

## 2008 Liturgical Year A

It has been said that the New Testament lies in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. The Old Testament Reading and the New Testament readings for the liturgical calendar help us understand the meaning of this statement. The letters and books of the New Testament other than the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) help to guide us in our applications of the messages found in the Gospels.

This is the start on Lessons At A Glance  
Jack Vessels moved to Mississippi from  
St. Ignatius House but continued Email

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

**DEC 2, 2007 - 1st Advent: Isa 2.1-5; Rom 13.11-14; MT 24.37-44**

ALL NATIONS SHALL STREAM TOWARD IT! 'COME, LET US  
CLIMB THE LORD'S MOUNTAIN THAT HE MAY INSTRUCT US  
IN HIS WAYS & WE MAY WALK IN HIS PATHS.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Stay awake! You do not know on which day your Lord will come.'

**During the day:** Hang loose. Be prepared for anything. Don't be surprised when things don't go as planned. Be humble enough to learn from experience as situations develop. Don't be distracted by apparent quick-fixes. Renew your commitment to what's right; let others depend on your integrity.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** If cultivated, prayer kicks in when needed: an automatic drive calculates alternative actions; a divine light focuses on each; the will resonates with God's; a sense of confident inner peace confirms a choice. Decision taken, prayer awaits the results, then discerns the next step up the mountain.

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**DEC 9, 2007 - 2nd Advent: Isa 11.1-10; Rom 15.4-9; MT 3.1-12**

HE SHALL JUDGE THE POOR WITH JUSTICE, DECIDE ARIGHT FOR THE LAND'S  
AFFLICTED. HE SHALL STRIKE THE RUTHLESS WITH THE ROD OF HIS MOUTH!

John the Baptist appeared saying 'Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' When he saw the  
Pharisees & Sadducees he said, 'Vipers! Who warned you to flee the coming wrath?

Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.'

**During the day:** Produce fruit. Good fruit. How tell the difference? Who are the afflicted you serve? What justice do you use with the poor? Till repentant, don't pat yourself on the back for all the 'good' you do; by divine criteria, it's worthless.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer joins Christ as he goes to the bottom of the barrel: the blind, the beggar, the prostitute, the leper, the lost sheep, the lame, the paralytic, the marginalized, the outcast, the prisoner, the abandoned dying. He serves the person, not the condition. Prayer turns one inside out, in service to the other.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**DEC 16, 2007 - 3rd Advent: Isa 35.1-10; James 5.7-10; MT 11.2-11**

STRENGTHEN THE HANDS THAT ARE FEEBLE, MAKE FIRM THE KNEES THAT  
ARE WEAK, SAY TO THOSE WHO ARE FRIGHTENED: BE STRONG, FEAR NOT!  
HERE IS YOUR GOD--HE COMES TO SAVE YOU!

"Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist;  
yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

**During the day:** Encourage the weak, calm the frightened. Their insecurity comes from problems they can't solve, difficulties they can't overcome; security comes from having a friend who can & wants to help. Be such, even to a stranger--God himself uses those willing to serve his purpose.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Feeble hands & weak knees are no deterrent to prayer; on the contrary they enhance its usefulness, consoling those thus limited with the assurance of a loving God upon whom they can depend. Least among men, their faith places them high in the eyes of angels.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**December 23, 2007 Fourth Sunday Advent**

THE LORD HIMSELF WILL GIVE YOU THIS SIGN: THE VIRGIN SHALL  
CONCEIVE & BEAR A SON, & YOU SHALL NAME HIM EMMANUEL.

"Joseph,... take Mary into your home. She will bear a son... name him Jesus... he will save his  
people from their sins... fulfill the prophet: 'name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.'"

**During the day:** Think of naming your next kid 'Emmanuel', better still, 'Jesus'. After all, *God is with us*, &--if we let him--saving us from our sinfulness; the reality of every human situation is how much or how little we do to help. The more concerned we are about each other, the less so we need be about ourselves.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is the human effort to assimilate the divine presence, mind open to ponder God's thoughts, heart open to share the human sentiments of Christ. In prayer we assume with him each other's sinfulness.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**December 30, 2007 Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

KINDNESS TO A FATHER WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN, FIRMLY PLANTED  
AGAINST THE DEBT OF YOUR SINS-- A HOUSE RAISED IN JUSTICE TO YOU.

He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through  
the prophet might be fulfilled, 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'

**During the day:** Stay put. Move on only when the call is loud & clear. You belong to Another; follow his schedule. Don't leave behind your tenderness & affection for others; love follows you wherever you go.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer brings out the best in your relationships with others. Prayer knows, then finds, the Christ in the other: forgives his faults, takes him the way he is, tries to be a channel of God's goodness, whatever his needs. The Christ in both does the rest.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**January 6, 2008 ;Is 60:1-6, Eph 3:2-6, Matthew 2:1-12**  
**RISE UP IN SPLendor, JERUSALEM! THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHINES UPON YOU.**  
**NATIONS SHALL GATHER & COME TO YOU FROM AFAR. YOU SHALL BE RADIANT**  
**AT WHAT YOU SEE, YOUR HEART THROB & OVERFLOW.**

**"We saw his star & come to do him homage, 'who is to shepherd my people Israel!'"**

**During the day:** At night, look up at the stars & recall the immensity of the universe & the God who made it. By day, look up at our own, & recall how each & every one of us live by its light & warmth & energy, sign & channel of God's own individual love for each. Let your smallness bask in the security of his greatness.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is surrender to the pull of the magnetism of God. Radiant in his presence, the heart throbs in unison with his. Prayer purifies one's spirit as it overflows with his love onto others. Shepherd is the reciprocal role we play in each other's lives. We exercise it gratefully

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**JAN 13, 2008 - The Baptism of Jesus: Isa 42.1-7; Acs 10.34-38; MT 3.13-17**

**THUS SAYS THE LORD: 'HERE IS MY SERVANT,**  
**MY CHOSEN ONE, WITH WHOM I AM PLEASED.'**

*John said, 'I need to be baptized by you yet you are coming to me?'*

**During the day:** Don't question God. Just do what needs to be done, Life is service, not being served. Each has a unique destiny to fulfill; as long as you're still on this side of the tomb, work at it--you're the only one of you God made. Chosen, be humble, be faithful.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer doesn't question, it discerns. God speaks through persons & events, as well as Scripture, & has no trouble communicating. Prayer is the keenness of intellect & will to perceive his purpose, then moves the heart to act accordingly with courage & generosity. 'That's my boy!' you hear him say--or is it, 'That's my girl!?' Whichever, make him proud!

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**JAN 20, 2008 - 2nd of yr: Isa 49.3-6; 1Cor 1.1-3; JN 1.29-34**  
**'YOU ARE MY SERVANT, ISRAEL,' THE LORD SAID. 'IT IS TOO LITTLE FOR YOU**  
**TO BE MY SERVANT-- I WILL MAKE YOU A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS, THAT MY**  
**SALVATION MAY REACH TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.'**

**John the Baptist saw Jesus & said, 'I came baptizing that he be made known to Israel:**  
**Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'**

**During the day:** Serve. It's the only way to be God to others. Serve the person, not the need. They go together, but for service to have God's effect, it needs to be personal. You may not even know the beneficiary; but you can think about him, & want (will) what's good for him. That's God's will, & you're his instrument.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer sharpens one's spiritual vision & enables one to see the Spirit hovering like a dove over the other--all others. Prayer listens to the Spirit, & acts accordingly, instinctively. Prayer forgets self, & flows with the Spirit's action instrumentally, unknowing & unconcerned. The Spirit knows what It's about, & that's sufficient.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**JAN 27, 2008 - 3rd of yr: Isa 8.23-9.3; 1Cor 1.10-13,17; MT 4,12-2**  
**ANGUISH HAS TAKEN WING, DARKNESS IS DISPELLED. UPON THOSE WHO**  
**DWELT IN THE LAND OF GLOOM, A LIGHT HAS SHOWN.**  
**He went around teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel,**  
**curing every disease & illness among the people.**

**During the day:** Dispel darkness. Be attentive to the gloom of others & be cheerful; let divine optimism melt the human cynicism in your own, that the joy of the Lord might touch the hearts of others. Faith is a torch; pass it around!

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is a candle &, in Christian prayer, the flame is Jesus. At first, the beauty of the flame holds our attention: what he's saying or doing, thinking & wanting. Then, in prayer, our gaze lifts & sees more clearly the people & things around us, his the Spirit that guides & motivates us. Night becomes day.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**FEB 3, 2008 - 4th of yr: Zeph 2.3, 3.12-13; 1Cor 1.26-31; MT 5.1-12**  
**SEEK THE LORD, HUMBLE OF THE EARTH, WHO HAVE OBSERVED HIS LAW.**  
**SEEK JUSTICE, SEEK HUMILITY.**

"Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right-- theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**During the day:** Defend the one who can't defend himself. You won't get paid for it; might even lose your job for it. Worth it? Depends on how close you're getting to the Lord you seek. Takes courage & humility--only way to grow in both.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer dives deep to find the Lord; then returns to the surface to look around & see things from his perspective. The Lord we seek is always at the bottom of the barrel, caring for the poor & little ones. Prayer suggests we pitch in; sometimes we walk away. Next time, dive deeper.

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

**FEB 10, 2008 - 1st Lent: Gen 2.7-9,3.1-7; Rms 5.12-19; MT 4.1-11**

**THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN IN EDEN, WITH THE TREE OF LIFE  
IN THE MIDDLE, & THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD & EVIL.**

**"Begone, Satan. It is written: The Lord your God shall you worship, & him alone shall you serve."**

**During the day:** Be knowledgeable: avoid evil, & be happy. God didn't create evil, so don't you. Made to serve others, do nothing self-serving that doesn't serve others as well, & fulfills his purpose. You live a life that flows from God; interrupt the flow, & you live death. If that's what you want, it's all you'll get.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer recognizes the temptation to ignore the needs of others & think only of your own. Prayer's aim is not to get God to do your will, but to get you to do his. Prayer resists the urge to exercise authority over others to accomplish your will rather than the common good; Christ like, through prayer you learn to know the difference.

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

**FEB 17, 2nd Lent: Gen 12.1-4; 2Tim 1.8-10; MT 17.1-9**

**THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM, 'GO FORTH TO A LAND I WILL SHOW YOU.  
ALL THE COMMUNITIES OF THE EARTH SHALL FIND BLESSING IN YOU.'**

Jesus took them up a mountain & was transfigured before them. Moses & Elijah appeared, conversing with him. From the cloud a voice said, 'This is my beloved son, listen to him.'

The disciples saw no one else but Jesus alone.

**During the day:** Be a Moses: keep the rules! enforce the rules! Be an Elijah: proclaim the truth! denounce the lie! Be Christlike: Be gentle but firm, as you do both.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** In prayer, with Moses we go up the mountain to wrestle with God about our doubts & problems, & the doubts, problems & complaints of others. We come down the mountain away from prayer with God's word & will in our own, sent to share with the people around us his life, his love. Be generous with both.

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

**FEB 24, 2008 3rd Lent: Ex 17.37; Rms 5.1-8; JN 1.5-42**

**THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 'STRIKE THE ROCK; WATER WILL FLOW FOR THE  
PEOPLE TO DRINK.' THE PLACE IS CALLED MERIBAH, BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES  
TESTED THE LORD, 'IS THE LORD IN OUR MIDST OR NOT?'**

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. The water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water!"

**During the day:** Test the Lord. He expects you to. *He* knows he's with you. Let him prove it. 'Course, he may not do the expected. Be prepared for anything! You don't dictate to him; he makes his own choices. He knows what's good for you. He keeps you on the move.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is drinking deeply from the spring of eternal life. We live a spiritual as well as a material life, & it's thirst can only be sated by saying, 'give me to drink'. We may not be aware of the response; but faithful prayer presumes it, & accepts the mystery of life as it unfolds.

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

**MAR 3, 2008 3rd Lent: 1Sam 16.1, 6-13; Eph 5.8-14; JN 9.1-41**

NOT AS MAN SEES DOES GOD SEE. MAN SEES THE APPEARANCE,  
BUT GOD LOOKS INTO THE HEART.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "If you were blind, you would have no sin.

But you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains."

**During the day:** Admit your mistakes; or at least uncertainty. Mistakes of bad judgment are no problem for God; mistakes of bad will are. Correct the former; repent the latter--then God can move in & help pick up the pieces.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer distinguishes mind from heart; we ponder truth with the former, then embrace it with the latter. Prayer overcomes the difficulties of doing both. Prayer is where--& when--God kicks in.

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

**MAR 9, 2008 5th Lent: Ezk 37.1-14; Rms 8.8-11; JN 11.1-45**

YOU SHALL KNOW THAT I AM LORD WHEN I OPEN YOUR  
GRAVES & HAVE YOU RISE FROM THEM.

"Whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live; everyone who lives &  
believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**During the day:** Open the graves in your heart; lots of bad memories there. Let 'em out; stop being afraid. Or, worse still, stop holding grudges. As long as you keep them locked in, you're the one who's dead.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer practices the afterlife. Assuming it, prayer settles more comfortably in the divine design. Fears diminish, health improves, truth clarifies. Love flourishes, & life goes on forever.

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**MAR 16, 2008 Palm Sunday: Isa 50.4-7; Phil 2.6-11; MT 26.14-27.66**

I GAVE MY BACK TO THOSE WHO BEAT ME. THE LORD GOD IS MY HELP,  
THEREFORE I AM NOT DISGRACED.

"He saved others; he cannot save himself. He trusted in God.

Let him deliver him now if he wants him."

**During the day:** Hope for the best, expect the worst; trust God, & be satisfied with what you get. Circumstances alter the context, they don't determine the results. All depends on how you measure things: Inner security defies disaster.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is the armor that withstands assaults; whatever their nature, it enables ultimately victorious resistance. Prayer is humble, weathers the storms with patience, puts the pieces back together in the marvelous mosaic only God can design.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**MARCH 23, 2008 Easter Sunday: Acts 10.34-43; Col 3.1-4; JN 20.1-9**

EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL RECEIVE FORGIVENESS IN HIS NAME.

"Oh, how foolish your are! Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things, & so enter into his glory?"

**During the day:** Practice forgiveness. It's the most Godlike thing you can do. Personal health is spiritual as well as mental & physical; holding grudges infects the mind & wearies the body. Be sensible: forgiven, forgive.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer opens the pours of the soul to God--he enters however he wishes, whatever the emotions, whatever the experience at hand. Don't be picky; just pray. He knows how to possess you; & be possessed.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**MARCH 30, 2008 2nd Easter: Acts 2.42-47; 1Peter 1.3-9; JN 20.19-31**

THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES,  
TO THE COMMUNAL LIFE, TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD & TO PRAYERS.

"Have you come to believe because you have seen me?  
Blessed are those who have not seen & have believed."

**During the day:** Stop disagreeing with everybody; look for common denominators & start cooperating. Life is organic: every cell puts itself on the line for the good of the whole. Try it; you might end up a little happier.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer looks at the wounds of others, then goes to work tending them; healing is believing, & a common bond of health-- spiritual as well as physical, divine as well as human--joins healed to healer: bonds eternal.

**Prayerful thoughts from the Banks of the Mighty Mississippi by Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ**  
**April 6, 2008 3rd Easter: Acts 2.14,22-23; 1Peter 1.17-21; LK 24.13-35**

GOD RAISED HIM UP, RELEASING HIM FROM THE THROES OF DEATH,  
BECAUSE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE HELD BY IT.

"Oh, how foolish you are! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things & enter into his glory?"

**During the day:** Live as though you're going to be dead ten minutes from now: do well what you're doing--best way to enter into your glory! Why be afraid of death, greatest of all moments? Sure, the throes of dying might turn out pretty awful, but pay the price with gusto for what comes next!

**ABOUT PRAYER:** In prayer, we wrestle with God on one side of the ring, with Satan on the other. Formidable opponents, both, the former, patient & resourceful, the latter, cunning & deadly. With Satan, it's do or die; with God, do & live-- prayer anticipates the victory sound of the final bell.

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**APRIL 13, 2008 4th Easter: Acts 2.14, 36-41; 1Peter 2.20-25; JN 10.1-10**

KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT GOD HAS MADE LORD & CHRIST  
THIS JESUS WHOM YOU CRUCIFIED.

"The Shepherd calls his own; the sheep hear his voice & he leads them out.  
A thief comes only to steal; I come that they might have life, & have it more abundantly.

**During the day:** Listen. Be ever more alert to the truth. Learn to discern it; don't be deceived by your own prejudices & preconceptions. The God who made you illuminates your intellect, if you keep it honest--he's paid quite a price to do so.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is the spiritual lung that keeps us truly alive; its regular breathing assures us, individually & corporately, of the flow of Christ's own human & divine vital energy flowing through us to each other. Breathe deeply & hold it, as often as you can.

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

**APRIL 20, 2008 5th Easter: Acts 6.1-7; 1Peter 2.4-9; JN 14.1-12**

THE WORD OF GOD CONTINUED TO SPREAD; THE NUMBER OF DISCIPLES IN  
JERUSALEM INCREASED GREATLY, OBEDIENT TO THE FAITH.

"I go to prepare a place for you. I will come back & take you to myself,  
that where I am you may also be."

**During the day:** Spread the good word; don't impose it, just practice it with integrity. Its impact will be internal, perhaps take time to develop; faith is a gift, & until the Giver is recognized, honest resistance is part of the process.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer expresses the virtue of hope, projects us into the presence of promise fulfilled. Prayer brings us back to the reality of here-&-now, with a sense of déjà vu inner peace. Prayer is the key into the heart of Christ.

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

**APRIL 27, 2008 6th Easter: Acts 8.5-8,14-17; 1Peter 3.15-18; JN 14.15-21**

WHEN SAMARIA HAD ACCEPTED THE WORD OF GOD, PETER & JOHN WENT  
DOWN & PRAYED FOR THEM, THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"I will ask the Father & he will give you another Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, whom  
the world cannot accept because it neither sees nor knows him. I will not leave you orphans.

**During the day:** The mind was made for truth; seek it! The will was made to live by it; choose it. Truth, even if beyond our ken, can be revealed; will to see & know it when it is. Truth has its own divine authority: if it's truth you want, it's truth you'll get, & know it when you do.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer supposes honesty & humility. In prayer one wills to be enlightened; prayer rests in darkness, then lights the candle--Christ--& gazes at the flame, absorbed by its beauty. Slowly, the Light draws the gaze away into the darkness, & reveals whatever needs knowing--the Spirit of the Word Incarnate is at work.

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

**MAY 4, 2008 The Ascension: Acts 1.1-11; Eph 1.17-23; MT 28.16-20**

MEN OF GALILEE, WHY ARE YOU STANDING THERE LOOKING AT THE SKY?  
THIS JESUS WHO HAS BEEN TAKEN UP FROM YOU WILL RETURN.

The eleven went to the mountain which Jesus had ordered them.

When they saw him, they worshiped; but they doubted.

**During the day:** Don't just stand there, get busy! There's work to be done. It's one thing to take a break, something else to waste time. True, time's value is measured, not so much by what you're doing, as why & how you're doing it, Keep your motives noble, & your methods respectful.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer entertains doubts; in fact, faith can't grow without them. The intellect weighs the data honestly, makes judgments accordingly. Prayer submits these to the will for a choice, then waits for grace to kick-in & illuminate. No hurry; it does, eventually.

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

**MAY 11, 2008 Pentecost: Acts 2.1-11; 1Cor 12.3-7,12-13; JN 20.19-23**

WE HEAR THEM SPEAKING IN OUR OWN TONGUES  
OF THE MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD.

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

Receive the Holy Spirit."

**During the day:** Speak clearly, forcefully & truthfully. Your demeanor will communicate your sincerity. More than the meaning of your words, your intentions will speak for themselves. The quiet firmness of conviction coupled with genuine respect for their opinions gains the confidence of others.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is the inner sensor that scans circumstances to find the mind & will of God, confident the Spirit that communicates it also confirms its recognition. Detached from personal opinions & preconceptions, prayer's humility facilitates the mighty acts of God.

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

**MAY 18, 2008 Holy Trinity: Ex 34.4-9; 2Cor 13.11-13; JN 3.16-18**

THE LORD STOOD WITH MOSES & PROCLAIMED HIS NAME.

"THE LORD, THE LORD, A MERCIFUL & GRACIOUS GOD,  
SLOW TO ANGER & RICH IN KINDNESS & FIDELITY."

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world  
but that the world might be saved by him.

**During the day:** Be firm but gentle in judging your little corner of the world. Love it as does the Lord who creates it, Do your bit helping bring good out of evil. It's easy enough to condemn, then go your way; but equally unproductive. The seemingly hopeless gesture to correct a situation may be the one that helps it turn the corner.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Intercessory prayer goes up the mountain with Moses to bring to God the needs & problems, complaints & doubts, fears & despair of his people, especially those in our own little corner of the world. Like Moses, we come down the mountain bringing from prayer God's kind & merciful answers, requiring in his name the fidelity on which they depend. Prayer's a two way trail.

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

**MAY 25, 2008 Body & Blood of Christ: Deut 8.2-3,14-16; 1Cor 10.16-17**

MOSES SAID, 'REMEMBER HOW FOR FORTY YEARS THE LORD HAS DIRECTED YOUR JOURNEYING. HE ALLOWED YOU TO BE AFFLICTED WITH HUNGER TO SHOW YOU NOT BY BREAD ALONE DOES MAN LIVE BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM GOD.'

"Just as the living Father sent me & 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."

**During the day:** Learn from afflictions. Welcome them, even seek them. Impose a little hunger on yourself--it'll do you good. You'll learn there are unexplored depths to the spiritual dimension. Want to be authentically healthy? Go for it!

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer feeds on the humanity of Christ. We chew & savor his words, visualize his actions. He's the living word that nourishes our humanity with his own, circulating the life of the Father through us all: The love of God for mankind is consummated.

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

**June 1, 2008 9th of yr: Deut 11.18,26-28; Rom 3.21-28; MT 7.21-27**

MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE, 'I SET BEFORE YOU HERE THIS DAY A BLESSING & A CURSE: A BLESSING FOR OBEYING THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD, A CURSE IF YOU TURN ASIDE.'  
"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father"

**During the day:** Enter the kingdom of heaven: let truth, goodness, & beauty be both the criteria & measure of your choices. God wills (commands) what's good for us; we need but will it ourselves for it to happen

**ABOUT PRAYER:** In prayer, the intellect scans the senses, ponders the data, formulates judgments. Then in prayer the will makes a choice, not always in accord with the judgment on the data available-- prayer remains open to the inspired truth of divine revelation. In prayer we discern God's will in God's word--the people & situations of every moment are but its reflection.

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

**JUNE 8, 2008 10th of yr: Hosea 6.3-6; Rms 4.18-25; MT 9.9-13**

FOR IT IS LOVE THAT 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 slow learner. God takes *his* time; take yours. Knowledge comes with experience, & experience with practice: loving sacrifice isn't sacrifice, it's love.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is becoming a master learning from a master. What the disciples got from personal experience, we get from prayer. The Good News is always good & it's always new, the Living Word fitting my situation at the very moment I need it. Practice does make perfect.

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

**JUNE 15, 2008 11th of yr: Exodus 19.2-6; Rms 5.6-11; MT 9.36-10.8**

IF YOU HEARKEN TO MY VOICE & KEEP MY COVENANT, YOU SHALL  
BE MY SPECIAL POSSESSION, A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, A HOLY NATION.

"As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of God is at hand!'  
Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.  
Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."

**During the day:** Drive out demons. Your own & others'. 'Demons' are a creation of the old Greeks & Romans; Satan is an angel who made God his enemy. He's still mad & still at it. But when he's trying to get you or someone else to do the wrong thing, just say 'shut up & get out!' He won't go without a fight, but will eventually.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer expresses absolute confidence in the power of God. Whatever the situation & circumstances, prayer is accompanied by inner peace nothing but your own lack of faith can rid you of. Generous concern for others & the common good will give it strength.

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

**JUNE 22, 2008 12th of yr: Jer 20.10-13; Rms 5.12-15; MT 10.26-33**

BUT THE LORD IS WITH ME LIKE A MIGHTY CHAMPION:  
MY PERSECUTORS WILL STUMBLE, THEY WILL NOT TRIUMPH.

"Fear no one. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill  
the soul--all the hairs on your head are counted! Whoever acknowledges  
me before others, I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.

**During the day:** Fear no one nor any thing--face fear with courage. Fear is blind, as are the dangers that threaten, even when evil intent is the source. Courage is inspired by hope for goodness, not security. Goodness is absolute; security is relative. Don't trade the former for the latter.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is a taste of eternity; in prayer we're already there: GOD '*is who is*' & we are too! Eternal life--outside of time--is divine, & ours by communication. Christ shares our humanity, & by so doing shares his divinity. Prayer takes advantage of it.

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

**JUNE 29, Peter & Paul: Acts 12.1-11; 2Tim 4.6-8,17-18; MT 16.13-19.**

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD AWAKENED PETER & SAID TO HIM,  
'GET UP QUICKLY.' THE CHAINS FELL FROM HIS WRISTS.

Jesus said, 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter replied, 'You are the Christ,  
Son of the Living God!' 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah.  
Flesh & blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.'

**During the day:** Drop the chains, get up & go! Quit sitting around feeling sorry for yourself! Nothing holding you back but your own lethargy, lack of self-confidence & fear of failure. Stop worrying! You belong to God, let him do the worrying. Get busy; if you fail, he'll pick up the pieces.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer's power is knowledge. Sharing God's. He knows who he is, & so do we. Eyes closed, prayer opens them, & we look right at him! We don't feel, we sense his presence; a real presence, communicating life. Prayer affirms it & let's it flow. In our humanity, it's Christ.

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

**JULY 6, 14th of yr: Zech 9.9-10; Rms 8.9-13; MT 11.25-30**

SEE, YOUR KING SHALL COME TO YOU; A JUST SAVIOR IS HE,  
MEEK & RIDING ON A COLT, FOAL OF A DONKEY.

"I give you praise, Father. Lord of heaven & earth; you've hidden these thing from the wise & learned, & revealed them to little ones! Come to me all you who labor & are burdened & I will give you rest-- for I am meek & humble of heart."

**During the day:** Look around you & see the strength of the meek & humble of heart. Less ambitious, perhaps, but straightforward & honest in fulfilling their responsibilities. Reassess your own goals & values. When you achieve them, how eternal your satisfaction?

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer knocks on the door of the heart of Christ, or listens to attend when he knocks on one's own. Whichever, the encounter is intimate, & mutually rewarding; it serves his mission as savior, & ours as servants for the tasks at hand. His become ours, & ours his.

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

**JULY 13, 2008 15th of yr: Isa 55.10-11; Rms 8.18-23; MT 13.1-23**

JUST AS FROM HEAVEN THE RAIN COMES DOWN & DOES NOT RETURN  
TILL IT WATERS THE EARTH & MAKES IT FRUITFUL, SO SHALL MY WORD  
GO FORTH FROM MY MOUTH & NOT RETURN VOID BUT DO MY WILL,  
ACHIEVING THE END FOR WHICH I SENT IT.

"The seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word & understands it,  
who indeed bears fruit & yields a hundredfold."

**During the day:** Hear the word & try to understand it; you won't bear fruit without it. The Word of God is about God, not about you. Like rain penetrating the earth, it has its own dynamic, & communicates the life of God. Know him, & you'll know yourself. Choose to live accordingly.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** The Word presents the mind with concepts, the will with a challenge: "Accept me as true". Prayer is our choice to accept, not with the conviction of the mind but with the intuition of faith--God's gift to the will. With ours in harmony with his, he goes to work. Mission accomplished.

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

**JULY 20, 2008 16th of yr: Wisdom 12.13-19; Rms 8.26-27; MT 13. 24-43**

THOUGH YOU ARE MASTER OF MIGHT, YOU JUDGE WITH CLEMENCY, & WITH MUCH  
LENIENCY GOVERN US. BY THESE DEEDS YOU TAUGHT YOUR PEOPLE THAT THOSE  
WHO ARE JUST MUST BE KIND.

"No, if you pull up the weeds, you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until the harvest. Then collect the weeds for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."

**During the day:** Be just but gentle, kind but firm; tensions need not boil over into conflict. The common good requires generous sacrifice from some, humble gratitude from others, mutual respect from all. Leadership leaves none behind.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer shares the Lord's responsibilities: He seeks the best in each, with patience awaits its discovery. Prayer enables us to perceive the 'why' of others' obstinacy, with wisdom assuage it & with truth enlighten it. God's might is in his mercy.

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

**JULY 27, 2008 17th of yr: 1Kings 3.5-12; Rom 8.28-30; MT 13.44-52**

BECAUSE YOU HAVE ASKED, SOLOMON, NOT FOR LONG LIFE OR RICHES  
OR THE LIFE OF YOUR ENEMIES, BUT FOR UNDERSTANDING SO THAT  
YOU MAY KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT, I DO AS YOU REQUESTED.

"Every scribe instructed in the kingdom of God is like the head of a household  
who brings from his storeroom both the old & the new."

**During the day:** Ask for understanding of what is right. Appetites & emotions have a way of bringing the mind to rationalize in their favor. Don't be deceived. Integrity doesn't settle for half-truths. Awaiting an inner sense of what's right, goodness grows.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer sorts through the mind's criteria to find the one that rings true, then weighs the witness of experience & rests in the sense of divine rather than human success. Ever old, but sometimes new, wisdom prevails.

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

**AUG 3, 18th of yr: Isa 55.1-3; Rom 8.35-39; MT 14.13-21**

ALL YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, COME TO THE WATER! YOU WHO HAVE NO MONEY, COME, RECEIVE GRAIN & EAT! COME TO ME HEEDFULLY, & YOU WILL HAVE LIFE.

"There is no need for them to disperse; give them something to eat yourselves."

All those present ate their fill.

**During the day:** Eat heedfully, i.e., share what you've got--there are people around you who have little. What's shared materially, multiples; what's hoarded, neither satisfies nor nourishes. Life is more than an appetite.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** All prayer is the prayer of Christ. Prayer makes his will one's own. He came to feed, heal, free, forgive, console everyone! Let your prayer flow into action.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**AUG 10, 2008 19th of yr: 1Kgs 19.9-13; Rom 9.1-5; MT 14.22-33**

THE LORD SAID TO ELIJAH, 'GO OUTSIDE, THE LORD WILL BE PASSING BY.'

... AFTER THE FIRE, THERE WAS A TINY WHISPERING SOUND. WHEN

HE HEARD THIS, ELIJAH HID HIS FACE IN HIS CLOAK.

When the disciples saw him waking on the water they were terrified. 'Do not be afraid. It is I.'

**During the day:** Don't be afraid, ever. Be it in the gentle breeze or walking on water, the Lord is always around you, present & protective. Get used to the idea, & exploit the truth that belies the facts.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer reaches out from fear & grabs hold of God. The mind clears, & calm returns; the threat comes into focus, God in its shadow. Come what may, he's still in charge.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**AUG 17, 2008 20th of yr: Is 56.1,6-7; Rom 11.13-15,29-32; MT 15.21-28**

THUS SAYS THE LORD, OBSERVE WHAT IS RIGHT, DO WHAT IS JUST. FOR MY SALVATION IS ABOUT TO COME. MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE.

"Lord, Son of David, have pity on me!" "My mission is only to the lost sheep of Israel; it is not right to take the food of the children & throw it to the dogs." "Lord, even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the masters' table." "Woman, great is your faith!. Your wish is granted."

**During the day:** Be satisfied with crumbs. Everything is gratuitous, & humble gratitude acknowledges the love of the giver rather than the value of the gift. It's faith's measure.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer diminishes our differences as it expresses our utter dependence on one & the same Father-Mother. No one better or worse than anyone else, we share equally in a common heritage. Prayer is the language of love, authentic only when free & forgiving.

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

**AUG 24, 2008 21st of yr: Isa 22.19-23; Rom 11.33-36; MT 16.13-20**

I WILL PLACE THE KEY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID ON HIS SHOULDER, WHEN HE OPENS, NO ONE SHALL SHUT; WHEN HE SHUTS, NO ONE SHALL OPEN.

"But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!" "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. For flesh & blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."

**During the day:** If the door's open, enter; if it's shut, knock. When it opens, enter; if it doesn't, check your conscience, make an act of contrition, & knock again. If your sorrow is sincere, it'll open. Otherwise, you'd better do something about your pride & indifference to the things of God.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** In prayer, Christians gaze at Christ, others at his shadow. Faith is God's gift to his children, never the same for any two of them; how he reveals himself to each, only he determines. The response is freely given (or not), & enriches accordingly. The Christ in question shares his Spirit.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**AUG 31, 2008 22nd of yr: Jeremiah 20 7-9; Romans 12.1-2; Matthew 16.21-27**

THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS BROUGHT ME DERISION & REPROACH. I WILL SPEAK IN HIS NAME NO MORE! BUT THEN IT BECOMES LIKE FIRE BURNING IN MY HEART. I GROW WEARY HOLDING IT IN-- I CANNOT ENDURE IT!

"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, & follow me. Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

**During the day:** Hang tough. There are good reasons for needless suffering, & bad. What honesty, truth & the good of others require, don't shirk; such loyalty forges integrity in persons God then uses to build his Kingdom. Be one.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer's the gear of human experience that shifts to the divine. So empowered, the will at prayer commits itself to the course discerned, though of a dimension that transcends perception. Prayer stays the course till home, no matter the obstacles.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**SEPT 7, 2008 23 of yr: Ez 33.7-9; Rm 13.8-10; MT 18.15-20**

IF YOU WARN THE WICKED TO TURN FROM HIS WAYS & HE REFUSES TO TURN, HE SHALL DIE FOR HIS GUILT. BUT YOU SHALL SAVE YOURSELF.

"If your brother sins against you, go & tell him of his fault. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother."

**During the day:** Don't judge the person, judge his actions & intentions. More important than their consequences are his recognition of unjust behavior & will to correct it. Your greater concern for him than for yourself will bring out the best in him; that's what matters.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** We take people into our prayer, the better to see Christ in each. From within, he wants what's best for them; from without, we try to complement his efforts. Our communion with each other in Christ--even with those who are unaware of his presence--is the key to true peace.

# Missing Sept 10, 2008

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**SEPT 21, 25th of yr: Is 55.6-9; Phil 1.20-27; MT 20.1-16**

SEEK THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND. CALL HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR.

TURN TO OUR GOD, GENEROUS IN FORGIVING.

"Are you envious because I am generous? Take what is yours & go."

The last will be first, & the first will be last.

**During the day:** Be last, back with the laggards who need help. Being first gets you glory; being thus last gets you credit.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer purifies our ambitions, keeps them trimmed to the Lord's. Prayer doesn't ask questions, it tries to answer his.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**Sept. 28, 2008 26th of yr: Ez 18.25-28; Phil 2.1-11; MT 21.28-32**

WHEN THE VIRTUOUS TURNS FROM VIRTUE & COMMITS INIQUITY, HE DIES.

BUT IF HE TURN FROM THIS WICKEDNESS, HE SHALL SURELY LIVE.

"A man told his son, 'go work in the vineyard.' 'No,' he said, then changed his mind & went.

The man gave his other son the same order; 'Yes, sir,' he said, but didn't go. Which obeyed?"

**DURING THE DAY:** Make judgments with the mind, make decisions with the will. Be alert to self-serving choices, sensible enough to regret them, & change course. You'll live longer--indeed, forever!

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer has a way of keeping us at peace when tough decisions are right, agitates if not; smart prayer turns us around.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**OCT 5, 2008 27th of yr: Is 5.1-7; Phil 4.6-9; MT 21.33-43**

WHAT MORE WAS THERE TO DO FOR MY

VINEYARD THAT I HAD NOT DONE?

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you

& given to a people that will produce its fruit."

**During the day:** Produce fruit. Collectively as well as individually, organically as well as organizationally. The human family lives, works, & dies together under one Maker, one Father. Make him proud.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer keeps us sensitive to grace. Prayer perceives-- senses--grace's organic character, the circulation of the vitality of the Redeemer through the members of his body. It's head & heart, Christ wills what's best for it, each & every member!

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**OCT 12, 2008 28th of yr: Is 25.6-10; Phil 4.12-14,19-20; Mt. 22.1-14**

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE FOR ALL PEOPLES A FEAST, DESTROY THE VEIL THAT  
VEILS ALL PEOPLE, DESTROY DEATH, WIPE THE TEARS FROM EVERY FACE.

"The feast is ready. Those invited were not worthy. So go out, invite whomever you find."

Many are invited, few are chosen.

**During the day:** Destroy the veil that hides you from others. Hold their hands; dry their tears; invite yourself to their feast of sorrow; be the one chosen to console. Let them know the real you.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer discerns both the choices & for what chosen. Prayer pursues the courage to oblige. Thoughtful prayer judges generously; willful prayer flows into fruitful action, then rests at peace in the results, whatever.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**OCT 19, 2008 29th of yr: Is 45.1,4-6; 1Thes 1.1-5; MT 22.15-21**

I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME, GIVING YOU A TITLE, THOUGH YOU  
KNEW ME NOT. I AM THE LORD, & THERE IS NO OTHER.

"Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man, not concerned with  
anyone's opinion, & do not regard a person's status."

**During the day:** Be truthful, coherent in judgments, & transparent in loyalty to the them. If humble enough to learn from others & grow in truth, you'll be free, a friend sought by all.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer keeps us tuned to truth, the Unknown God. Being of the will rather than the intellect, prayer grasps the ungraspable. Prayer chooses to believe & serve, trusting love rather than evidence; or rather, on the evidence of being loved, life a gift of the Lover unseen.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**OCT 26, 2008 30th of yr: Ex 22.20-26; Thes 1.5-10; MT 22.34-40**

IF YOU TAKE YOUR NEIGHBOR'S CLOAK AS A PLEDGE, RETURN IT BEFORE  
SUNSET-- WHAT ELSE HAS HE TO SLEEP IN? IF HE CRIES OUT TO ME  
I WILL HEAR HIM; FOR I AM COMPASSIONATE.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law &  
the prophets depend on these two commandments.

**During the day:** Don't loan, give to the poor. Call it a loan, for dignity's sake, but accept it back for that reason only. What you have is God's, his gift to you; share it with those who received the gift of poverty. You'll be the one to gain.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer muses. Ponders laws. Analyzes prophecies (i.e. truths foreseen). Prayer is the mind awaiting enlightenment, open to grace. What comes into focus isn't always rational, at times quite the opposite. No matter. Prayer flows into action, the other's needs are served. God is pleased. Faith grows.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**NOV 2, 2008 Faithful Departed: Wisdom 3.1-9; Rms 5.5-11; JN 6.37-40**

THE SOULS OF THE JUST ARE IN THE HAND OF GOD, & NO TORMENT  
SHALL TOUCH THEM. GOD TRIED THEM, &  
FOUND THEM WORTHY OF HIMSELF.

This is the will of the One who sent me, that everyone who sees  
the Son & believes in him may have eternal life.

**During the day:** Look around at love. Believe in it. Practice it. Love & life are inseparable: to love is to live, to live is to love. God *is* love--Lover & Beloved. Whoever recognizes with gratitude the Giver in the gift of love lives the life of the Giver forever.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer eternalizes our daily thoughts, words & deeds. Magnetic response to the power of God's creative & redemptive love, prayer fulfills the will to be possessed by possessing. Eternally.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**NOV 9, 2008 Lateran Basilica: Ezek 47.1-2,8-12; 1Cor 3.9-11,16-17; JN 2.13-22**

THE ANGEL BROUGHT ME TO THE TEMPLE. I SAW WATER FLOWING  
FROM BENEATH. 'WHEREVER THE RIVER FLOWS EVERY LIVING  
CREATURE THAT CAN MULTIPLY SHALL LIVE.'

"Destroy this temple & in 3 days I will raise it up." He was speaking about the temple of his body.

**During the day:** Multiply. Be a living creature that communicates life, not death. The intelligent, free choice is the ultimate of vital activity. Choose truth, goodness, beauty always, & God's life flows unending.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer survives the death of sin. Sinfulness repented is sinfulness reversed; prayer cultivates the virtues that replace vices uprooted. Prayer rebuilds God's temple deep within the human heart.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**Nov 16, 2008 33rd of yr: Proverbs 31.10-13, 19-20,30-31; 1Thes 5.1-6; MT 15.14-15,19-21**

WHEN ONE FINDS A WORTHY WIFE, HER VALUE IS FAR BEYOND PEARLS.

"Well done, good & faithful servant! Since you were faithful in small matters,  
I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy."

**During the day:** Share the joy of those you serve. Give of yourself generously to your responsibilities. Be worthy of gratitude & praise, but give God the credit. Your honest humility assures yet greater & more important service.

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is the intimacy of communion with the One whose responsibilities you share. It's the will of Another you fulfill, his the wisdom of the plan you execute, the strength with which you do so. Prayer is the connector between Source & servant.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, Director Manresa Jesuit Retreat House**

**NOV 23, 2008 Christ the King: Ezek 34.11-17; 1Cor 15.20-28; MT 25.31-46**

I MYSELF WILL PASTURE MY SHEEP, SAYS THE LORD GOD. THE LOST I WILL SEEK, THE STRAYED BRING BACK, THE INJURED BIND UP, THE SICK HEAL.

"Come, you blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was hungry & you gave me food..."

**During the day:** Don't be distracted: feed the hungry! Nourish others; spiritually, culturally, physically, however. Give of yourself; serve generously--not *needs*, the *needy*! You're made in God's image: *Be* Godlike!

**ABOUT PRAYER:** Prayer is spiritual awareness, memory recalling the hidden truths we've chosen to believe about ourselves & God. Prayer ponders, judges--then the will kicks in again & chooses to be available for whatever God disposes. No second thoughts.