEK HER. WHOEVER FOR HER SAKE KEEPS VIGIL SHALL  
QUICKLY BE FREE FROM CARE.

"Then the door was locked. The others came & said, 'Lord, open the door.'  
He said, 'I do not know you.' So stay awake. You know neither the day nor the hour."

During the day: Be sensible. Leave your mind free to scan the senses. The mind was made to scan, ponder & judge; in that order. Don't keep it so busy thinking about a dozen different things that it can't be alert enough to the job at hand to make wise judgments - once the will kicks in & makes its choice, it may be too late to back up & reconsider. Trim your lamps, relax, take things one at a time. Be humble enough to make mistakes, & courageous enough to correct them. You'll find your Wise Boss makes allowances if you're honest enough to admit them.

ABOUT PRAYER: A sensible person begins each day with prayer, not yet knowing either that day nor its hour. Prayerfully, one thanks God for it, then endorses it & gives it back. Each day has its own 'fullness of time'. In some way, perhaps many, 'the hour has come.' Trick is, as the day develops stay alert to the divine dimension. The Spirit's at work. You know not what, but prayer keeps you tuned to it, sight unseen. At evening prayer, he'll fill you in.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**NOV 13, 2005 - 33rd of yr: Proverbs 10-20,30-31; 1Thess 5.1-6; MT 25.14-30**

A WORTHY WIFE IS FAR BEYOND PEARLS. HER HUSBAND, ENTRUSTING  
HIS HEART TO HER, HAS AN UNFAILING PRIZE. SHE BRINGS HIM GOOD,  
NOT EVIL, ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE.

"Well done, good & faithful servant. Because you were faithful in small matters,  
I will give you great responsibilities."

During the day: Some gifts are external, some internal. Prize them all. Ultimately, they're all from the God who made you, & designed each uniquely for you. The place you have in the hearts of others is the two way passage to the heart of God. Responsible loyalty to both expresses your gratitude & exercises your metal. Your life.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer - at best with the other, at least individually - is the space in our lives where tensions are subdued & conflicts avoided. Indispensable, the sincerity of our prayer of petition precludes the infallibly effective response of the Giver, however tested our patience & fortitude. Measure of unconditional love, prayer nurtures the inner peace that humbles.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Texas Trinidad by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**

**NOV 20, 2005 - Christ the King: Ezekiel 34.11-17; 1Cor 15.20-28; MT 25.31-46**

I MYSELF TEND MY SHEEP & GIVE THEM REST.

THE LOST I WILL SEEK, THE INJURED BIND UP. THE SICK HEAL.

I WILL JUDGE BETWEEN ONE & ANOTHER, BETWEEN RAMS & GOATS.

"Whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine you did for me!

Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

During the day: Claim your inheritance now, as you earn it. True, you 'earn' it not by right, but by promise & the fulfillment of its conditions. Enjoy now the joy that only freely proffered service provides. It's not a need you serve; it's a person in need - one with whom God identifies. God himself loves by serving both served & serving. Be then servant, & deserve his service.

ABOUT PRAYER: The prayer of intercession is itself a powerful service. Not because it changes God's determinations, but because - depending on its willfulness - it joins the human will of Christ in healing the broken members of his body. Our prayer for each other as members of his body is unconditional, implicit offering of ourselves for whatever purpose would serve his renewing love.